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Impact of gender and culture: Contributing factors to satisfactory long-term marriages

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Impact of gender and culture: Contributing factors to satisfactory long-term marriages

by

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Abstract

The constructs of gender and culture have been neglected in our understanding of marital relationships. With the recent upsurge of postmodernism, the two constructs have come into focus as essential to furthering our understanding of these relationships. My doctoral dissertation research is a cross-cultural comparative study of five Hong Kong Chinese immigrant couples in Canada and five Euro Canadian couples who were born in Canada. I used a social construction perspective to examine the gender and cultural processes that evolve in the long-term satisfactorily married couples. Couples who have been married for thirty to thirty-six years were under study.

I used the Dyadic Adjustment Scale which measured married couples' marital adjustment and satisfaction as a screening instrument to identify the ten couples for in-depth interviews. I adopted an inductive narrative approach to analyse the gender and cultural factors that contribute to long-term marital satisfaction. The narratives of the couples' evolution of their gender relationships reflect the evolving culture embedded in a particular group's socio-historical context. Through comparison of the two cultural groups, I made the cultural elements more transparent, and in turn, problematised certain gender issues in their socio-historical context.

Building upon the existing knowledge of long-term marriages, I conducted an empirical research grounded in a theoretical model which illuminated how cultural contexts and gender role expectations interweave with interpersonal life to create meaning of a satisfactory long-term marital relationship. With the cross-cultural comparisons, I explored the different meanings of marital expectations, marital satisfaction, gender role expectations,

and the qualities of sharing, acceptance, and commitment in marriage among the two cultural groups under study. Cultural-specific factors and cross-cultural factors that contributed to satisfactory long-term marriages were discovered from the couples' narratives.

Compatibility between the partners in a marital relationship was found to be important for a couple to achieve marital satisfaction. Perceived fairness in the couple's gender division of labour, efforts to accommodate changes and go through difficulties, the distribution of decision-making power, willingness to compromise, shared values and activities, and good communication contributed to long-term marital satisfaction. Care and concern, as most of the long-term marriage studies suggest, were more important than satisfaction in sex. A distinctive factor, gender mutuality -- the reciprocity of each spouse in understanding the other's gender characteristics -- was found to contribute to the couples' high level of marital satisfaction. Couples who had high gender mutuality also had a more positive sense of self.

My cross-cultural comparative study articulated the complex processes of socio-cultural construction of male and female in each cultural group under study and examined how such forces affected long-term marital satisfaction. My theoretical endeavour was to dislodge the oppositional dichotomy of the dominant Western gender discourses and deconstruct the Western notion as the norm for understanding human behaviours. I explored the different meanings co-constructed by the husband and wife in a marital relationship, under their own socio-cultural contexts, in achieving the couple's long-term marital satisfaction.

Acknowledgements

I started my doctoral study in Wilfrid Laurier University in 1993, a year after my family immigrated to Canada from Hong Kong. I learned a lot during these years – as a student, a wife, a mother, a daughter, and a friend. While I was going through my doctoral study, I experienced different stages of development of my family acculturating to the Canadian society. During these years, we have experienced growth, ethnic prejudice, family conflicts (the biggest we ever had due to in-law relationships), and mental health issues in the family. I am glad in the midst of what had happened, I thrived through and completed the program in five and a half years. My family is still intact and the children are doing what they need to do. During my struggle, both personally and academically, there are people who are around me to support me through, and they are the ones that I would like to express my gratitude here.

The first one I want to express my gratitude is Dr. Anne Westhues, Chair of my Dissertation Committee. Anne has given me endless support and encouragement during my doctoral study. She inspired me not only of her academic excellence, but her composure as a woman social work educator, and respect towards students. Modelling from her qualities, I learned to be a humble academia, and learned to care about my students, especially those who came from other countries. I also take this opportunity to thank each of my committee members. Dr. Harriet Lyons gave me tremendous insights in cross-cultural and gender perspectives. She opened up my horizon of perspectives to other cultures. She represents a source of wisdom to me. Professor Claude Guldner, whom I have known before coming to Canada, inspired me as an academia and therapist who has excellence in both theoretical

my dearest friend Gloria Taylor, the first friend I met when I came to the 'strange' place of Waterloo. She is the light in me who rekindle my spirit and hope.

Last but not the least, I express my gratitude to my husband, Lawrence, and my children Jason and Judith who have shown their consideration and love during this lengthy process. Lawrence, I can not separate my success from your support – both intellectually and emotionally. The love and support from my spouse and children elevate my spirit when I feel discouraged. I also thank Jason who did the wonderful charts for me using his computer knowledge, and Judith who made me the lucky charms to boost me up. I want to dedicate this dissertation to Jason and Judith. I hope they will read my work when they go into their own relationships.

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Chapter One

Introduction

"Marriage is the most complex of human relationships."
(Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995, p.15)

An overview of the research study

The discourses in society and academia reflect an overwhelming emphasis on marital breakdowns in recent decades. The literature on divorce and its effects far exceeds the literature that has explored the strengths of marriage. However, the dominant "pathogenic" approach to studying the phenomena and causes of divorce only points out the negative factors that are identified in dysfunctional marriages. There is no logical implication that the reverse of the negative features discovered in these findings would be the strengthening factors of a satisfactory marriage. Instead of asking "What makes couples divorce?" marriage researchers are beginning to pose the question "What makes some couples sustain their relationships in a satisfactory way?" Empirical studies on long-term marriages shed light on this rarely researched area (Sporakowski & Hughston, 1978; Roberts, 1979; Rowe & Meredith, 1982; Schlesinger, 1982; Copeland, Bugaighis, & Schumm, 1984; MacKinnon, MacKinnon & Franken, 1984; Lauer and Lauer, 1986; Lauer, Lauer & Kerr, 1990; Fenell, 1993; Robinson & Blanton, 1993; Levenson, Carstensen, & Gottman, 1994; Bilingsley, Lim, & Jennings, 1995; Kaslow & Robinson, 1996).

In recent decades, while gender and culture have become two indispensable categories and have gained much importance in various academic fields, research on long-term marriages is devoid of such a perspective. Most literature on long-term marriages

assumes that a marital relationship is an interpersonal adjustment between two individuals. This literature neglects the complexity of the many extra-dyadic factors that each partner brings into the relationship. Cultural messages about the roles, responsibilities, and rights of men and women are fundamental influences on an intimate heterosexual relationship. When a couple gets married, each partner takes a vast complexity of beliefs, habits, preferences, and viewpoints into the new relationship. These standards and values have been continuously formulated and accumulated into a system of guidelines since a person's birth (Mace, 1982). This system of gender beliefs is referred to as the gender schema (Worden & Worden, 1998) in the dissertation. Gender and culture are two important organizing principles for understanding today's marriage (Beaujot, 1990; Karpel, 1994).

In my research, I examined the social construction of culture and gender in fostering satisfactory long-term marriages. In a comparative study of Hong Kong Chinese immigrant couples in Canada and English speaking Euro Canadian couples who were born in Canada, I identified differences and similarities between the two groups that contributed to long-term marriages. I also explored how the different forces in society shape modern marriages, and how couples in their particular culture act upon these forces to construct gender relationships in the long course of marriage which are satisfying for the marital dyad.

My definition of a long-term marriage is one in which the couple has been married for thirty years or more because most of the empirical studies on long-term marriages sampled couples who were married thirty years or more (Brubaker & Ade-Ridder, 1984). The mean length of Canadian marriages is thirty-one years (The Vanier Institute, 1994b). I also chose the cut-off point of thirty years because the divorce rate is lower after this cut-

off. For example, divorce rates for men and women at age 50-54 are 10.1 and 7.7 per 1,000 legally married people respectively, and the lowest divorce rate occurs at age 65 and over (Statistics Canada, 1995). Marriage break-up usually takes place within the first fifteen years of marriage (Krantzler & Krantzler, 1992; "'Typical' Canadian family," 1995). The greatest number of divorces occurred in the fourth year of marriage in Canada (Statistics Canada, 1995).

I adopted a social construction perspective to articulate a new paradigm[1] for future empirical inquiry in long-term marriages. I used an interdisciplinary method to formulate a theoretical model to elucidate the mutual construction of gender and culture in marital relationships. The study of long-term marriage is a relatively new and seldom researched area. My research endeavour was to move beyond the existing pattern of identifying predictors of long-term marriages. I hope it is an initial dialogue to explore how culture and gender interweave and thereby achieve a deeper understanding of what sustains today's long-term satisfactory marriages.

The context of the study

The Meaning of marriages: The social shift

Marriage has been construed differently in different times and cultures in human history. Traditionally, marriage has been considered as a human mating and procreation

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[1]   In this dissertation, I use the terms paradigms, perspectives, theories, models, and frameworks interchangeably (Triandis & Lambert, 1980).

system. Marriage served as an integral part of society for stabilizing religious, social and economic institutions. For example, in Medieval Europe, marriage exerted the control of the state and church over individual conduct, sexual mores, and the transfer of property for the ruling class (Wellwood, 1985; Altrocchi & Crosby, 1989; Kelman, 1994). Constraints against divorce were still strong in the first half of the century. Most people married with the intention of staying together (Roberts, 1979). It should also be noted that until the Communists came to power in China in 1949, more than half of all the world's marriages were arranged (Mace, 1982).

Marriage in the twentieth century, especially since the Second World War, has undergone major transitions – both in structure and value. In open democratic societies, greater flexibility and choice are allowed with respect to marriage (Mace, 1982; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995). The traditional function of marriage in preserving social order has been replaced by personal fulfilment. The conventional instrumental function of marriages has been replaced by the emotional function based on the quality of the relationship. A companionship marriage based on love, intimacy and choice has been upheld as the norm for marriage in the twentieth century. Today love is expected to be romantic and passionate while marriage is expected to bring comfort and security, satisfaction and happiness, growth and fulfilment.

The social shift in the meaning of marriage has been interwoven with societal, cultural, economic, and political changes after the Second World War. In North America, the 1960s' anti-Vietnam War movement and the dual impact of the civil rights and women's movements, which stressed individual self-actualization and satisfaction in life, had a

definite impact on the values and expectations surrounding marriage. Family values formerly taken for granted became subject to debate and doubt. The former exclusivity of intimate relationships was challenged by extramarital relationships and sexually open marriages. Common-law union, same-sex families, and single-parent households have become common alternatives to formal marriage. The heterosexual married couple with children, where the husband is the only breadwinner, now represents 19% of all Canadian families (The Vanier Institute, 1994b).

An accompanying social force of the 1960s which has had a far-reaching impact on contemporary marriages is the second wave of the gender revolution.[2] The gender relationship in marriage was put under scrutiny. It was asked whether, or in what ways, patterns of discrimination against women in the larger male-dominated society were replicated or reinforced in marriage. In Western feminist literature, marriage is considered to be a device for dominating women and confining them only to the private sphere. Feminist scholars criticize the fact that women's contributions – child bearing, child rearing, day-to-day housework, caring for the emotions of family members – receive no public recognition. They consider the relegation of females to the private sphere while males dominate the public sphere a reflection of the modern Western cultural trait of valuing the production of goods over the production of people (Rosaldo & Lamphere, 1974; Sacks, 1974; Ortner & Whitehead, 1981; Yanagasiko & Collier, 1990).

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[2]   The women's movement in the 60's is considered the "second wave" while the "first wave" dated back to the early twentieth century (Kome, 1982; Friedan, 1983; Mandell & Duffy, 1995).

The women's movement called for a renegotiation of gender roles in the marital system as a result of a dramatic change in the percentage of women in the labour force from 24.1% in 1951 to 58.2% in 1991 (The Vanier Institute, 1994). This increase in women's labour participation from the 1960s to 1970s was equal to the total increase of the last six decades (Czerny, Swift, & Clarke, 1994). The influx of wives and mothers into the labour force began thirty years ago (Mandell & Duffy, 1995). When men left to fight in World War II, women filled their jobs in the factories, but when the men came home from the war, the women returned to their original place at home. The steady increase of women in the paid labour force started in the 1960s. The rate of participation in the labour force for married women in Canada increased steadily from 5% in 1941 to 61% in 1991. Most dramatic was the change in the percentage of women who participated in the labour force and had children under the age of six. In 1977, these women represented only 38% of labour-force participants, while in 1992, working women with children under six years of age comprised 63% of those participating in the labour force (The Vanier Institute, 1994b).

The proportion of dual-earner households is increasing. A dual-earner family constituted 62% of all husband/wife families in 1991(Conway, 1997), with approximately two-thirds of all married women being gainfully employed (Kurian, 1993). In both Western and Eastern countries, when women are more economically independent and socially significant, they have relatively more choices in their marriages. Women's status in Hong Kong has been raised as a result of their active participation in the labour market and a series of social reforms. In 1987, the enforcement of compulsory education for all children up to

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the age of 15 resulted in a drop in women's illiteracy rate by nearly half from the 1960s to 80s (22% in 1966 to 12.5% in 1986). The employment rate in Hong Kong for women between 25 and 54 has increased from 34.5% in 1971, to 53% in 1981, and 61% in 1991 (Young, 1995; Law et al, 1995). Their growing participation in the labour force is unlikely to reverse, which means a continuing challenge to restructure roles and redefine gender relationships in the marriage.

Since the late 1980s, the rate in the number of new divorces has decreased in North America. A pro-family movement has revived family and marriage values in North America. Barbach and Geisinger (1994) observe that today, people are searching for something deeper, not just more sexual partners. Partly as a reaction to the spiritual emptiness of the 70s and early 80s, when the emphasis was on self-centred individualism and materialism, and partly in response to the dramatic rise in sexually transmitted diseases, especially AIDS, humans are once again seeking more meaningful commitments and intimacy. The pendulum has swung back to marriage, especially in North America, but the challenges to modern marriages remain immense.

Modern marriages: Four human paradoxes

I condense the prominent features of contemporary marriages in modern industrialized societies into four paradoxes, as illustrated mostly with Canadian statistics and supplemented with statistics from Hong Kong and other countries.

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Paradox one: Despite the high divorce rate and loss of faith in marriage, the majority of people still get married today.

The divorce rates in most industrialized countries reached their climax in recent decades. Between 1965 and 1988, Canada's divorce rate shifted from one of the lowest rates to one of the highest rates of the industrialized countries. The rapid rise in the divorce rate since the 1960s has been facilitated by liberalizing changes in the legislation in Canada. The 1968 Divorce Act allowed reasons for divorce other than physical and mental cruelty and adultery, which had been the only grounds for divorce in the past. The new law also granted easier access to divorce when the provinces were responsible for their own divorce cases, which made divorce less restricted and costly (Peters, 1976). Between 1968 and 1988, Canada's divorce rate increased from 54.8 per 100,000 population in 1968 to 310.5 per 100,000 population in 1988 (Baker, 1986). The two amendments of the 1985 Divorce Act, including 'no-fault' grounds for divorce and the shortening of the compulsory separation period from three years to one, have further facilitated divorce (Ryant, 1988; Frederick & Hamel, 1998). Since then, the divorce rate has climbed sharply, peaking at 362 divorces per 100,000 population in 1987 (Frederick & Hamel, 1998). Since 1987, the divorce rate has steadily declined; it was 262.2 per 100,000 population in 1995 (Statistics Canada, 1995). The projected rate of divorce in Canada is 40% (Czerny, Swift, & Clarke, 1994; The Vanier Institute, 1994b) while in the United States it is between one half and two-thirds of all marriages (Martin & Bumpass, 1989 in Robinson & Blanton, 1993; Goldscheider, 1990; Fenell 1993; Gottman, 1994a). In 1990, one couple divorced for every 2.4 couples that married in Canada (The Vanier Institute, 1994b).

Compared to the United States and Canada, the divorce rate in Hong Kong is relatively low, but it is rising. The 1971 Marriage Reform Ordinance restricted marriage to a monogamous type and officially abolished the old concubine system in Hong Kong. In 1972, No-Fault Divorce was instituted making divorce easier. From 1981 to 1991, the percentage of divorced or separated men and women doubled from 0.6% to 1.2% (Hong Kong Census & Statistics, 1991 in Young, 1994). Between 1981 and 1997, the number of divorces that were granted to married men and women in Hong Kong increased five-fold (2,060 divorces in 1981, the base year, compared to 10,492 in 1997) (Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, 1998).

Despite the discourses and figures regarding the rising divorce rate, 95% of the adult population have experienced at least one marriage in Canada (Pléchaty, 1987; Gilford, 1986). Among the 7.5 million families of the 28 million people in Canada, legal marriage is still the preferred lifestyle for the majority of people. In 1995, over 160,000 men and women chose to marry (Statistics, Canada, 1995). Surveys on attitudes towards marriage have found that many young people still look forward to getting married (Pléchaty, 1987). The Vanier Institute of the Family (1994) found that at least 85% of nearly 4,000 Canadian high school students said they planned to marry. Among the teens who planned to marry, 86% expected a marriage with permanency. Karpel (1994) also found that more of today's couples use the traditional vow "till death do us part," expecting life long marriages.

Paradox two: People are ambivalent about commitment. They keep on seeking intimate relationships but are simultaneously afraid of intimacy.

Both the theoretical literature (Scarf, 1987; Solomon, 1989; Lerner, 1989) and statistics have shown that people are desperately seeking intimacy but are unable to sustain a committed intimate relationship. In her study of divorce in 62 cultures around the world, Fisher (1992) found that divorce clusters around a four-year peak after marriage, similar to that of Canada. Lindstrom (1992) discovered that the divorce peak is between two to four years in northern Europe, while Krantzler and Krantzler (1992) observed that the highest divorce rate in the United States occurs in the crucial first three years, and is similar for remarriages. Thus, the popular idea of the 'seven-year itch' does not seem to be supported by statistics. Fisher (1992) interpreted such short-term commitment as correspondent with the normal duration of a human being's infatuation.

Although large numbers of people get divorced, over 85% of them (with more men than women) eventually remarry and about one-fourth will remarry within a year (Lauer & Lauer, 1986b; Lauer, Lauer & Kerr, 1990). However, about 38% of remarriages end in divorce (Goldberg et al., 1985). Gottman (1994a) remarked that the failing rate of remarriage is as high as 60%. Fisher (1992) termed this human habit "serial monogamy" (p.103). As today's people do not want long-term commitment, they become involved in intimate relationships in alternative ways. Cohabitation is one. The number of couples who live in common-law relationships in Canada is increasing. Common-law unions increased from 7% to 10% of Canadian families from 1986 to 1991 (The Vanier Institute, 1994b), and to approximately 22% in 1996 (Statistics Canada, 1996). Although most authors (Trussell &

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Rao, 1989; Beaujot, 1990; Blumstein & Schwartz, 1990; Halli & Zimmer, 1991; Fisher, 1992; Gottman, 1994; Nock, 1995) found that cohabiting and common-law relationships are extremely short-lived and of poor quality, people are continuously seeking "what they believe marriage has to offer but are failing dismally to find it." (Mace, 1982, p.13).

Paradox three: The more power women have, the more unstable marriage becomes.

Fisher (1992) discovered that divorce is common in societies where both women and men own resources such as land, currency, and information. She contends that in many pre-agricultural societies, women were relatively more powerful, that is, they owned resources, and had a more equal relationship with men. Their power declined only after the mode of production changed to the use of plows, and later machines, confining women to the domestic sphere. In their cross-cultural data, Warner, Lee and Lee (1986) found that women have more power in marriage in societies with a nuclear family structure which is a product of industrialization and modernization. The contemporary economic and family structures which resulted from rapid industrialization and modernization after the Second World War, have greatly increased the power of women, and their ability to leave the marriage if they are unhappy in it.

The more power women have in society and the family, the greater their urge to initiate change towards a more equal marital relationship with their husbands (Brillinger, 1983; Schwartz, 1994). When the status of men in the hierarchical structure of the family is challenged by sharing tasks with their wives, marriage becomes more fragile (Goldscheider, 1990; Young, 1995). If today's men do not adjust their roles and relationships with their

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wives, marital breakdown will continue. Marital and family therapists like Mace (1982) and Krantzler & Krantzler (1992) advocate a two-vote system in marriage, which emphasizes equality between husbands and wives. In recent decades, patterns of egalitarian marriage have emerged, in which each partner regards the other as the number-one friend, lover, and equal partner in his or her life. Today, even though some men – and women too – still do not know how to practise equal partnership, they do agree with or advocate the principle of 'equality' in marriage.

Paradox four: Marriage has been considered a haven but now is considered dangerous by many

Marriage has been considered a safe haven to which a couple can escape from today's stressful world in modern times. The support, understanding, comfort and companionship provided by marriage are valued. However, domestic violence occurs so often, particularly in North America, that marriage is no longer a safe place, especially for women. In Canada, one in ten women is physically and/or sexually assaulted by her husband or partner. Wife battering is the single most important cause of injury to Canadian married women (Czerny, Swift, & Clarke, 1994). As Wallerstein and Blakeslee (1995) have observed, "Except for the worry about AIDS, premarital sex and living together are considered safe. But marriage is dangerous!" (p.175).

The rationale and focus of my study of long-term satisfactory marriages

The 1990s is a "decade of ethnicity" (Shweder & Sullivan, 1993). My comparative

study of long-term marriages illuminates the variability of marital practices by eschewing the notion that the Western forms are the universal norm. When we look at human history, we see a wide variation in the institution of marriage. Marriage has assumed different forms and structures, meanings and conceptions in various cultures during different periods. No single population should be treated as the normative base line for human behaviours (Shweder and Sullivan, 1993).

The multi-cultural milieu of Canada is an ideal venue for conducting cross-cultural studies. Today, nearly one in three Canadians consider their ethnic origin neither British nor French (The Vanier Institute, 1994a, 1994b). The Asian population comprises 6% of the total population. Hong Kong has been one of the major sources of immigration in recent years because of the political uncertainty of the colony.

It has been widely recognized that the Chinese ideology about the family is at the pole of collectivism while the Canadian ideology is at the opposite pole, individualism. Collectivism refers to a syndrome of attitudes and behaviours such as concern about the effects of actions or decisions on others, and a willingness to share material and affective resources with others (Hui & Triandis, 1986; Dion & Dion, 1993). On the other hand, individualism signifies the emotional independence of an individual from groups, and the subordination of the goals of the collectivities to individual goals (Dion & Dion, 1993). Although traditional values have been eroded in both societies after the onset of industrialization and modernization, family collectivism is still evident among the Hong Kong Chinese. The family-centeredness of Chinese culture among the Hong Kong Chinese (Hong & Ham, 1992) is still manifested in their desire to stay close to their family of origin.

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Although they prefer their parents to live nearby in separate households, the relatively high frequency of visits to their parents (Lam, 1982), and the relatively high financial assistance to their parents are signs of filial piety (Lau, 1981; Young, 1995). Although the ethos of the Hong Kong Chinese has moved towards individualism, and even more so in the case of those who immigrated to Canada, we need to be aware of the collectivistic values that are still implanted in their minds – the significance of parental approval of one's choice of mate, and maintaining a network of family and kin relationships after one's marriage. The distinction between Chinese immigrant couples coming from Hong Kong, representing a more collectivistic cultural origin, and Canadian couples, representing an individualistic cultural origin, makes a sound and interesting case for comparisons of their cultural construction of gender relationships in marriage.

I chose two distinct cultural ethnic groups – Hong Kong Chinese and Canadian-born Euro Canadians – for my comparative study. I am aware that there are subcultural differences within any particular ethnic group, just as no two persons share identical meanings of the same phenomenon. Chinese immigrants who live in Scarborough or Toronto, where there is a huge Chinese population, would have different cultural perceptions from those who live in Waterloo. The Hong Kong Chinese group I interviewed lived in the Toronto area. Similarly, the Canadian-born Euro Canadians had slightly different ethnic characteristics: a husband with a Norwegian background was quite different from a wife with an Irish background. These subtleties needed to be addressed.

The philosophical orientation of the researcher

Rohner (1984) reminds us that culture is abstracted from human behaviours and exists only in the mind of the investigator. Culture is an interactive process between the observed and the observer. As a result, the assumptions held by the researchers are as important as those held by the people they investigate. For this reason, I need to spell out my philosophical beliefs, assumptions, and biases explicitly.

In my study, I adopted a strengths perspective, which focuses on health rather than pathology, to examine how long-term couples construct the categories of culture and gender in their marriages and what the relationship is between these two conceptual categories and marital satisfaction. I assigned no privilege to heterosexual marriages over other forms of marriages, but chose to examine only male-female relationships in this study.

I adopted a social construction perspective as the theoretical framework of my research. Since human life is greatly mediated by culture, and I believe gender roles are socially constructed, marriage is a socially constituted product of society. Gender is more an ideological construct than a biological fact. I argued that the biological differences between male and female in itself are not enough to cause the differences in gender roles. Rather, these differences are deemed to be the result of social, cultural, and historical processes.

The major goal of conducting this cross-cultural study is to understand the implicit meanings that shape gender relationships in marital interactions. Through comparison and contrast, we can see what is sufficiently different from one group to another in a qualitative sense. Asad (1986) points out, "Society is not a text that communicates itself to the skilled reader. It is people who speak. And the ultimate meaning of what they say does not reside

in society -- society is the cultural condition in which speakers act and are acted upon." (p.155). By using narrative analysis as my core methodology, I want to understand the meaning and behaviours of gender relationships in the two cultural groups' marriages.

I am well aware that my interpretation is not an authoritative one. I am not trying to impose my interpretations on the members of the cultural groups whose cultural discourse I unravel (Asad, 1986). Rather, this piece of work is to be contested. The reading of my work is to be co-created with the readers. I see myself as a learner, rather than a guide.

Chapter Two

Literature Review of Long-term Marriages

Scholarship on long-term marriages is lacking and not well-developed (Schlesinger, 1982; Sporakowski & Axelson, 1984; Cole, 1985; Beavers, 1985; Robinson & Blanton, 1993; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995). Early studies, which focused on identifying a list of factors that contributed to long-term marriages (Sporakowski & Hughston, 1978; Roberts, 1979; Schlesinger, 1982, 1983; Schlesinger & Mullaly, 1984), were lacking in conceptual and statistical analytical tools, and failed to study the linkages between variables. Research throughout the 1980s became increasingly rigorous, and contributed further to identifying these factors. The research at this time adopted more systematic methodologies and was conceptually more mature. Although still atheoretical, these studies employed several approaches to gathering data (Lauer & Lauer, 1986) and provided observations that were distinct from the popular clinical discourses. In the 1990s, quantitative and qualitative approaches to the study of long-term marriages became more sophisticated and rigorous. In this decade, quantitative methods have been developed for predicting marital stability (Buehlman, Gottman, & Katz, 1992; Gottman, 1994b), various studies have contributed to the understanding of marriage across the developmental life cycle (Levenson, Cartensen, & Gottman, 1993, 1994), and conceptual models for understanding the relationship between key variables for enduring marriages have been developed (Robinson & Blanton, 1993). Despite the progress in marriage research, the study of long-term marriages remains an underdeveloped area (Wood & Duck, 1995). Research literature on the impact of gender and culture in long-term marriages is even more scarce.

There have been two major reasons for the increase in attention to the study of long-term marriages since the 1970s. One is the prominent concern about the increase in marital breakdown since the Second World War. Another is the recent demographic changes. Marriages were seldom expected to last longer than 20 years after a couple's children leave home due to a short life expectancy (Dumas & Peron, 1992). Increased longevity life means that people are spending more years in marriage than ever before as more marriages continue into old age. The latter reason is particularly relevant for Canada, which is an aging society. Between the 1970s and 1980s, Canada's elderly population increased by 80%. The proportion of the population aged 65 and over increased from 8.1% in 1971 to 10.6% in 1986 (The Vanier Institute, 1994b). By 1996, people aged 65 and over made up over 12% of the total population (The Vanier Institute, 1994b, 1994c).

Dominant research findings on long-term marriages

According to a predominance of the literature, most long-term marriages are satisfactory (Schlesinger, 1982; Mudd & Taubin, 1982; Copeland, Bugaighis, & Schumm, 1984; MacKinnon, MacKinnon & Franken, 1984; Lauer & Lauer, 1986a; Lauer, Lauer & Kerr, 1990; Levenson, Carstensen & Gottman, 1994; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995; Bilingsley, Lim, & Jennings, 1995; Kaslow & Robinson, 1996). Only a few studies report that there are long-term couples who stay together for primarily instrumental reasons like habits, children, convenience, religion or finances (Lauer & Lauer, 1986b; Weishaus & Field, 1988). Lasswell estimated that 20% of all long-term marriages were of low quality (in Rowe & Meredith, 1982), while Todd & Friedman found as many as 60% of their sample who were

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married 50 years were not happy in their marriages (in Weishaus & Filed, 1988). While some of these early studies have revealed that some long-term marriages were of low quality, most of the later studies agreed with Rollin and Feldman (1970) that there is a high level of marital satisfaction among long-term couples. Lauer and Lauer (1986), and Lauer, Lauer and Kerr (1990) found that 85.5% and 91.5% of couples in their two respective studies reported that they were happy. In their respondents samples, 85% of happy couples agreed that their mates were more interesting to them at the time of the interview than when they were first married (Lauer, Lauer & Kerr, 1990). Other studies with long-term couples have similar findings with over 90% of their respondents reporting their marriages as happy (Stinnett, Carter, & Montgomery, 1972; Schlesinger, 1982). Greater satisfaction among long-term couples has also been found in studies of long-term successful families (Mudd & Taubin, 1982; MacKinnon, MacKinnon & Franken, 1984).

Assessing marital satisfaction

Marital quality and marital stability are two important concepts in the existing literature on long-term marriages. Most studies of long-term marriages emphasize the interplay of these two concepts (Cole, 1985; Lauer & Lauer, 1986; Lauer, Lauer & Kerr, 1990; Robinson & Blanton; 1993). However, differentiation between the two concepts is important. Although marital quality is highly related to marital stability, the converse is not necessarily so (MacKinnon, MacKinnon & Franken, 1984) just as commitment is not synonymous with happiness (Gilford, 1986). A marriage can last for many reasons other than the intrinsic satisfaction obtained from the marriage. We need to be aware that long-term

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marriages include some unsatisfactory instrumental marriages.

It is important to understand how the literature on long-term marriages defines the terms 'marital quality' and 'marital stability', since the concepts may have different meanings in different contexts. There is no consensus on how marital quality should be conceptualized (Glenn, 1990). A factor analysis performed by Johnson and Associates (in Glenn, 1990) differentiates five components of marital quality – marital happiness, interaction, disagreements, problems, and instability. A further analysis differentiates these factors into two dimensions, with marital happiness and interaction in one, and the rest in another. In the literature on long-term marriages, the meanings of these terms can only be inferred. Marital stability usually is an indication of the longevity of the marriage, while marital quality is a matter of the couple's marital satisfaction and happiness. Marital satisfaction is a subjective concept, and agreement between the wife and husband about what constitutes happiness for them is vital (Kaslow & Hammerschmidt, 1992). Moreover, there are objective measurements for assessing marital satisfaction. Many studies adopt the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (in particular, using the one item of that scale which measures satisfaction) or the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Instrument to measure marital satisfaction. Some studies ask for the subjective evaluation of the respondents (cf. Rowe & Meredith, 1982; Cole, 1985; Robinson & Blanton, 1993). Many authors equate marital satisfaction with marital happiness (cf. Stinnett, Carter, & Montgomery, 1972; Lauer & Lauer, 1986; Lauer, Lauer & Kerr, 1990); some equate it with marital adjustment (cf. Sporakowski & Hughston, 1978; Roberts, 1979; Kaslow & Hammerschmidt, 1992), although Rao & Rao (1986) argue that they are conceptually different.

The relationship between marital satisfaction and the family life cycle

There is a fairly consistent finding on marital satisfaction and its relation to the family life cycle. Early studies reported a steady decline in satisfaction over time (Bossard & Boll, 1955; Blood & Wolfe, 1960 in Pineo, 1961). However, in the post-70s studies, which were more fully sampled, researchers found a curvilinear pattern (Rollins & Cannon, 1974; Spanier, Lewis, & Cole, 1975; Lupri & Frideres, 1981; Rowe & Meredith, 1982; Anderson, Russell & Schumm, 1983; Sporakowski & Axelson, 1984; Copeland, Bugaighis, & Schumm, 1984; Weishaus & Field, 1988; Glenn, 1990; Levenson, Carstensen, & Gottman, 1993). Lower marital satisfaction in the middle child-rearing years has been uniformly confirmed by researchers (Lee, 1988). The childbearing stage was considered by husbands and wives as both the most and least satisfying in the family life cycle. The stages that are seen as the most satisfying are the childbearing, preschool, and aging stage.

The least satisfying stages are the child-rearing, launching and middle-years stages (Sporakowski & Hughston, 1978; Lee, 1988). Apart from children, money and sex have been regarded as typical sources of dissatisfaction during the course of marriage (Schlesinger, 1982; Mace, 1982; Henslin, 1985). Although marital satisfaction is lower during the child-rearing years, there is not enough evidence to show that having children causes the deterioration in satisfaction. The findings of the effect of children on the long course of marriage are inconclusive. In a longitudinal study between 1980 and 1983, White and Booth (1985) compared a group of childless couples with another group of couples who transited to parenthood during this period. The authors found that marital satisfaction had deteriorated for both groups, and concluded that having children does not particularly worsen the

relationship. Children have been perceived as the most and least satisfying elements in a marital life cycle (Anderson, Russell & Schumm, 1983; Lauer & Lauer, 1986b; White, Booth & Edwards, 1986; Lee, 1988). Lauer and Lauer's (1986b) long-term couples indicated that their children enriched their lives and enhanced their marital solidarity; but they recognized that children added strains to their relationships and that strains were present in their own relationship prior to having children.

What are the key factors that contribute to long-term marriages?

1. Commitment

Commitment is unanimously accepted as a factor in long-term marriages (Sporakowski & Hughston, 1978; Roberts, 1979; Ammons & Stinnett, 1980; Schlesinger, 1982; Lauer & Lauer, 1986a; Lauer, Lauer & Kerr, 1990; Kaslow & Hammerschmidt, 1992; Fenell, 1993; Robinson & Blanton, 1993; Bilingsley, Lim, & Jennings, 1995). Commitment includes endurance, tolerance, and perseverance. Findings suggest that vital long-term couples express a personal commitment to the partner (Lauer & Lauer, 1986b; Lauer, Lauer & Kerr, 1990). Commitment involves an investment of energy, thought, patience, feeling, and time to build a relationship, along with a promise to dedicate oneself to an emotional attachment even when social pressures to commitment are weak. It is also a promise to endure hardship, a determination to work through difficulties, and a willingness to renegotiate the relationship and promote mutual growth as changes occur (Cole, 1985; Barbach & Geisinger, 1994; Lauer & Lauer, 1986b; Krantzler & Krantzler, 1992; Robinson & Blanton, 1993). Like all other couples, long-term couples are faced with the vicissitudes

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of life. It is important for couples to make changes as positive as possible, as this is necessary for marital survival and allows the partners in a marriage to grow (Goldberg et al., 1985). According to Goldberg et al (1985), many couples in enduring marriages have undesirable relationships because they do not allow for the possibility of change, which is inevitable in all relationships. Krantzler and Krantzler (1992) advocate a philosophy of creating and recreating a new marriage out of an existing marriage during the course of change in a marriage life cycle. The literature clearly shows that a long-term marriage is not a given, and that it requires a lot of work and effort to keep a marriage vibrant.

2. Perceptual congruence

Perceptual congruence is another dominant characteristic of long-term marriages (Sporakowski & Hughston, 1978; Schlesinger, 1982; Fields, 1983; Swensen & Trahaug, 1985; Lauer & Lauer, 1986b; Pléchaty, 1987; Kaslow & Hammerschmidt, 1992; Fenell, 1993). The studies show that consensus among couples on matters they consider important and fundamental is an essential element for long-term commitment. Findings show that these couples agree on a wide variety of issues like family finances, recreation, interests, life goals, ways of handling in-laws, and life around the home (Roberts, 1979; Lauer & Lauer, 1986b).

3. Companionship

Companionship is key in long-term marriages (Sporakowski & Hughston, 1978; Roberts, 1979; Ammons & Stinnett, 1980; Schlesinger, 1982; Brillinger, 1983; Lauer &

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Lauer, 1986a; Lauer, Lauer & Kerr, 1990; Kaslow & Hammerschmidt, 1992; Fenell, 1993; Robinson & Blanton, 1993; Bilingsley, Lim, & Jennings, 1995). Companionship includes an enjoyable relationship, time spent together, and an appreciation of each other. Research shows that the loving relationship between long-term couples is more companion-like. Respect, friendships, care, trust, honesty, security, appreciation, understanding, affirmation, forgiveness, fun together and a sense of humour are dominant attributes of long-term marriages (Mace, 1982; Schlesinger, 1982; Beavers, 1985; Lauer & Lauer, 1986b; Gilford, 1986; Krantzler & Krantzler, 1992; Kaslow & Hammerschmidt, 1992; Barbach & Geisinger, 1994; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995; Bilingsley, Lim, & Jennings, 1995; Kaslow & Robinson, 1996).

The long-term couples enjoy being together and value each other's companionship. They feel comfortable with each other's presence, and like to spend time with each other. Ninety-three per cent of Roberts' (1979) respondents said they would marry the same person if they could live their life over. Rowe and Meredith (1982) have found that in older marriages, commitment, companionship, and interdependence become more important. Among their respondents who had been married fifty years or more, 80% recalled their marriages as happy, yet only 28% of these same individuals selected their spouse as one of their three closest confidants. In their study of 17 marriages that have lasted 50 to 69 years, Weishaus and Field (1988) discovered that the basis for long-term marriages was maintaining a comfortable and reasonably contented "best friends" relationship.

4. Sexual expression

Sexual interest and activity remain an integral part of marriage, though they might decline in older age (Ard, 1977; Gilford, 1986). The studies on long-term marriages find that intrinsic factors other than sex are pertinent to long-term marriages. Touching, appreciation and other forms of expressing affection can also be satisfying (O'Sullivan, Lawrence & Byers, 1994). Affection in long-term marriages is expressed in sharing and communicating genuine feelings. Intimacy between long-term couples implies shared interests, activities, values, thoughts, feelings, as well as pain and joy (Cole, 1985; Kaslow & Hammerschmidt 1992; Robinson & Blanton, 1993; Kaslow, & Robinson, 1996). The shared making and memory of their own history are also foundations of long-term marriages (Buehlman, Gottman, & Katz, 1992; Willi, 1992; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995).

5. Conflict management

Although long-term couples face challenges similar to those of other couples, the empirical findings on long-term marriages portray a harmonious relationship between the partners. The long-term couples claim that they have fewer conflicts and problems (Swensen, Eskew & Kohlhepp, 1984; Swensen & Trahaug, 1985; Lauer & Lauer, 1986b). Findings suggest that these long-term couples demonstrate their joint problem-solving abilities (Kaslow & Hammerschmidt, 1992). They approach conflict by attacking the issue and not the mate, maintaining calmness and flexibility, and keeping issues in perspective (Lauer & Lauer, 1986a, 1986b; Krantzler & Krantzler, 1992).

Marriage is made up of minute daily matters which account for the satisfaction or

dissatisfaction of couples (Gottman, 1994b; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995). Some authors advocate a balanced view of benefit and cost during the long course of the relationship. Satisfaction among long-term couples is found to outweigh frustrations over the long haul (Roberts, 1979; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995). Contentment, fulfilment, a balance or fit between the dyadic partners' needs, wishes, and expectations, and the above-mentioned foundations that they have built upon help these couples deal with frustration and hardship.

6. Separateness and togetherness in long-term couples

Apart from the dominant theme of companionship and commitment in the discourses of long-term marriage studies, the couple's ability to balance separateness/individuation and togetherness/intimacy has also been considered crucial. As Willi (1992) emphasizes, "both partners create their common goals and their unique historical process out of the experience of "I and You" (p.122). Most authors on the topic say that to achieve a satisfactory long-term marriage, a couple needs to retain closeness and interdependence as a loving couple, yet each partner must maintain his or her own sense of identity with clear boundaries (Beavers, 1985; Goldberg et al., 1985; Krantzler & Krantzler, 1992; Kaslow & Hammerschmidt, 1992; Robinson & Blanton, 1993; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995). These authors suggest that the individual spouse needs to learn to be autonomous in order to be able to attain closeness and interdependence in an intimate relationship. Mace (1982) also stresses that one cannot enter into a meaningful relationship without establishing one's own personhood. In his comparison of high- and low-quality long-term couples who had been married for forty years, Cole (1985) found that the low-quality relationships were those in which the partners

had not learned to be autonomous.

What does the picture look like if gender findings are added?

A different picture appears when we look at marital satisfaction through a subjugated gender lens. Most research finds that husbands are more satisfied with and benefit more from the marriage than wives. Married men are physically and mentally healthier and happier than their wives (Sporakowski & Hughston, 1978; Rhyne, 1981; MacKinnon, MacKinnon & Franken, 1984; Gilford, 1986; Peterson, 1990; Kaslow, Hansson, & Lundblad, 1994; Levenson, Carstensen, & Gottman, 1994). Married men have much lower mortality than those living alone. Men's life expectancy is increased by eight years when they are married, compared to a three-year increase for women (Beaujot, 1990). Women are more disadvantaged and deprived in the long course of a marriage. They pay more costs in the marriage – physical, emotional, and financial. They are more vulnerable in physical and mental health. If they are homemakers, they face more financial hardship and lack of status in the family and society (Kome, 1982; Lee, 1988; Hochschild, 1989; Goldscheider, 1990; Van Yperen & Buunk, 1990; Levenson, Carstensen, & Gottman, 1994). Although more husbands now participate in child care and family roles (Cohen, 1987), there are still great imbalances of task sharing in household work. Even when they share the household chores, men choose those jobs in which they have more control over the use of time (Hochschild, 1989).

Wives are in general less happy, less satisfied, less healthy, and feel less equal in marriage than their husbands. Empirical data show that the majority of married women retain

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primary responsibility for housework, even among dual-career couples (Kome, 1982; Brubaker & Hennon, 1982 in Brubaker, 1990; Michelson, 1985; Hochschild, 1989; Scanzoni et al., 1989; Van Yperen & Buunk, 1990; John, Shelton, & Luschen, 1995; Mandell & Duffy, 1995; Conway, 1997). According to Karpel's (1994) data, 74% to 92% of housework and child-care tasks are still performed by women when both partners work. It is figured that on average, women spend fifteen hours longer than their husbands per week on housework, the equivalent of an extra month of twenty-four hours a day per year (Hochschild, 1989). The Stone Centre (Jaggar, 1990; Jordan et al., 1991; Bergman, 1991; Bergman & Surrey, 1992) maintains that as women play the care-taking and nurturing roles in the family, men are better taken care of in marriage. On the other hand, women experience more underlying anger and despair as a consequence of the burden they shoulder.

Empirical studies that tackle gender relationships in long-term marriages are scarce. Some studies of long-term marriages find that there is less gender difference in satisfactory long-term couples, probably due to the perceptual accord that they have attained over the years. Dobson (1983) noticed a less traditional division of household tasks in marriages among the elderly (in Brubaker, 1990). Both genders become more dependent on each other as they age (MacKinnon, MacKinnon & Franken, 1984; Trost, 1991; Levenson, Carstensen, & Gottman, 1993; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995). Holahan (1984) conducted a longitudinal study to compare marital attitudes of a group of 144 men and women in 1940 and the 115 participants who remained from the original group in 1981. He discovered that the respondents, over the forty years, had become more egalitarian in their attitudes toward role relationships in marriage, with greater change occurring for women. Schlesinger (1982) also

observed change from traditional expectations to shared responsibilities in a study that involved 129 Canadian long-term couples. Studies of older couples (Gilford, 1986; Huyck & Gutmann, 1992) suggest that men become more nurturing and women more assertive as they age. However, Keith, Schafer, and Wacker (1993) caution that there is no empirical support for the hypothesis that perceptions of equity will increase as a relationship progresses. Studies of perceptions of fairness over the life cycle (Peterson, 1990; Keith, Schafer, & Wacker, 1993) find that the feeling that women have equal influence in the relationship is low among women consistently throughout the life cycle.

Women also accommodate more in the marriage than men. Women adjust their intimacy levels to match those of their husbands, and not vice versa (Whitbourne & Ebmeyer, 1990). Authors like Gilford (1986), and Kaslow, Hansson, and Lundblad (1994) have found that older wives' marital satisfaction is more contingent upon their husbands' satisfaction than is the satisfaction of the husbands on their wives. Older wives' satisfaction with marriage is the strongest predictor of their life satisfaction. However, it is not the case for older husbands whose satisfaction emanates from other factors such as health, independent of their wives' contentment.

Limitations of long-term marriage studies

Major limitations of the studies of long-term marriages include the following:

1. Discrepancy between theory and research, and lack of conceptual linkages

A review of the existing literature on long-term marriages indicates that there is a lack of integration between theory and empirical research. Most of the theoretical literature

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on long-term marriages (Krantzler & Krantzler, 1992; Willi, 1992; Barbach & Geisinger, 1994) lacks support from solid empirical data. Although a variety of significant factors contributing to long-term marriages have been identified by qualitative and quantitative studies, an adequate theoretical framework to integrate these research findings has not been developed. Moreover, with the exception of Robinson and Blanton's study (1993), the identified concepts such as commitment and companionship are not conceptually linked. It is common in many studies of long-term marriages for the authors to lump together a large number of "differentiating" concepts which belong to different levels of conceptualization (cf. Rowe & Meredith, 1982; Cole, 1985; Fenell, 1993). The failure of studies in this area to build upon each other's results also leads to a lack of conceptual integration.

2. Limitations of cross-sectional studies

Most of the research on long-term marriages consists of cross-sectional studies which pose methodological difficulties. One of the major difficulties of cross-sectional studies is that they do not allow for an unambiguous conclusion about progressive changes, especially regarding attitude changes. Take for example, Huyck and Gutmann's (1992) conclusion that wives progress from a submissive towards an egalitarian style after their children have left home. The wives were reported to have moved from a patriarchal relationship acknowledging the husbands' authority to one that covertly challenged their husbands' authority. Since the study was cross-sectional in nature, such a conclusion is not well-grounded, since it may reflect cohort differences rather than changes in a relationship over time. Longitudinal studies have been regarded as more appropriate than cross-sectional ones

in assessing changes in a relationship over time. Yet, Glenn (1990) warns us not to idealize longitudinal studies, since they cannot do everything that cross-sectional studies fail to do. Nevertheless, longitudinal studies of long-term marriages are rare.

3. Sampling, sample size and selection limitations

An additional limitation of the research on long-term marriages is the sample methods that have been used in studies. Apart from those that extract data from a larger survey or longitudinal studies (cf. Weishaus & Field, 1988; Huyck & Gutmann, 1992), most of the studies adopt a non-random "convenience" sampling method through referrals, advertisements in newspapers, or institutions that can reach the target group. As a result, it is problematic whether the findings of these non-random studies can be generalized.

A traditional view, with some research support, is that religion is a key component of satisfactory long-term marital and familial relationships (MacKinnon, MacKinnon & Franken, 1984; Robinson & Blanton, 1993). We need to be aware that convenience sampling resulted in samples that were severely skewed with respect to religious affiliation; most of the long-term couples had a religious affiliation. Over 90% of the couples who participated in prominent studies of long-term marriages had such affiliation (Rowe & Meredith, 1982; Schlesinger, 1982; Kaslow, Hansson, & Lundblad, 1994). For example, all the 15 respondents in Robinson and Blanton's (1993) qualitative study had religious backgrounds. Fields' (1983) respondents were recruited from synagogues. Thus, a plausible explanation for the importance of religiosity among long-term couples is that most of the couples who were recruited through newspapers or referrals to the researchers had religious backgrounds,

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and were enthusiastic about participating in studies of long-term marriages.

In Lauer and Lauer's (1986b) study, where the sample was very close to the religious composition of the population at large, fewer than 5% of the respondents identified religious faith as important to their long-term commitment. Other studies in which the samples were collected through random sampling methodologies (Lee, 1988; Levenson, Carstensen, & Gottman, 1994) do not suggest that religiosity ensures a high-quality marriage. In sum, whether religious faith is an overriding contributing factor to long-term marriages remains to be proven.

4. Limitations of quantitative research

Most of the above-reviewed quantitative research looks for a group of variables that contribute to long-term marriages, and thus confronts the problem of "unmeasured selectivity" (Glenn, 1990, p.820). In many cases, the variables being tested and interpreted are self-selected by the authors (cf. Swensen, Eskew & Kohlhepp, 1984; Cole, 1985). Given the nature of quantitative research, the authors are the major stakeholders in interpreting the results of their findings. For example, Kaslow, Hansson, and Lundblad (1994) found that few items on the Dyadic Adjustment Scale differentiated between satisfied and dissatisfied long-term couples. They were unable to obtain further elaboration or explanation of these findings from the respondents. Most quantitative research did not allow their respondents to expand on their meaning and rationales for their answers (Levenson, Carstensen, & Gottman, 1994).

Selective interpretation of findings and overstatement of conclusions are typical in quantitative research (cf. Swensen, Eskew & Kohlhepp, 1984; Gottman & Krokoff, 1989;

Gottman & Levenson, 1992; Levenson, Carstensen, & Gottman, 1994). Objectivity, which is a salient claim of the positivist paradigm, is a myth. The presentation and interpretation of findings are very much coloured by the beliefs and emphases of the authors.

5. Lack of cultural perspectives in long-term marriage studies

Typical of many studies on long-term marriages is an exclusive focus on the internal qualities of the marital dyad. They neglect the influence of the wider socio-cultural context (Pléchaty, 1987). There is a serious lack of cultural diversity in the long-term marriage data. The sampling procedures that are used in studies such as advertisements in newspapers, recruitment from volunteers, and referral (snowball effects) recruit couples who belong to a particular group, the majority being white, middle-class and well-educated. Gottman and his colleagues (Levenson, Carstensen, & Gottman, 1993, 1994) have made an effort to construct a sample which represented the general population of the community they studied, but they were unsuccessful in their ethnic representation. The only empirical study that successfully incorporated different ethnic groups in its sample was Mackey and O'Brian's (1995) study, *Lasting Marriages*, which focused on various ethnic groups among working class North Americans. The present literature on long-term marriages represents the views of middle-class white couples.

6. Lack of gender perspectives in long-term marriage studies

A substantial number of long-term marriage studies look at gender differences in the perception of what contributes to long-term marriages. Unfortunately, the only achievement

of these studies is to generate a list of these differences without any further discussion of their implications for marital interactions. Although some authors put great emphasis on the changing roles of women as a result of the women's movement (Beavers, 1985; Lauer & Lauer, 1986b; Krantzler & Krantzler, 1992), the literature does not discuss in much depth the gender roles and relationships in long-term marriages.

A few theoretical writings on long-term marriages (Mace, 1982; Beavers, 1985; Lewis in Cole, 1985; Lauer & Lauer, 1986b; Krantzler & Krantzler, 1992) advocate that couples share power on the basis of gender equality. Krantzler and Krantzler (1992) opine that a successful long-term marriage is a "two-gether" marriage which comprises two equal partners who treat each other with fairness and respect. In sharing their lifetime experiences, the couples become more complete human beings. Unfortunately, this theoretical literature has not produced empirical evidence of the benefits of egalitarian relationships in long-term marriages.

Chapter Three

A Theoretical Formulation of an Empirical Study of Construction of

Culture and Gender in Long-term Marriages

"From birth human beings are exposed to a culturally relevant
environment."
(Coll, 1992, p. 3).

Humans are born in the context of culture. Whether they are consciously aware of it,

their behaviours and attitudes are shaped by the values, beliefs and practices of that particular

culture. In fact, most of the time people are unaware of the impact of culture on their

behaviour and experience. Even in cross-cultural studies, culture is always taken as a given.

It is always taken as an unexamined variable (Rohner, 1984; Betancourt & Lopez, 1993). In

this chapter, I use a social construction perspective to define the concept of culture, gender,

and the mutual constitution of these two concepts. Implications of the theoretical framework

for the empirical inquiry of long-term marriages and the research questions of my study are

addressed.

A social construction perspective for a mutual construction of gender and culture in

long-term marriages

Having its roots in interpretive social sciences, social construction theory contends

that reality is socially constructed. Our beliefs about the world are social inventions. The

social construction theory explicates the processes by which people describe and explain the

world in which they live (Gergen, 1982, 1985, 1992). This theory sees meanings as

emerging from interaction between people, an artifact of communal interchange (Cheung,

1997). As a result, gender-related behaviours are processes of individual and social construction. A socially constructed gender relationship is produced and reproduced through people's interactions (Deaux & Major, 1990). Gender behaviours may have different sets of meanings in different cultural contexts.

Our construction of reality is a representation of what is out there. Representations of reality are shared meanings that are derived from shared language, history, and culture (Gergen, 1985; Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1990). Social construction theory incorporates an appreciation of heterogeneity and historical contingencies. It recognizes that situational factors and social circumstances play critical roles in eliciting and suppressing gender-related characteristics (Rhode, 1990). It is important to appreciate evidence of changes over time and circumstances in order to comprehend the complexity of human interactions.

A social construction view of culture

There have been two opposing views about the ontological reality of culture – the cultural realists or idealists stress that culture has a concrete reality of its own, while the cultural nominalists stress that culture has no concrete reality. The former view is monolithic and static. The social construction perspective expands the concept of culture as highly variable systems of meanings which are learned and shared by a group of people at a particular time (Rohner, 1984). Culture is a fluid and relative notion. The concept of culture is interactive and historical. Culture is constructed and reconstructed by the people within it. It is also time and context bound (Clifford & Marcus, 1986). Culture is not an object to be described; neither is it a collection of symbols and meanings that can be definitely

interpreted. Culture is contestable, temporal and emergent (Clifford, 1986).

Contemporary cultural studies in both anthropology and psychology share the view that cross-cultural studies need to spell out the implicit meaning and the social construction of meaning across cultural groups (Asad, 1986; Shweder & Sullivan, 1993). Culture carries different sets of meanings in different contexts. Meanings are constructed and reconstructed through human history. The meaning of culture varies according to the socio-historical context of a particular time. Cultural meaning changes according to how the people within that culture ascribe meaning to it through what they do. Meanings are particular to different cultural groups. It is through interactions that meanings are shared and learned by a group of people in a particular time.

Culture is not only a shared ideational process, or a shared meaning system (Shweder & LeVine, 1984). More importantly, culture is a shared pattern of interactions and ways of life. In E.B. Tyler's (1891) classical definition of culture, culture is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (in Asad, 1986, p.141). What interests me are the capabilities and habits acquired by a member of a culture. Shweder and Sullivan (1993) hold that the process of learning and taking on the cultural capabilities and habits is so natural that it is nearly unreflexive and unconscious. They said, "acts of interpretation and representation can take place so rapidly and unconsciously that they are experienced by [people] as indistinguishable from consciousness itself, thereby creating the naive realist illusion that acts of consciousness are unmediated or direct" [italic mine] (p.507).

According to Shweder and Sullivan (1993), "cultural learning does not presuppose

an empty organism. Human beings enter the world already equipped with a complex and heterogeneous array of differentiated interpretive schemes, some of which are activated and transformed throughout the life course" (p.513). They continued to point out that "there may be aspects of psychological functioning that are empirical universals in infancy but are not cross-cultural universals for adults. It implies that some qualities are differentially lost or suppressed as a result of cultural learning, and the complexity and sophistication of the inherited past can be reworked or refashioned in different ways through participation in the practices (including language and discourse practices) of a local and particularizing cultural world" (p.513-4).

Culture is an interpreter of our experiences, parallel to a filter through which our understandings pass (Kerby, 1993). Cultural practice is something that we always take for granted. As D'Andrade (1984) argues, "people have a tendency to treat culturally created things as if they were natural things" (p. 92) As a result, the most experience-near (Shweder & Sullivan, 1993) way of understanding cultural practice is through interactions and reflections.

Culture is closely intertwined with concepts such as race and ethnicity. Very often they are used interchangeably and loosely. In my theoretical formulation, I treat culture, ethnicity and race as separate yet related concepts. Betancourt and Lopez (1993) have articulated a clear conceptual distinction between them. Race is identified by physical characteristics like skin and hair colour, facial features etc., e.g. Caucasoid, Mongoloid. Ethnicity is characterized by a common nationality, language and shared cultural background, e.g. Chinese, Italian, Russian.

Cultural conceptions can be located both outside a person and inside a person (Shweder and Sullivan, 1993). At a personal level, culture is internalized (Ho, 1995). Internalized culture, or in Triandis' term, subjective culture (1972), is the cultural influences operating within an individual that affect individual behaviours. In a multicultural country like Canada, different cultural systems can be internalized and coexist within a person's mind (Ho, 1995). A person is able to subscribe to various cultural identities simultaneously (Ho, 1987; Turner, 1991)[3]. For example, a Chinese immigrant can identify herself or himself as a "Chinese" as well as a "Canadian" at the same time.

A social construction view of gender

"Gender is an arbitrary, ever-changing, socially constructed set of attributes" (Worden & Worden, 1998, p.23). Gender is an invention of human societies (Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1990). The social construct of gender is a way of organizing everyday life, so natural that every day there are messages about what men and women are like. Very much like culture, we practise our gender behaviour without much reflection. Coward (1983) stresses that gender identity is a public representation of the discourses around sexual identity as integrated into the personality. She said, "identity is a discursive construction. This process of construction entails the modes of subjectivity constructed in discourse; consequently these modes are multiple and any individual would be subject to the workings of any number of discursive constructions" (p.283). Our agents of socialization like education and messages

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[3]   Ho (1987) has referred to this phenomenon as biculturalism. Turner (1991) has referred to it as a trans-context lifestyle.

in the media, transform male and female children into masculine and feminine adults. Societal values are creating and maintaining the social arrangements that sustain differences in men's and women's consciousness and behaviour. Gender symbolism is supported by the division of labour of men and women, in private homes and in society at large. Different cultures are creating the linguistic and conceptual structures that shape and discipline their people's image of male and female, as well as creating the meaning of gender itself.

Conventional cross-cultural studies make a clear distinction between sex and gender. Sex generally connotes the biological distinction between male and female while gender refers to the socio-cultural construction of men and women (Veevers, 1991). The social construction perspective argues that both are socially constructed. Yanagasiko and Collier (1990) contend that "it is impossible to know what gender would mean if it were entirely disconnected from sex and biological reproduction" (Yanagasiko and Collier 1990: 141).

A literature review of gender studies in the disciplines of anthropology, sociology, and psychology unveils an oppositional stance in gender relationships based primarily on a biological determinism of sex (Rosaldo & Lamphere, 1974; Chodorow, 1978; Ortner, 1981; Ortner & Whitehead, 1981; Gilligan, 1982; Freedman, 1990). The social construction approach to gender studies queries the assumption that men and women have different essential natures which are best understood in terms of opposition (Thorne, 1990). The concept of sex is as socially constructed as that of gender is. The symbolic and social processes that construe sex as a system of differences are themselves culturally constructed (Collier & Yanagasiko, 1987; Yanagasiko & Collier, 1990). How men and women interact depends on a variety of factors, and the oppositional dichotomy, considered fundamental by

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many feminist scholars, is just one of these factors. When we examine what contributes to the construction of gender and gender relations, we need to look at everything in society – some directly related to sexuality and some not.

Culture and gender are mutually constructed

The construction of gender cannot be separated from its cultural context. Gender and culture are mutually constituted. They represent a socially prescribed relationship, a process of historical and social constructions in a particular context. Gender behaviours manifest many cultural assumptions. The culturally ritualized interactions between men and women are so natural that the process of assuming these cultural behaviours is nearly unreflexive and unconscious (D'Andrade, 1984; Shweder & Sullivan, 1993).

Social context shapes knowledge and meanings. Meanings, mediated through languages, are always negotiated and regenerated by communication and action (Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1990). They are historically situated and are products of human interaction. As a result, meanings are neither static nor singular, but multiple and changing. Since meaning varies according to context, gender is constructed differently for people of different cultural backgrounds (John, Shelton, & Luschen, 1995). Moreover, these cultural meanings are constantly under challenge and revision (Huyck & Gutmann, 1992).

A social construction view of understanding marital behaviours emphasizes that women and men make choices about their actions. An active proactivism replaces passive determinism. Individual men and women choose different responses on varying occasions with varying degrees of self-awareness. Reciprocally, their choices are shaped by the other

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people involved and the prevailing societal and cultural norms (Hochschild, 1989;

Yanagasiko & Collier, 1990).

A Theoretical Formulation of the Mutual Construction Process of Culture and Gender

in Marriage

"Marriage is a culturally created entity." (D'Andrade, 1984, p.91). Every society

prescribes ways for its members to define and perceive reality (Berger & Kellner, 1991;

Neimeyer & Mahoney, 1995; Freedman & Combs, 1996). Marriage, in today's society, is

a cultural act in which two strangers come together and redefine themselves in a new

relationship (Berger & Kellner, 1991). In marital behaviours, culture is internalized (Ho,

1995). The specific expectations, beliefs and identities that they have internalized from

society and bring to the marriage will guide their feeling and behaviours in the marriage

(Sheinberg & Penn, 1991; Minuchin & Nichols, 1993). Their physical and psychological

tastes are also derived from their cultural experiences (Schwartz, 1994). Most of the time the

manifestation of socio-cultural behaviours in marital interactions is not at a conscious level;

couples are mostly unreflexive about the cultural influences on their behaviours.

Marital behaviours manifest a couple's cultural beliefs concerning gender role

expectations. Deaux and Major (1990) conceptualize three basic factors that shape an

individual's behaviour in social interaction: (1) the self-concept of the individual system, (2)

expectations of others, and (3) contextual influences. Expectations link beliefs to actions, and

shape the form of interpersonal interaction to constitute a self-fulfilling prophecy. The role

assignments and behaviours in marital relationships are highly affected by the partners'

perceptions and expectations of each other's gender role, and by what they believe their

partner perceives and expects (Hiller & Philliber, 1986; Deaux & Major, 1990).

An analysis of the construction of

marital relationships illuminates the

interaction between the cultural systems,

social systems and personality systems.

Couples form their relationship and family

according to cultural scripts. Worden and

Culture

Worden (1998) conceptualize the

Families of Origin

construction of culture and gender in

marriage. According to the authors, there

Couple's personal
histories

are three channels of cultural transmission

of gender values: (1) vertical – from a

Figure 1 A conceptual framework of the cultural influences on gender in
marriage
(Modified from Worden & Worden, 1998, p.24.)

person's family of origin, including the

extended family network, (2) horizontal –

from a person's peers and cohort group,

and (3) oblique – from society in general through media, education and discourses. I

modified the authors' conceptual framework of the mutual constitution of gender and culture

as illustrated in a series of embedded circles of influence (figure 1). The outermost ring

represents the oblique influence of culture. This ring of influence includes the ethnic

influences as portrayed by Worden and Worden (1998), such as religion and cultural history.

The next circle represents the couple's own families of origin, and the innermost double-

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circle represents the couple's individual identity and personality system. Gender identity is the most central and organizing schema of a person's internalized self-concept (Worden & Worden, 1998). A person is influenced by the inter-generational transmission process through the family. Cultural values and expectations are translated to the subjective identity of a person, both consciously and unconsciously, and are brought into the marriage.

Worden and Worden (1998) view a couple as two gendered individuals searching for consensual intimacy. In the process of the construction of their relationship, the two partners review the cultural scripts about being male or female in light of their circumstantial needs, experiences, and personalities. The couple reshapes cultural moulds to fit their individual and conjugal needs. The couple is actively engaged in constructing their relationship within a particular socio-cultural context (Mackie, 1995; Worden & Worden, 1998). The ongoing experiences of the two partners shape and construct a reality that is meaningful to both parties. The values and expectations of the couple are dynamically under evaluation and reevaluation.

Marital relationships exist in a temporal context. The ongoing construction of a couple's relationship is influenced by things that happen around them, such as economic, political, social, and financial matters. The perception of marital satisfaction also changes with time and context. The gender relationship in marriage undergoes constant challenges as more women continue to work outside the home, and the ideology of the women's movement takes root in society. Contemporary couples are, to various extents, affected by the changes in the socio-cultural environment around them. These changes have an impact on their views and expectations regarding gender roles in a marital relationship.

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Research questions

The central question in my dissertation research is: How do the cultural construction and reconstruction of gender relationships in marriage weave satisfactory long-term marriages? Adopting the above-mentioned social construction theoretical perspective and a naturalistic/interpretive research methodology (see the next chapter), I pose the following research questions in my cross-cultural study of the construction of culture and gender in satisfactory long-term marriages:

(1)   What does marriage and marital satisfaction mean, and how does marital satisfaction reflect gender expectations among the two different cultural groups (Euro Canadian and Hong Kong Chinese Canadian)?

(2)   How do males and females, in their socio-cultural contexts, construct their meanings and roles of being husband and wife in order to achieve long-term marital satisfaction?

(3)   How do long-term couples reconcile their differences in perceptions and expectations of their gender roles in marriage, and to what extent do their cultural backgrounds affect their negotiation processes?

(4)   How do gender construction and reconstruction by the long-term couples manifest the characteristics described in the long-term marriage research literature, which contribute to long-term marital satisfaction?

(5)   How did the immigration process affect the Chinese couples' reconstruction of their gender relationship, and how did the process affect their marital satisfaction?

Conclusion

Marital satisfaction varies according to cultural expectations. Empirical studies on marriage rarely address the impact of culture and gender on marital satisfaction. Literature on long-term marriages which tackles both categories of culture and gender is nearly nonexistent. Culture is invisible, and only by contrasting different cultural contexts can distinctive cultural factors be brought to the surface. Cross-cultural studies on long-term marriages are required in order to highlight the cultural forces that shape gender relationships in marriage.

The proposed theoretical perspective, which adopts both organizing principles of culture and gender, makes a shift by exploring marriages in terms of strengths rather than pathology. In examining the qualities of long-term satisfactory marriages, the empirical inquiry moves beyond the dominant approach of looking for a group of variables which contribute to long-term marriages. The theoretical perspective makes possible an empirical study, with the research questions posed, to examine the process of construction of gender relationships in a cultural context, and through cultural comparison, to locate factors that contribute to long-term marriages.

Chapter Four

Research Design and Methodology

The purpose of my research was to explicate the complex construction of culture and gender among couples pursuing long-term marital satisfaction. Based upon the principles of the naturalistic/interpretive research paradigm, I used a "dual research strategy" (Gibbs, 1996, p.145) by blending quantitative measures with qualitative interviews. I conducted in-depth, qualitative interviews with satisfied long-term couples from the Euro Canadian and Chinese Canadian cultures to understand how these couples achieve their gender relations in their cultural context. Narrative analysis is the method I adopted to analyse narrative themes and meanings in couples' recounting of their stories about their marriages of thirty years or more. The construction of gender relationships in marriage is embedded in the context of everyday life and influenced by socio-cultural forces. As discussed in Chapter Three, it takes place mostly without reflection. Holland & Kilpatrick (1993) remark that narrative analysis is one of the most promising approaches to studying and understanding how behaviour and relationship are influenced by culture, and especially how people develop meaning in the diverse events of their daily experiences.

In this chapter, I first provide my rationale for using both qualitative and quantitative methods under a naturalistic/interpretive paradigm. Secondly, I present the selection criteria for couple respondents. Thirdly, I describe the recruitment and data collection procedures. Fourthly, I discuss the narrative analysis methodology. Fifthly, I discuss the interpretation of quantitative measurements under a naturalistic/interpretive paradigm. Sixthly, I discuss the trustworthiness of my research design and finally, the challenges that I faced.

The blending of quantitative and qualitative methods

The choice of paradigm reflects a researcher's philosophical position about ontology (nature of reality) and epistemology (theory of knowledge). In social work empirical research, both qualitative and quantitative methods are legitimate (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Patton, 1980; Bryman, 1984; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) and compatible methodologies (Rothe, 1993; Rubin & Babbie, 1993; Anastas & Macdonald, 1994; Riessman, 1993, 1994).[4]

Under a naturalistic/interpretive paradigm, I used the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) (Spanier, 1976)[5] to screen satisfactory long-term married couples, and the Role Orientation (ROR), subscale of the Marital Satisfaction Inventory (Snyder, 1989) to understand the gender role perceptions of couples (the two scales and their psychometric properties are in Appendix V). In long-term marriage research, the DAS, a 32-Likert type scale, is the most widely adopted and highly recommended instrument (Sporakowski & Axelson, 1984), with high reliability and validity, for measuring couple adjustment and

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[4] Please refer to my research proposal dated August 1996, with regard to my arguments for the compatibility of both qualitative and quantitative methods under a naturalistic/interpretive paradigm.

[5] A revised DAS (RDAS) was published by Busby et al. (1995) which included only 14 items from the original DAS. By using a confirmatory factor analysis, a clear construct hierarchy was delineated. Seven first-order scales were created which were combined to create three second-order concepts of consensus, satisfaction, and cohesion. The three factors combined to form a global factor of marital adjustment. However, since the RDAS has not been verified in the Chinese version, I used Spanier's original version.

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satisfaction (cf. Lauer & Lauer, 1986a, 1990; Whitbourne & Ebmeyer, 1990; Fenell, 1993; Kaslow & Hammerschmidt, 1992; Kaslow, Hansson & Lundblad, 1994). The higher the DAS score, the higher the adjustment and satisfaction of the marital partner. The ROR measures attitudes regarding conventional and unconventional gender role preferences (Snyder, Lachar & Wills, 1988; Snyder, 1989). The ROR consists of 25 items with yes and no answers, and the higher the score the more traditional the marital partner's perception of gender role. The ROR also served as a supplementary scale to the DAS in order to sensitize the respondents to talking about marital sex roles. The adopted quantitative scales, the DAS and ROR, were used as triangulation (Creswell, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) which contributes to different aspects of understanding the phenomenon of the construction of marital relationships among long-term couples. In-depth interviewing, using a narrative approach, is the major tool for asking the long-term couple respondents to recollect their memories and recount their marital experiences.

Criteria for choosing interview respondents

Based upon the rationale discussed in Chapter One, I selected five long-term couples from each of the two cultural groups who volunteered for an in-depth interview. Selection criteria were the following:

(1)   The couples had to be heterosexual, in their <u>first marriage,</u> and married between <u>30</u> <u>to 35</u> years at the time of the interview;

(2)   Five couples had to be of Euro Canadian descent, been <u>born in Canada,</u> and use <u>English</u> as their first language;

(3)   Five couples had to be Hong Kong Chinese immigrant couples (for simplicity sake,

referred to as Chinese couples in subsequent chapters) who had immigrated to

Canada between 3 and 12 years before the interview, and use Cantonese (dialect of

southern China and the major language spoken in Hong Kong) as their first language;

(4)   All ten couples had to have adequate marital adjustment and satisfaction, according

to their scores on the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS). Cut-off scores were 110 for

Euro Canadians and 100 for Chinese couples (the rationale for the choice of cut-off

scores is given in Appendix V).

Recruitment and data collection procedures

Recruiting potential respondents from different sources

Recruitment strategies included putting up posters in adult recreational centres in

Kitchener-Waterloo, placing an advertisement in the local newspaper, and contacting

churches, Chinese associations, social service agencies and related organizations in

Kitchener-Waterloo and Toronto. Invitation letters were sent to the agencies (Appendix I)

and followed up with telephone contact. These agencies were asked to locate potential

couples who met my selection criteria for participation in the study. I approached the

Kitchener-Waterloo organizations for referrals of both Euro Canadian and Chinese couples

and the Toronto agencies for only Chinese couples.

An invitation letter (Appendix II) was sent to potential couples to explain my

research objectives and procedure. An abridged Chinese version of the invitation letter was

used to address the needs of a few Chinese couples who were not very proficient in English.

Couples who responded positively to the letter were administered the DAS for screening purposes and as well the Role Orientation (ROR). It took about thirty minutes for the couples to fill out the two scales individually. Both scales were self-administered. The Chinese version of the DAS (C-DAS) was used for the Chinese couples. The C-DAS has acceptable reliability and validity (Shek et al., 1993, 1994; Shek, 1995). The Chinese couples received a Chinese translation of the ROR along with the original English statements. Of the ten Chinese couples who responded to the DAS, only five met my above-mentioned cut-off criteria of the DAS. Only one of the six Euro Canadian couples who were screened did not meet the cut-off scores. In my invitation letter (Appendix II), I stated "I shall invite you to participate in the second phase of in-depth interviews when certain criteria can be matched with the Hong Kong Chinese/Euro Canadian counterparts." I informed couples who were not invited for the in-depth interview that their criteria could not be matched for the second phase of interviewing, and I thanked them for their help in the first phase.

Methodology used in the Chinese translation of the ROR

There is no Chinese version of the ROR. Since I only had a pool of fifteen to twenty couples, the sample was too small to conduct reliability and validity tests on a translated scale. I used a back-translation method (Rubin & Babbie, 1993) to translate the English statements of the ROR into Chinese. First, I translated the twenty-five items of the scale into Chinese. Following Asad's suggestions (Asad, 1986), I used Chinese, my mother language, to translate the original meaning of the concepts of the ROR into a comparable meaning in

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Chinese that could be understood by the respondents in their cultural context. Next, I invited two persons to translate my Chinese version back into English without having the original English version of the ROR. I compared the discrepancies between the translated versions and the scale's original version.

The two individuals who completed the back translation included a woman who lived in Toronto, and a man who lived in Waterloo. Both were Canadian immigrants, with university education, and were born in Hong Kong. They were proficient in both English and Chinese. Because of time constraints, I could only discuss the areas of disagreement concerning the translation with the woman translator. Together, we chose the appropriate wordings and made the revisions to the Chinese version.

The Chinese couples reported no problems during the screening process regarding the language in the ROR. Since most of the respondents are proficient in both languages, they read both versions before they filled out the scale.

The interviewing process

The selected couples were asked to sign a consent form (see Appendix III) before I proceeded with the interviews. The in-depth interviews consisted of at least one individual interview with each spouse and a joint interview with the couple. The average duration of interviews was from one to one and a half hours, with a few lasting as long as two hours.

In both cultural groups, I interviewed the wife individually first, then the husband. A joint interview was arranged a week after the individual interviews. During that week, I listened to the two individual interview tapes, and came up with a few questions pertaining

to my interest, to be pursued in the joint interview. I conducted a second individual interview with a Chinese wife and a Euro Canadian wife. At the end of the joint interview, I asked the couples to fill out a feedback form (Appendix IV) in English and Chinese for the respective cultural groups. Verbal feedback was also collected, the duration of which depended on the availability of time.

The research design evolved with on-going refinement and adaptation during the interview process. A few important changes need to be noted:

(1)   I recruited a Chinese couple who had been married for 36 years at the time of the interview, as I had difficulty recruiting suitable respondents from my contacted sources. The couple was highly recommended by the social worker in a Chinese club for being a 'satisfied' couple. Because I had difficulty recruiting a Euro Canadian couple in which the wife was a homemaker, I included a couple in which the husband's DAS score was 109, one point lower than the cut-off score.

(2)   The cut-off score for the DAS was raised to 107 from the original 100 for the Chinese couples. I interviewed a few couples with a cut-off score lower than 107 and among them, one of the spouses expressed dissatisfaction with the marriage. These couples were excluded from the study. The choice of a cut-off score of 107 in the DAS concurred with suggestions made by Crane, Busby and Larson (1991).

(3)   My recruitment strategy was a purposeful sampling (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Gilgun, Daly, & Handel, 1992), with years of marriage, marital satisfaction, years of stay in Canada (for Chinese) and Canada as country of birth (for Euro Canadian) as the major criteria for selection. A comparable strategy was used to recruit both Euro

Canadian and Chinese couples, based upon the analytic reflection I did during the process of data collection (Gilgun, Daly, & Handel, 1992; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994):

(a)   Because more of the Chinese couples were non-Christians than their Euro Canadian counterparts, I recruited the last Chinese couple from a church to ensure they were a Christian couple.

(b)   Since the first two couples I interviewed had children, I thought that the remaining couples should have children as well since couples with children are different in their marital developmental cycle from those without.

(c)   During the course of interviews, I determined that the wife working outside the home was an essential factor in the meaning-making of gender roles among couples. In one of the Hong Kong couples the wife had never worked outside the home, and in another the wife stopped working after the first child was born. Since none of my Euro Canadian couples had such characteristics, I looked for a Euro Canadian couple in which the wife had never worked outside the home; I succeeded in recruiting such a couple through an advertisement in the local newspaper.

Of the five Euro Canadian couples I interviewed, three were recruited through a church, one was referred by a friend, and one was recruited from a local newspaper. They lived in or near a mid-size city in southwestern Ontario. Four of the Chinese couples were recruited from two Chinese-speaking seniors' clubs in Toronto. The last Chinese couple was recruited from a church in Toronto. All eligible couples were cooperative and were able to follow through all of the interviews.

Oakley (1981) makes an analogy between qualitative interviewing and marriage: "Interviewing is rather like a marriage: everybody knows what it is, an awful lot of people do it, and yet behind each closed front door there is a world of secrets" (in Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.374). Oakley's analogy is relevant to both my research interviewing and the study of marriage. In discovering the "world of secrets," I tried to interview the couples in a respectful way and listened to what they were willing to share with me. I treated the long-term couple respondents as participants/collaborators with me to co-construct meaning-making stories of their marital experiences.

Narrative and narrative analysis

Narrative, an ancient concept recently become popular, is commonly understood as story. Narrative comes from a Latin word *gnarus* meaning knowledge, that is, a telling history (McCabe & Peterson, 1991). According to McCabe and Peterson, "We are the stories we tell" (1991, p.x). Through narrative, people translate knowing into telling. Narrative is a vital human activity, a mode through which people explore meaning and express their understanding of events and experiences. According to Polkinghorne (1988), being human is more "a type of meaning-generating activity than a kind of object" (p.125). Narrative provides a root metaphor for understanding a framework of the construction of past occurrences in terms of events (Mishler, 1991; Sarbin, 1986a; Labov, 1972). Narrative is also a primary form of expression in which people present their life events in a coherent and meaningful theme.

Riessman (1991) points out that "not all narratives in interviews are stories in the

linguistic sense of the term" (in Riessman, 1993, p.18). In my study, narrative includes stories, interview conversations (between the researcher and the respondents, and between the respondents in the case of joint interviews), views and metaphors, and even non-lexical utterances. I agree with Riessman's (1993) view that "personal narratives are produced in conversation" (p.31). In the present research experience, I found that narratives are embedded in the interview conversations which might take different forms of narrative genres (categories) – part being stories and part being views, which are the respondents' evaluations of their lived experiences. Even non-lexical utterances were useful clues for understanding the meanings the respondents attached to their marital experience.

Personal narratives are comprised of multiple realities, and narrative meaning is a selective reconstruction (Riessman, 1993; Cheung, 1998). What couples shared in the interviews was the result of: (1) what they remembered as meaningful and significant in their marital relationship; (2) what they considered comfortable in presenting in the context of interview; and (3) the interaction between I as the interviewer and researcher, and the couples as the respondents (Mishler, 1986a). As Holland & Kilpatrick (1993) point out, past events are not meaningful in and of themselves, but rather are given significance by the overall choices made by the storyteller. The couples' narrative accounts reflect a coherent sequencing that structures the couple's life events into a meaningful whole that presents structure, purpose and direction (Cheung, 1998). Becvar and Becvar (1993) describe storytelling as a process that "involves a continual reimagining of the future and reinterpretation of the past to give meaning to the present, remembering best those events that prefigured what followed, forgetting those that proved to have no meaning within the

narrative." (p. 148). Cohler (1982) believes that a personal narrative recounted at any time in a person's course of life represents "the most internally consistent interpretation of past, experienced present, and anticipated future at that time." (in Mishler, 1986a, p.149). What the respondents revealed in the interview represents a reality, though not the only reality (Riessman, 1990).

Gee (1991) points out that narrative represents human memory, history, and tradition. Narrative reflects cultural values and social meaning (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Cheung, 1988). Stories, organized by plots and themes, carry the values of embedded culture by pursuing what is positive and avoiding what is negative (Polkinghorne, 1988; Riessman, 1993). Although respondents narrate in terms that seem natural, narrative analysis is a method that analyses the cultural and historical situation of these narratives (Riessman, 1993).

My goal in narrative interviewing was to elicit stories of the couples' marital events in order to illuminate how these couples constructed and reconstructed their gender relationships, and in turn, to answer the posed research questions. According to Mishler (1986a), stories are more likely to occur in interviews if the interviewer asks questions in ways that invite respondents to speak in their own voices, allows them to control the introduction and flow of topics, and encourages them to extend their responses.

Sharing the essential features of qualitative research methodology, narrative analysis is one of the methods which aims to describe subjective experiences and understand the meaning of interaction (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Congruent with the goal of qualitative analysis, narrative analysis focuses on the context, more so than the content, of what is said

by the respondents (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). The naturalistic/interpretive tradition of

narrative analysis is derived from phenomenology and literary theories (Sarbin, 1986; Gee,

1991a; Riessman, 1993, 1994). Compared to other qualitative methods, narrative analysis

devotes much attention to preserving the text as it views stories that people tell as

representations of human lived experiences (Riessman, 1993). Contrasted with the grounded

theory method, narrative analysis emphasizes reading the text as a whole piece. The

grounded theory approach is criticized for fragmenting the text by taking snippets of a

response, and reducing data to codes and categories for interpretation and generalization

(Riessman, 1993)[6].

There is much diversity in narrative research, and there is no standard way of

conducting narrative analysis (Mishler, 1986b, 1991; Riessman, 1993; Coffey & Atkinson,

1996). Whether the priority of analysis is the structure of how people construct their stories,

the linguistic analysis of meaning, or the interactional context, depends on the researcher's

purpose in the analysis. In my study, I chose Mishler's (1986a) interactional narrative

interviewing and Riessman's (1993) narrative analysis schema to conduct my narrative

analysis. I also used the method of Agar and Hobbs (1982) to analyse themes that emerged

as a result of the meaning-making process that the respondents experience in their marriages

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[6] Lincoln and Guba (1985) criticized Glaser and Strauss' grounded theory method as
working under a mainstream natural science paradigm rather than a naturalistic
paradigm. The grounded theory method shows strong signs of the natural science
conceptions of building substantive and formal theories by stressing abstract concepts
and the interrelationship of the concepts rather than respecting the coherence of the
texts.

in order to understand the impact of culture and gender in long-term marital satisfaction. Mishler (1986a) and Riessman (1993) also introduce the use of narrative analysis in understanding the respondents' nuances of speech, social and interactional contexts of generating narratives, and social discourses in a particular cultural group. I analysed language when such effort shed light on the nuance of the meaning in the two different cultures. The narrative analysis schema that I used attends to three analytically distinct but interdependent functions of a narrative[7]: (1) the ideational function (content); (2) the interpersonal function (role relationships between speakers that are realized in the talking); and (3) the textual function (structure, i.e. how something is said) (Mishler, 1986a; Riessman, 1993). The specificities of the four-stage methodology are elaborated in the illustration below.

Research process

The following chart summarizes the essential steps in narrative analysis:

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[7]The ideas are borrowed from Halliday's systematic theory of grammar. For details see Mishler, 1986a, pp. 76-77.

Step four:
Presentation of results to the readers

Step three:
Theoretical abstraction

Step two:
Analysis of narrative through
transcribing narrative experiences
and interpreting meaning

Step one:
Representation of narrative through
researcher-respondent interaction
during in-depth interviews

Primary and daily experiences of long-
term married couples

Figure 2: The inductive research process

<u>Step one: The researcher-respondent interface: Attending to experiences and telling experiences</u>

Mishler (1986a & 1986b) emphasizes the interview relationship as an interaction between the researcher-listener and respondent-narrator. Authors like Labov (1972), Mishler (1986a), Riessman (1993), and Chambon (1995) emphasize the importance of the researcher or interviewer as a co-participant in the creation of narrative text. The co-creation of narrative text is jointly produced through the interaction between the interviewer and respondents, situated in a particular time and context. My mode of asking questions definitely influenced the generation of narrative and respondents' story production.

The narrative account in an interview is a self-representation. Marriage is a private place. As mentioned above regarding the selective nature of narrative, the researcher cannot fully capture how couples behave in private. What the respondents tell during the interview is a representation of what they want to reveal to the researcher. Respondents present an image of their past experiences in particular contexts to claim *identities* and *construct lives* (Mishler, 1986b; Riessman, 1993; Cheung, 1998). Their representation of their experience depicts limited portraits of the respondents. The researcher's job is to make inferences on the basis of partial information (Mishler, 1986b; Riessman, 1993). During the process of the interview, the researcher's major role is to encourage and facilitate narrativization, or storytelling.

Although the researcher and respondents are collaborators in making the story known, it is important to note the asymmetrical power relationship between researcher and respondent. When researchers are able to share control with the interviewee by using

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nontyrannical words (Fine & Turner, 1991) and questions, and approach the interview as conversation, with open or closed questions, they can generate narrative (Riessman, 1993). During the interviews, the following types of questions helped elicit stories:

- Can you walk me through your marriage and talk about any changes that took place?

- What marital satisfaction do you experience in your marriage?

- What maintained your marriage for so many years?

- What is your experience of being a wife or husband in the marriage?

Some useful follow-up questions were "what happened then?" and "Can you give me some examples?"

Narrative analysis allows new research strategies to emerge and further unfold during the researcher-respondent interaction process. After interviewing three couples who represented both cultural groups, I found that the respondents had difficulties talking about their marital experience. After reflection with one of my advisors, I introduced the question "how often do you think about your marriage?" at the beginning of the remaining interviews. I discovered that a lot of the respondents did not always think about their marriages. This finding helped me to trust the process of asking more about the couples' daily experiences in their marriages.

Another important realization during the interview process was that more responses were elicited from Chinese couples if I asked indirect questions, but this was not the case for the Euro Canadians, especially during the joint interview. I began to ask indirect questions such as, "if you were to tell your children today what, based on your own experience, are the most important elements that contribute to a satisfactory long-term marriage, what would

you tell them?" They were very enthusiastic about responding since they enjoyed talking about their children. Another indirect gender question I used was "I just want to make a hypothetical case. If your role were exchanged today, that is, the wife became husband, and vice versa, what would you do in your new role?" Thus, during the interviewing process, I developed two approaches to asking questions – a direct approach and an indirect one – which were conceptually similar, but posed in different ways according to the ethnic idiosyncrasies of the respondents.

Language constructs the structure of social reality (Anderson and Goolishan, 1988; Neimeyer & Mahoney, 1995). As Anderson and Goolishan (1988) remark, "we create the objects of our worlds with and through language" (p. 378). Language reflects one's thinking process. The language used in interviews thus influences the respondents' response. I interviewed my respondents in their first language, that is, English for Euro Canadians, and Cantonese for Chinese. A point worth noting is that two Chinese couples and one Chinese man respondent used both Chinese and English, which is a common phenomenon for educated Hong Kong Chinese who were educated with the English system in Hong Kong. I only mimicked their use of English words in my probing. I maintained the use of Cantonese to pose my questions in the interviews.

The structure of a story is made up of a beginning, a middle, and an end (Sarbin, 1986; Mishler, 1986; Riessman, 1994). In the present research, the thick plot of the respondents' stories was mostly co-created by myself as the researcher, and the couples as respondents. A respondent might give snippets of events and digress to another line of thought during the interview. I asked follow-up questions to bring the respondents back to

their original point to develop their stories further, when I determined that the story might touch on the construction of gender relationships. As I continued to probe, and once the respondents developed more trust in me during the interview, they could tell numerous stories that described different events which illustrated their lived experience in the construction of gender relationships in marriage.

Step two: Analysis of narrative through transcribing experiences and interpreting meaning

The narrative analysis method I adopted focuses on interpreting gender and cultural meanings in their embedded societal context, by outlining themes of the interview texts of respondents' marital experiences in the form of different narrative genres. Riessman (1993) remarks that respondents may tell their experiences through different forms of narrative genres (her technical definition is in Riessman, 1990, p.77). I identified five or more narrative genres in my interview texts – stories, views, metaphors, referential narratives, and non-lexical utterances:

1. Stories

Many researchers find that stories are a prominent and naturally occurring feature of respondents in search of meaning (Cohler, 1982; Mishler, 1986b; Gergen & Gergen, 1986; Polkinghorne, 1988; Becvar & Becvar, 1993; Riessman, 1993, 1994). Narrative analysis focuses on the chronological, consequential, and thematic sequencing of a story (Riessman, 1993).

Although similar questions were asked in the interview, the storytelling as revealed

in responses varied among the respondents. Of the four groups of respondents – Chinese men, Chinese women, Euro Canadian men, and Euro Canadian women – the Chinese women told stories in the most natural way. They easily took the floor and told lengthy stories. Eighty per cent of the narrative of at least three Chinese women respondents were in the form of stories. The Chinese men told the least stories. They expressed more views about their marital experience. For example, four Chinese husbands used either Christian principles or Chinese philosophies to answer my questions. Sometimes I could treat these responses as metaphors. With more probing of respondents to draw out their story lines, they were able to tell me stories of their lived experience.

The Euro Canadian men were more analytical, and three of them were very articulate in answering my questions. Both Euro Canadian men and women were more ready to express their views, that is, evaluate their lived experience, before they actually told the details of their stories with further probing. Both Euro Canadian husbands and wives could join together in their joint interview to tell their marital stories. In individual interviews, in general, Euro Canadian women told more stories than Euro Canadian men.

I adopted Labov's (1972, 1982) structural analysis of how speech events are organized to understand the structure of respondents' stories. This approach explores the social meaning of a course of action and reactions through an analysis of the sequence of narrative clauses which is highly recommended by Mishler (1986b) and Riessman (1993). The analytical scheme interprets the significance of events from the following six common elements (Labov, 1972):

(1)   Abstract: what was this about?

(2)   Orientation: who, when, what, where?

(3)   Complicating action: then what happened?

This part is the core narrative – sequence of events. In the narrative, all the other elements can be placed anywhere, can be absent, or in any chronological sequence in the conversation (Mishler, 1986a). However, in the core narrative, the logical sequencing of the events is significant.

(4)   Evaluation: so what?

It conveys the narrator's appraisal of the significance and meaning of what happened. It provides clues about why the story is told.

(5)   Resolution/result: what finally happened?

(6)   Coda: rounding up of the story.

The narrator returns the perspective to the present.

2. Views

Related to stories, another typical narrative genre used by my respondents was views and comments (for simplicity sake, I use "view" in subsequent discussions). In most cases, respondents' views represented their evaluation of their lived experience, which is the fourth element in the above-mentioned structural analysis of a story (Labov, 1997). This was the case, for example, in an exchange with a Euro Canadian husband:

01 M: Umhum. Recalling your marriage of 34 years,
02 do you find there is change over time,
03 or did it stay pretty much the same over time?

04 H: Oh, I think {pause}

05 after you're married a certain number of years [umhum]
06 you, you realize well,
07 of course (?) the change in society now
08 where, where women have more say in what goes on [umhum] and,
09 like when we were first married 30 years ago,
10 it was different.[8]

Instead of telling the story of change in his marriage to answer my question (lines 1-3), the husband gave his view about society's change with regard to women. Paying attention to this husband's use of pronouns, he started using "I" (line 4) and immediately changed to "you" (line 5) when he presented a general view, but he shifted to "we" (line 9) when he shifted his view back to his marriage. With my follow-up question, he then started to recount his story of change:

M: Yeah. I'd like hearing more.

H: I don't really know, like that, well I guess that's partly where, maybe when we were talking respect before, that comes in that you, you know, that I realize that {wife} is an individual and has her own thoughts and her ideas and I guess that's probably one of the biggest changes that has happened......

At other times, respondents' views exposed the discrepancy between their beliefs and behaviour. The most obvious discrepancy identified in the Euro Canadian respondents' narratives is that between beliefs and practices concerning household task performance, while for the Chinese, this discrepancy is between their beliefs about the meaning of sharing in marriage and their actual marital behaviours. Stories rarely incorporate consistency in

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[8]In the following presentations of respondents' verbatim, M represents myself Maria, the researcher; H - husband, W- wife. {}encloses nonverbal responses, and [ ] my response while the respondent is speaking. (?) marks gaps where the words could not be made out.

experience, but leave gaps and inconsistencies. These are the views of the respondents. The researcher's task is to identify gaps and inconsistencies, piece them together and make meaning from the seemingly disconnected or even paradoxical narratives.

A Chinese wife underscored her principle of *"don't talk about divorce"* in her narrative, in response to my question regarding the essential elements that contributed to her long-term marriage. She was very satisfied with her marital relationship. She told her husband that she would not divorce him and would find him as her husband in her next life. She passed on this principle to her daughter and advised her not to be impulsive and cry out 'divorce' during quarrels with her spouse. Paradoxically, she threatened her own husband with divorce when she seized the decision-making power over money from him. Feeling frustrated with the way her husband handled money ten years into their marriage, she caused a "revolution," in her own terms, which she regarded as critical to their marital relationship. She remarked, *"if he didn't agree, maybe it could lead to our divorce."* Was it not paradoxical to use the threat of divorce to maintain her marital relationship? I do not think so. The seemingly paradoxical messages of the threat of a divorce and *"don't talk about divorce"* were both representations of her reality, in different contexts. She would not use divorce as a threat unless there was an issue that involved a critical change in her marriage.

3. Metaphors

Both Chinese and Euro Canadian couples used metaphors to describe their marital experience. Metaphors represent the gist of their stories, similar to the poetic narrative structure described by Riessman (1993). For example, a Euro Canadian wife told the story

about the couple's separation and their renewed relationship after their reunification. The

metaphor she used paints the picture of the couple's renewed relationship and her satisfaction

from the renewal:

W: it's like a forest fire you know, [haha]
you have you have this forest grown
and then it all burns down,
and then you have [you grow again] new growth
but the new growth is thicker [yeah],
it's better.
And that's what happened.
That's really what happened.

4. Referential narratives

I have not encountered the genre of referential narrative in narrative literature. What

I mean by referential narrative is that the narrator derives views from comparing his/her

situation to stories of others. I found that referential narrative is a typical narrative genre

used by the Chinese couples, both husbands and wives, to form views about their marital

relationship. A Chinese wife told the story of her female immigrant friend's frustration with

her husband's irresponsible behaviour. This husband was so upset about his jobless

experience after immigration that he went back to Hong Kong to pursue his career and left

his wife – my respondent's friend – to take care of the two young children and to move the

family to a new house. This particular respondent and three other Chinese female

respondents drew upon other people's stories to conclude that their own husband was nicer.

Such comparison also helped these wives to accept more of their husbands' shortcomings.

I found that some Euro Canadian couple respondents also used referential narratives,

but they drew references in a more general sense. Unlike the Chinese wives who gathered

specific stories from their acquaintances or from what they saw or heard, one Euro Canadian wife used a referential narrative to draw references from the broader societal context. In approximately eight places of her individual narrative, this respondent talked about her satisfaction in marriage by making reference to how other men in her generation would behave, compared to her husband. Her narrative reflects her awareness of gender discourse in her society. She spoke three times of her satisfaction with her husband's encouraging her to go back to work after the children were born. The following is one of her examples of drawing reference:

W: he has always encouraged me to work,
where I think some people in our age group,
the husbands want them at home [yeah],
doing everything for them [umhum].

5. Non-lexical utterances

Non-lexical utterances like "hmmhmm" "uh-huh" in English, and "hmm" "eh" in Chinese are useful for understanding respondents' hesitation and emotional involvement in their narration, as well as locating shifts in their narration. Utterances and pauses, which conveyed the Chinese men's difficulty in talking about marital relationships, are particularly useful in understanding Chinese men's responses. Utterances supplement missing parts of a story. Chinese men's frequent use of non-lexical utterances conveyed meaning that they found important in their gender relationships, but at the same time found difficult to talk about because they felt it was not sanctioned in social discourse. One Chinese husband's expectation that his wife should serve him was unintentionally revealed in his non-lexical utterances. These utterances provided an essential cue for understanding his gender

expectations in marriage. This Chinese husband expressed his expectation when he responded to his wife's story about an irritation that she laughed away. The husband had a habit of tucking in the blanket when sleeping but the wife liked the blanket hanging loose. The husband usually went to bed later than his wife. When he came to bed, his wife would usually be asleep. He would raise the blanket in order to tuck it in, a habit that annoyed the wife. In response to the wife's comment, the husband said the following:

01 H: In fact it can be very simple.
02 She always says other shuffle the bed. [wife laughed hard]
03 It's so simple.

04 W: you did it purposefully [she laughed so hard again]

05 H: You can do a simple thing by by....
06 tucking my side in... that would be the best,
07 Then it won't disturb eh eh....
08 She couldn't think of it after so many years.
09 That is you serve me by eh eh tuc tucking in the blanket properly for me,
10 then you can go to bed early.

The "....." part was the sluggishness of the husband's non-lexical utterance, starting from line 5. I note that he used "other" instead of "I" in line 2 and missed the objects "blanket" in line 6 and "you" in line 7.

6. Other types of genres

Riessman (1993) differentiates various narrative genres that might be encountered in narrative analysis. In my data, I found respondents also used what Riessman (1993) describes as habitual narratives (events that happen over and over and there is no peak in the action), and hypothetical narratives (depicting events that did not happen). For example, a

Chinese man, who told the most stories of the Chinese male respondents, liked to use plots of television series and movies to elaborate his views. In my present study, I categorize these less conspicuous genres as part of the "story" or "views" of respondents.

I found that all of the above-mentioned narrative genres conveyed meaning to the couples' life stories about their marriages. Since the utterances and emotional expression were pertinent to the interpretation of meaning, I transcribed not only the verbatim responses of respondents, but also significant emotional expressions like laughter and crying, long pauses and non-lexical utterances.

Locating themes

Agar and Hobbs (1982) remark that a particular episode in narrative is connected globally and thematically with the rest of the account to make a meaningful story. They propose three kinds of coherence in a narrative text, as recapitulated by Mishler (1986a) and Riessman (1993):

- Global coherence – it represents a top-down view which reflects the narrator's beliefs and goals. For example, a Euro Canadian couple stated their global theme of "marriage is forever," so they worked at their marriage as they were faithful to their religious faith. Global coherence examines the relation between the respondent's overall intent and local themes in narrative.

- Local coherence – it represents a bottom-up view which is generated from the core narrative of the narrator's story. It is the local theme of episodes in narrative.

- Themal coherence – it represents the recurrent themes that unify the text. The

repeated occurrence of themes expresses the respondents' cultural assumptions and beliefs.

Themes, or subplots of stories, are embedded in narrative (Mishler, 1986a). The researcher's task is to examine the interrelationship of the different subplots of narrative and their relationship to the general plot of a narrative. The analysis of the coherence of themes in narrative is an important means of interpreting the meaning of respondents' lived experiences encoded in their socio-cultural contexts.

A hermeneutic sense of interpretation in narrative analysis

Narratives are representations, and interpretation is inevitable. Cohler (1994) stresses that studies in human sciences are experiencing a shift from examining a phenomenon existing outside the field of the observer, to reliance on the observer's experience of the phenomenon. The place of the researcher is reliant upon her "own self-reflexive understanding or vicarious observation from within the field observation of self and others, which constitutes evidence and understanding" (Cohler, 1994, p.166). Freedman and Combs (1996) note that humans selectively attend to what they hear. Listening is not a passive activity. When we listen, we interpret, whether we want to or not. Our minds are not, and can never be, blank slates on which other people inscribe their stories. It is impossible to avoid interpretation. While I try to stay close to the respondents' lived experiences in my analysis, I do make interpretations. I cannot avoid reading my transcripts through the social and cultural lenses of an educated woman at the crossroads of Chinese and Western culture.

Narrative analysis consists of both hermeneutic (interpretation) and heuristic (a self-

searching way of discovering) implications. In its hermeneutic sense, narrative analysis interprets meanings from a phenomenon of interest. The researcher goes through a process which involves a gradual shift from a respondent's natural attitude and behaviour, as conditioned ways of experiencing the world, to a more conscious awareness of the respondent's presuppositions and underlying meaning structures (Osborne, 1994). Respondents' dominant and subjugated frames of reference are unravelled. The heuristic aspect of narrative analysis refers to the discovery of the nature and meaning of a phenomenon through the researcher's inner awareness and inspiration during the process of his/her empirical investigations (Moustakas, 1990)[9].

In my analysis process, I read a couple's full set of transcripts – two or more individual texts and one joint interview text as a coherent piece, without fragmenting the text, in conjunction with my field notes and journals, and the couples' answers in the two quantitative measures – DAS and ROR. I identified coherence and contradictions, convergence and divergence of themes. I looked at the content and embedded meanings of the narratives and linked them up with themes. In such a process, I reduced the full account to about 25% of the original text, as suggested by Labov (in Riessman, 1993), by arranging the narrative texts according to each individual theme I generated. For the Chinese narrative

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[9]Heuristic research also stresses the connectedness and relationship that the researcher undergoes in his/her own transformation of experience in the phenomenon under study (Moustakas, 1990). With the research questions in mind, I placed more emphasis on the interpretation of respondents' stories rather than transformation of my self through self-search and self-dialogue etc.

texts, I transcribed the full verbatim record of respondents' interviews in Chinese and read through all interviews in their original language. I translated the Chinese narrative texts into English when I identified the themes and arranged relevant segments of the text according to each theme.

With each additional couple and the additional comparisons that their responses engendered, I developed more themes and argumentation in my interpretive schema. In the process of reading narrative texts in their own language in each cultural group, I expanded outward to relate the narratives to cultural themes and values. I then conceptualized my findings and made cross-cultural comparisons. At this stage, English was the language I used. I agree with Mishler (1986a) in that my interpretation was contingent upon the knowledge I gained from existing literature and inferred from my general knowledge as a member of the larger culture. Drawing upon all that I know, I try to interpret meanings and examine the relationship between couples' meanings and their recounting of marital behaviours.

Step three: Theoretical abstraction

The central tenet of narrative analysis is to achieve a theoretical explanation of the social process of complex relationships (Mishler, 1986b). Similar to the grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), the theoretical abstraction makes inductions from data, without any a priori theories. The inductive process can be seen from the direction of the arrows in figure 2.

As Riessman (1994) points out, "by storifying a life we bring order to random

happenings, make sense by reconstructing and reinterpreting." (p.114). In my narrative analysis, I articulated themes from couples' stories. The theoretical articulation was integrated in the findings and discussion chapters. I also linked the findings of my study to previous research and to related theories in order to understand how the couples constructed their gender relationships in their particular cultural contexts to achieve a satisfactory long-term marriage. I articulated a theoretical model about the process of gender and cultural constructions in satisfactory long-term marriages in figure 10.

Step four: Presenting analysis and reading experience

Every text is "plurivocal, open to several readings and to several constructions." (Riessman, 1993, p.15). In the research process, reader and interpreter are part of the text. In presenting the findings, the researcher is creating a metastory by signifying, editing, and reshaping what was told. The presentation involves decisions about form, ordering, style, and ways of making stories of the episodes of long-term marriage (Riessman, 1993). More importantly, the presentation needs to include documentation about how interpretations are produced, evidence from respondents' accounts to support theoretical claims and consideration of alternative interpretive statements. Both dominant and subjugated patterns of findings need to be discussed, and supported by data (Gilgun, Daly, & Handel, 1992).

As Riessman (1993) points out, a researcher's anticipated response to the piece of work shapes what is to be included and excluded. I needed to examine and open up these interpretive issues for readers to see. Examples of such issues are: Whose voice is represented in the final product? How open is the text to other readings? How am I situated

in the personal narratives I collected and analysed? It is recognized that the respondents may not agree with my interpretation. Human stories are not static; meanings of experiences shift as consciousness changes. When respondents are regarded as co-authors of a narrative, it is important to display their views and the researcher's views with equal respect.

Interpretation of quantitative measurements under a naturalistic/interpretive paradigm

Although a different set of criteria is applied to assess the usefulness of quantitative measuring scales under the positivist paradigm, the two scales chosen for this study can be used differently under the naturalistic/interpretive paradigm. According to the naturalistic/interpretive paradigm, quantitative tests are socially constructed by a large section of a population whose answers represent a dominant response. The test results of the scales provide a basis for comparison in my sample with the majority pattern. The characteristics identified among long-term couples in these studies can also be compared to those discovered in the present sample. Furthermore, I explored the ways in which my respondents manifest these characteristics, such as respect and companionship etc., in their cultural and gender relationships.

As the sample size of my study is ten couples, no statistical procedures were performed. Adhering to the principles of qualitative analysis, I used both quantitative and qualitative data to examine the factors contributing to satisfactory long-term marriages. From the ten couples, five from each cultural group, adequate narratives were generated for my in-depth analysis of how couples attribute meanings to marital adjustment, marital satisfaction,

and gender construction; and most importantly, how couples construct their gender relationships in their cultural contexts.

Establishing trustworthiness in the research design of the present study

Under the naturalistic/interpretive paradigm, a different set of criteria is used to assess the trustworthiness of research. The key research criteria emphasized by the positivist orientation are validity and reliability. Validity is concerned with whether the research measured what it purported to measure while reliability refers to internal consistency and the long-term stability of the findings. Apart from the aforesaid understanding of the basic concepts of validity and reliability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Erlandson et al, 1993), the set of criteria in judging the validity of qualitative research is drastically different from the conventional positivist criteria. Since the naturalistic/interpretive paradigm is not based on a single reality, there cannot be an absolute truth or a single objective world that exists out there. As meaning is multiple and interpretations are varied, there cannot be generalization or external validity. The aim of narrative analysis is to establish trustworthiness, believability, and authenticity to enlarge our understanding of a particular phenomenon. A vital question is: Is a piece of research able to move readers to a deeper understanding of the social world? As Rothe (1993) asks, "are the findings faithful and consistent with the experiences of those who live in the situation?" (p.123).

A recapitulation of naturalistic and narrative research literature highlights four ways of approaching trustworthiness:

(1) *Persuasiveness* – whether the interpretation of findings is reasonable and convincing. Riessman (1993) emphasizes that when alternative interpretations of data are considered and theoretical claims are supported by data, persuasiveness is greatest.

(2) *Credibility* – whether the findings and presentation are believable and authentic. Naturalistic researchers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Erlandson et al, 1993) delineate varieties of procedures in research design, such as prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checking, to establish credibility. As the naturalistic/interpretive paradigm hold that realities are multiple, the interpretation of the researcher may be different from that of the narrator. However, the different realities represented by stakeholders need to be considered and stated. Riessman (1993) calls such a procedure "correspondence."

(3) *Coherence* – how parts of an account are connected to make a meaningful story. Other qualitative research authors (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Erlandson et al., 1993) name this concept "consistency."

(4) *Pragmatic use* – how useful the research is for similar future endeavours. Most qualitative research authors refer to this concept as "transferability" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Erlandson et al., 1993). When researchers want to conduct similar research in the future, it is their responsibility to transfer relevant information to their study. The role of the qualitative researcher is to provide enough thick description and understanding of the events and processes. Under the naturalistic/interpretive paradigm, it is reasonable for the researcher to make primary data available to other researchers, provided confidentiality is maintained. Making explicit their fundamental assumptions and values is also important.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose an additional dimension of confirmability in establishing the trustworthiness of qualitative research. Confirmability emphasizes the believability of the data. It is achieved through establishing procedures such as audit trails, raw written field notes, process and personal notes, and reflexive journals for tracking the data collection and the reflexive processes involved (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

The present research focused much attention on its empirical design to meet the trustworthiness, credibility and other criteria described above. The in-depth interviews and data collection process reflected prolonged engagement and persistent observation with the respondents. To achieve a more thorough understanding of the couple's experiences, I interviewed a couple at least three times – wife first, husband second, and then together. Additional interviews were conducted when necessary. Individual and joint interviews provided different contexts for the researcher to co-create the couples' narratives. In the initial individual interviews, the respondents could talk about their experiences and reflections on the marriage as freely as they wished. Individual interviews also served to overcome the potential fear of conflictual or embarrassing situations which might have occurred in the joint interview. The respondent did not need to withhold or overstate disclosures in order to protect the other spouse. Once I had the background provided by each partner's individual story, joint interviews allowed me to witness how partners act together, how they seek to help or influence each other, and how they handle disagreements arising in the joint narration process (Gilgun, Daly, & Handel, 1992). As discussed in the earlier section, the use of multiple sources of methods – quantitative measures, individual and joint narrative interviews – increased the credibility of the study.

During the interviewing phase, I used analytic memos and monthly journals to document the interview process, highlight important themes, explore the dynamics of the relationship, and record my own reflections (Gilgun, Daly, & Handel, 1992). Data collection, transcription, and data analysis went hand in hand. Reflections during the interviewing and analytical process heightened my awareness in particular areas and posed questions about neglected concerns for further interviews. Analytic memos, process notes, and reflexive journals were important documentary procedures for establishing an audit trail to increase the confirmability of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Erlandson et al, 1993; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

In order to involve the respondents as readers, I discussed the interpretation of findings with couples in groups to gather their comments and input after my data analysis was completed. At the end of the interview, I requested that the couples fill out a one-page feedback form (Appendix IV). This form served as a channel of feedback in addition to the verbal comments which I encouraged at each interview. Such feedback increased the authenticity and credibility[10] of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Erlandson et al, 1993).

Ethical considerations

My research proposal had been approved by the Wilfrid Laurier University Ethics

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[10]Lincoln and Guba (1985) term respondents' feedback on the research process as member checking; while Erlandson et al (1993) used the terms "ontological authenticity" and "educative authenticity" etc. (p.154) to describe respondents' learning from the research experience.

Committee. I had considered the following ethical issues:

Risks and benefits

A benefit of the study is that couples had an opportunity to reminisce about the long marriage journey they have gone through. The recounting of their marital history helped the couples to reflect on the efforts they had made in the marriage. On the other hand, a risk of this study was that couples might have had to retell some of their tough or unhappy marital experiences, which might have led to emotional upset. Long-term couples are like ordinary couples in that they have their own interactional problems. I had considered that during the in-depth interviews, some potentially destructive conflicts might emerge, resulting in emotions the couples were unprepared to handle. I handled these situations with care. Risks were mentioned in the letter of informed consent (Appendix II) and referrals for counselling, if necessary, were also mentioned.

Procedures for informed consent from participants

Participation in the study was voluntary. Queries were answered during the initial contact. When the couples agreed to proceed, I arranged a first meeting with both spouses to administer the quantitative questionnaire. The test results of the DAS were calculated immediately and the couples were informed of the results. I explained the purpose and structure of my research in detail to the couples who met the screening criteria. The invited respondents were asked to sign a written consent form which stated that they could refuse to participate in the study or withdraw from the study at any time if they wished, and could refuse to answer any questions. Since audio taping was done during my interviews, prior

verbal and written consent was sought in the same consent form.

Ensuring privacy and confidentiality

The respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their data in written form. The data was used by myself solely for the analysis of this study, and was to be read by my committee members selectively. Since the work would be published in a dissertation report and professional articles, the respondents were assured of anonymity in all reports and publications so that their identities would not be disclosed.

Member Check

A member check was done in November, 1998. Eight of the ten couples that I interviewed participated in it. One in the Chinese group was not available due to the wife's recent surgery. One Euro Canadian couple was out of the country. In each cultural group, I had one 'member check' session with a group of two couples and two individual sessions with the other two couples respectively. Each sharing session was about an hour. I shared my findings, including my interpretations, on the areas of: (a) meaning of marriage for the Chinese and Euro Canadian groups illustrated with figures 6 and 7; (b) gender role expectations; (c) the summary of factors contributing to long-term marriages illustrated with figures 3 and 8; and in particular, (d) the four levels of couple communication and understanding with figure 9, and specific areas that I will point out in the respective findings and discussion sections. I illustrated my findings with examples of couples' experiences in an anonymous way. In group sessions, I used examples from couples who were not present

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in the group.

In my 'member check' sessions, I explained to the respondents that my findings included my interpretation and evaluation of their stories. I highlighted areas of my interpretation, such as the embedded nature of marriage and family among Chinese, and the emphasis of individuality in Euro Canadian marriages. After I presented my findings in the 'member check' sessions, I asked couples the question of "To what extent do you find your marriage being described in my findings?" All couples agreed that my findings described their marital experiences. They could easily identify their marriages in my description of findings. One husband said, "Sometimes I find my experience on the left side of your range, sometimes on the right, and sometimes right on the middle." One Euro Canadian wife originally had a dispute over my finding that Euro Canadian couples did not evaluate their marital satisfaction according to their children's success. She emphasized that her marital relationship was greatly affected by their son's behaviour. After some clarifications, she agreed that she did not evaluate her marital satisfaction according to her son's success though he gave a lot of trouble to the couple's marital relationship.

Another form of 'member check' I did was giving the three detailed stories that I wrote on the couple's evolution of gender relationship in Chapter Seven to the three respective couples, the Wongs, the Fungs and the Smiths. I asked them to correct any parts where their experience was misrepresented and to comment on whether my interpretation of the story was agreeable to them. The couples had no corrections to my story and accepted what I wrote about them.

Challenges encountered in the study

I encountered the following challenges during the research process:

(1) Narrative analysis is a developing research method. It is still not popular in social work research. There is no canonicity in narrative analysis and there are many ways of doing narrative analysis. Since the analysis emphasizes interpretation, peer comments were necessary to ensure the systematic use of narrative procedures and to explore alternatives. Early interviews were discussed with my dissertation advisors to monitor the plausibility of the interpretation of the data.

(2) The emphasis of language analysis in narrative analysis was a challenge for me. I had the advantage of being bilingual so that I could handle the two languages of the Euro Canadian and Chinese couples. Since I have no particular training in linguistic analysis, I could only use my available language skills and sensitivity to attend to the nuances of languages in the texts. The guidelines set out in the narrative literature provided direction for me. I used them in a pragmatic way to help me understand my theoretical interests.

(3) With my background as a quantitative researcher, it was a challenge for me to trust the emergent research process, both during the interview and data analysis stages. This research process tested my sensitivities and required my courage to stay open, listen, reflect and articulate my data.

Conclusion

My cross-cultural study of how the mutual construction of gender and culture contributes to long-term satisfactory marriages is a theoretical pursuit. At the operational level, culture and gender are not what people think, but how people act. The use of naturalistic in-depth interviews helped me to get nearer to the primary marital experiences of long-term couples. I co-constructed with the respondents in a trusting and open environment that allowed these couples to recount their stories about their struggles in the course of their marriages. Narrative analysis served as a bridge to link, through systematic interpretation, the primary experiences of the couples to the theoretical abstraction of my research topic. This methodology provided me with the tool to unravel the multiple layers of meanings embedded in their historical and cultural contexts by analysing languages and themes.

The blending of quantitative and qualitative methods enriched the data by utilizing the strengths of both empirical methods. Apart from the use of the DAS as a screening instrument, the use of both scales, DAS and ROR, provided a structure for me and the couples to initiate discussions around the topics of the questionnaire. The naturalistic interviews allowed space for the respondents to re-create the stories of their long history of marital experiences. My social construction theoretical framework, together with the empirical methodologies, illuminated how the characteristics of long-term marriages discovered in previous studies are manifested in the cultural and gender behaviours of the two cultural groups. Moreover, my framework also allowed for any unique or subjugated patterns to emerge for future theoretical and research endeavours. The design of this

empirical research demonstrated trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, authenticity and

believability by using a triangulation of methods, establishing audit trail procedures, and

being consistent throughout the study.

Chapter Five

Orientation of the Readers to the Findings and Discussion Chapters

Chapter Five is an introduction to my three findings and discussion chapters, chapters six to eight. This introduction highlights the common threads I used in the findings and discussion chapters, such as the conceptual dimensions, and my conceptual framework of analyses which was derived from the narratives of my respondents by using an inductive methodology of narrative analysis. Lastly, I discuss culture and language and the respondents' use of language, in order to orient the English readers to the Chinese texts. In particular, I draw attention to the nuances in the respondents' use of pronouns in their narrative as a representation of the collectivistic and individualistic orientations of the two respective cultural groups.

In search of the answers to my research questions posed in the last section of Chapter Three, I focused more on the course of marital interaction and behaviours of the long-term couple respondents over thirty years or more, rather than on a particular stage of their marital life cycle (Nichols & Pace-Nichols, 1993). My discussion of findings is geared toward a global theme – how do the cultural construction and reconstruction of gender contribute to marital satisfaction in long-term marriages? In order to protect the respondents' identity, the ten couples were identified by pseudonyms. In quotations of the respondents' narrative text, {wife}, {husband}, {son} were used to replace their respective names to ensure anonymity. As mentioned in Chapter Four regarding the importance of the interaction between the researcher and respondents, I included my response – and the spouse's response in the case of joint interviews – in the respondent's narrative text and signified them by using [ ]. When

I paraphrased a particular word used in a respondent's verbatim response, I used the symbol [ ] as well. In case of a respondent's nonverbal response like a pause, laughter or cry, I used { } to signify them. There are two kinds of presentations of respondents' verbatim expressions in their narrative text:

(1)   If I needed to discuss a narrative text, the respondent's verbatim expression was structured sentence by sentence as illustrated in the formats used in narrative analysis literature (Riessman, 1991, 1993, 1994). Line numbering was applied to each sentence uttered by a respondent, if I needed to refer to particular statements in my discussion of the text. This is the most detailed and desirable method, especially for the Chinese texts which were always shortened and collapsed, and characterized by the lack of use of appropriate pronouns. However, this presentation of data is not very economical since it occupies a lot of space.

(2)   For longer narrative segments and segments which were straightforward, I used the ordinary format in qualitative study presentations, which is in paragraph form. "M" connotes myself; while "H" stands for husband and "W" for wife. In most cases, I used a pseudonym to refer to a particular respondent such as Mrs Chung, or Mr Carter.

Conceptual dimensions

I used two analytical dimensions – *individualism and collectivism*, and *traditional and egalitarian* – to conceptualize the findings of my cross-cultural study on the impact of culture and gender on long-term marital satisfaction. As I noted before (see Chapter One),

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individualism and collectivism are constructs widely used by cross-cultural researchers in the 1990s (Triandis, Chen & Chan, 1998). Chinese people are regarded as collectivistic while North Americans (including Canadians) are individualistic (Hofstede, 1980; Hui & Triandis, 1986; Buda & Elsayed-Elkhouly, 1998). A collectivistic culture emphasizes members' interdependence, acceptance of authority, desirability of harmony and good interpersonal relationships. People in a collectivistic society believe their behaviour has direct or indirect consequences on others. People in these societies are concerned about loss of face. A person's misbehaviour or failure is regarded as a disgrace to the immediate group such as the family, or kin. On the other hand, an individualistic culture emphasizes one's responsibility to one's own self. People are emotionally independent of their community. An individual's behaviour is more inner-directed, answerable to the self (conscience) or to superordinate entities (government and God etc.) (Hui & Triandis, 1986; Chen, 1995; Tafarodi & Swann, 1996; Buda & Elsayed-Elkhouly, 1998).

Contemporary marriage studies examine marriages along the continuum of traditional to egalitarian (Scanzoni et al., 1989; Altrocchi & Crosby, 1989; Hochschild, 1989; Pollock, Die, & Marriot, 1990; Schwartz, 1994; Worden & Worden, 1998). At one end of the continuum, a traditional marriage is based on a parallel sexual division of labour evolved from the industrialization which took place in Western societies about two hundred years ago. The division of roles is very much construed according to the 'public' and 'private' domains (Rosaldo, 1974; Sacks, 1974). The husband is endowed with the 'outside' instrumental roles while the wife is conferred the 'inside' expressive and nurturing roles. A couple divides their responsibilities and spheres of influence into the male earning and

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female care-taking roles, with final authority given to the husband. The male public role is privileged over the female private role, such that men are the ones who have more power in decision making. On the other end of the continuum, an egalitarian marriage is an equal partnership in which power is equitably distributed, the careers of both spouses are given equal priority, and the financial, household, and child-care responsibilities are shared equally among the partners over time (Scanzoni et al., 1989; Schwartz, 1994). Hochschild (1989) conceptualizes an in-between type of marriage, between the traditional and egalitarian gender ideology in marriage, which she called the "transitional" marriage. As I treated the traditional-egalitarian dimensions as a continuum, couples who fell in between the two poles could be identified as transitional.

Schweder and Sullivan (1993) remind us that the conceptual dichotomies in social sciences (such as innate vs learned, nature vs culture) tend to pigeonhole observations and too often simplify the complex process of social interaction. In my analysis, I avoid fitting my respondents into the pigeonholes of conceptual dichotomies. Rather, I treat the dimensions of *individualism and collectivism*, and *traditional and egalitarian* as continuums to enunciate the intricacies of the construction processes of culture and gender in long-term marriages in order to examine what contributes to the respondents' marital satisfaction.

Conceptual framework of the analyses

The conceptual framework laid out in figure 3 is a guide to my findings in the following chapters. The themes outlined in figure 3 were deduced from my reading of the narrative texts of couples during my data analysis:

What contributes to martital satisfaction in
long-term relationships

Marital satisfaction defined and
measured

Cultural   An active construction and
expectations   reconstruction process in achieving
defined   marital satisfaction

Sense of   Compatibility in gender
Self   relationships

Division   Decision-
of   Compromise making   Mutual
labour   power &   understanding
                        negotiation

Figure 3: A conceptual framework of the construction of gender relationships in Euro Canadian and
Chinese couples in satisfactory long-term marriages

In Chapter Six, I present the profile of the ten couples along the two above-mentioned conceptual continuums of *individualism-collectivism*, and *traditional-egalitarian* in the couples' respective socio-cultural context. The respondents' DAS scores and ROR scores are discussed with regard to their marital adjustment and satisfaction in light of the cultural differences between the two groups. I also explore the meanings of marriage and marital satisfaction, which reflect marital expectations, in the two cultural groups.

Chapter Seven discusses the social construction of gender and culture in marriage as extrapolated from the couples' lived experiences in the course of their thirty or more years of marriage. I re-examine the social construct of gender and culture in light of my data. I also explicate the process of the social construction of gender and culture in long-term marriages. Three particular couples' stories are portrayed in-depth. I define 'gender relationship' from the constructs I derived from the stories of the Chinese and Euro Canadian couples, which formed the basic themes of the factors contributing to long-term marriages. Before I define 'gender relationship,' I use the term loosely to denote male and female relationships, and in marriage, it refers to husband and wife relationships. Lastly in this chapter, I explore the sense of self of the four respondent groups – Chinese women, Chinese men, Euro Canadian women and Euro Canadian men.

In Chapter Eight, I conceptualize the gender factors which contribute to long-term marital satisfaction in terms of compatibility in gender relationships. Through analysis of the respondents' narratives, I discuss my findings along the lines of four components of gender relationship: (1) division of labour, (2) decision-making power and negotiation, (3) compromise of differences and disagreement, and (4) communication and mutual

understanding. Cultural factors, such as companionship, perceptual congruence, similarity in background, and religion are also discussed, as is the meaning of commitment. I then reformulate my conceptual model on the construction of gender and culture in satisfactory long-term marriage.

Culture and language

This section orients the reader to the language structures used by the two cultural groups in the presentation of their narratives. Kashima and Kashima (1998) studied the relationship between culture and language, in terms of the use of personal pronouns, in 39 languages spoken in 71 cultures. They found that both Chinese and English have first- and second-person singular pronouns (that is, 'I' and 'you') in their languages. In English, the use of pronouns is imperative, while the Chinese language allows the pronouns to be dropped when they would be used as the subject of a sentence in a conversation. In other words, an English-speaking person would use more pronouns in speaking English than would a Chinese person speaking Chinese. The authors found that cultures who use "pronoun drop languages" were less individualistic than those who use "nonpronoun drop languages" (Kashima & Kashima 1998, p.471). The meaning conveyed by people who use pronoun drop languages is more contextualized, as greater emphasis is placed on the information that surrounds the speech event.

Kashima and Kashima's finding is consistent with Hall's (1976, 1990) postulation of "high context" communication and "low context" communication. In a low context culture, such as Canadian culture, people communicate in an explicit manner, without much

hidden meaning. On the other hand, people from a high context culture, such as Chinese culture, use more implicit and assumed messages, while context carries an important weight. The meaning that people convey in a high context culture is embedded in and referenced to the larger collective group to which they belong. The Chinese language is a typical high context form of communication as words and sentences collapse and are shortened in conversation (Hall, 1976). Furthermore, the use of the pronouns, 'I' and 'you,' also signifies a speaker's identity negotiation in a specific context and his or her definition of the relationship with the person being addressed. The use of 'I' signifies a person's ownership and responsibility for what he/she said, which indicates the person's commitment to what he/she said.

In my study, as predicted by Kashima and Kashima's analysis schema (1998), the Euro Canadian couples used more pronouns of 'I' and 'you' in their narratives than did their Chinese counterparts. Furthermore, I found that the different contents of the narrative affected a respondent's use of 'I.' For example, the Chinese women used more 'I' and 'you' than did the Chinese men when discussing their marital relationship. The Chinese men, who used the fewest pronouns in comparison to all other respondent groups, used more 'I' and 'you' when they talked about their children and work than when they discussed their marital relationships. The Euro Canadian men showed a similar differentiation; and they used 'I' less when they talked about marital conflicts. However, the Euro Canadian men were much more comfortable talking about their marital relationships, as were the Euro Canadian women, compared to the Chinese men.

The following narrative segment about a Chinese husband's dissatisfaction with his

sex life in his marriage, a sensitive issue, illustrates the above-discussed embedded meaning

of speech events in a high context communication:

01   *M: Do you find anything you feel not as satisfactory in your marriage?*

02   *H: Men and women are different physically,*
03   *Probably you women know that.*
04   *As you said men have more desire than women.*
05   *There is a difference in this area.*
06   *So far there is such a phenomena that the man's impulse is stronger than the*
      woman's.
07   *Everybody knows that.*
08   *So we don't have a problem with that.*

In the above eight lines of speech event between myself and the respondent during

an individual interview, this Chinese husband never used ˙I,˙ nor the word ˙sex˙ but

conveyed a rich meaning of dissatisfaction about sex in his marriage in response to my

question. He demonstrated an understanding of his wife, and said that their differences in sex

did not pose a problem to their marriage. The crucial sentence was in line 06, where he used

an objective phrase "there is such a phenomena." He used "the man" to represent ˙I.˙ By

using "the man" and "the woman," this husband defined his dissatisfaction about sex as a

contextualized phenomenon and he justified his needs by saying "everybody knows that"

(line 07). He drew me in as part of his communal context as a woman. At first, I was shocked

and felt embarrassed by his saying "as you said," as I never said anything like what he

suggested in line 04. I then realized he used me as an escape from his ownership of his sexual

dissatisfaction in his marriage. His narrative statements in line 02, further reinforced in line

05, normalized his sexual needs and attributed that to sexual differences. He also implied that

he was understanding of his wife as her lack of interest in sex was not her fault, but just a

sexual difference, and it did not affect their relationship (line 08). In this last utterance in line

08, his use of a collective pronoun "we" linked up his previous statements about the couple's

relationship. The above-discussed characteristics of verbal communication of high context

culture and low context culture are displayed in the verbatim quotes from respondents in the

findings and discussion chapters.

Chapter Six

Findings and Discussion I: Meaning of marriage and marital satisfaction of respondents situated in their respective socio-cultural context

A general profile of respondents

The ten successfully interviewed couples comprised five couples from each cultural group, twenty respondents in total. The years of marriage of the Euro Canadians ranged from 30 to 34 years while the Hong Kong Chinese (Chinese) ranged from 30 to 36 years. Most of the Euro Canadians were second-generation Canadians, while a few had grandparents who were born in Canada. A Euro Canadian male respondent, whose grandfather settled in Canada in 1810, had the oldest ancestry of the group. All Euro Canadian couples were Protestants. Three couples in the Chinese group were Protestants. One had no particular religion, and one wife worshipped her ancestors while her husband had no religion.

The ages of the husbands in the Chinese group ranged from 61 to 66, with a mean age of 63.8, while the wives' age clustered around 59 to 60, with a mean of 59.4. The ages of the Euro Canadian men ranged from 51 to 60, with a mean of 55, while the age range of the wives was from 52 to 56, with a mean of 54.4. Three Euro Canadian wives were one year older than their husbands. All of the couples had two or three children, except one Euro Canadian couple who had six children.

The educational background and social class of the two cultural groups were comparable. By their educational background and occupation, they were middle class. All respondents had at least a high school education, except for one Chinese woman who had

no formal education. In each cultural group there was one woman who had a university degree. Three Chinese and two Euro Canadian women graduated from college, and two Chinese women and one Euro Canadian woman went to teacher's college. Of the men, two Euro Canadians and one Chinese man had a master's degree. Each group had at least one male church minister (one full-time in the Chinese group and three in the Euro Canadian group, two being part-time and one being a lay minister). Within each group there was one man who was a businessman and another who was an accountant. Of the two Chinese men, one was a bank administrator and another was a hospital clerk when they lived in Hong Kong. One Chinese couple, the Fungs, changed from professional jobs to working class jobs after they immigrated to Canada. Since the mean age of the Chinese male respondents was higher than that of Euro Canadian men, three of the five Chinese men had retired while all Euro Canadian men were still working. One Euro Canadian husband was working part-time as he had been laid off from his last job. The impact of the older age of the Chinese couples on their marital satisfaction will be discussed in Section V.

Within each group there was one wife who had never worked outside the home since she married, while another Chinese wife stopped working with the birth of her first child. The other Chinese wives were employed in education when they still lived in Hong Kong – two were teachers and one was an education inspector. Two of them were still working at the time of the interview, one as a packer and the other as a part-time clinic administrator. Of the four working women in the Euro Canadian group, only one was retired. Two were still in their full-time jobs, and one wife was enrolled in a master's program and held a part-time job.

Summary impressions of the ten couples' construction of marriage

In order to facilitate the reader's understanding of the ten couples in the following

sections of findings and discussion, I offer a brief summary of my impressions of how the

couples constructed their relationships in ways that contributed to their marital satisfaction:

The Euro Canadian couples

<u>**The Browns**</u>

The Browns got married in 1962. They had two sons who were eleven months apart.

The husband, being a businessman, was mostly unavailable at home in the early years of

marriage. The wife, being a part-time administrator, had to make decisions for the family

independently. Early on in the marriage, the wife felt so burdened with the tremendous

responsibilities with the family that she wrote a letter to her husband protesting and

threatening a divorce if the husband did not change. The husband treated that as a `wake up

call.` He responded and started to learn to understand the needs of his wife. The couple's

cottage was a place where they spent their family life when the children were young. At the

time of the interview, the couple spent half a year in their summer house in the south where

they enjoyed their life together. The husband did housework, including vacuuming and

barbequing, mostly in the cottage and the summer house. The wife made most of the

decisions around the home and the husband respected those decisions. The wife had a more

traditional ROR score of 14/24 while husband had a less traditional one of 6/20. The wife

had a high DAS score of 130 and the husband had 120 (refer to figure 5 for the distribution

of the Euro Canadian couples' scores).

The Scotts

The Scotts got married in 1966. They had three daughters. The husband was being laid off at the time of the interview and changed to a part-time job. He was also a lay minister in a Protestant church. The wife had a stable job as a secretary. Like Mrs Brown and Mrs Taylor, she stayed home while the children were young, then returned to the same job after the children were at school. The wife's return to work in the labour force was a process marker for the evolution of their gender relationship. The couple regularly evaluated their own relationship when they observed those of their friends. The husband gradually learned to cook, to do laundry and to can food over the years. After the children left home, he did more of these chores. The couple claimed that over the years, they had moved towards a balance in their power relationship. The wife became more assertive and forceful in arguments while the husband became more quiet and gave up pursuing his arguments. The couple's ROR scores were on the less traditional side (9/25 and 9/21 for the husband and wife respectively), and they had the highest DAS scores in the Euro Canadian respondent group (133 and 134 for the husband and wife respectively).

The Taylors

The Taylors got married in 1964 and had three children, two daughters and a son, the youngest. Like the Browns and the Scotts, this couple started with a well-defined gender relationship. The wife stressed that the evolution of their gender roles was critical to her marital satisfaction. When their first daughter was born three years after their wedding, the husband was still uninvolved in housework and only played with the daughter. The husband

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was engaged with his hockey team as a volunteer coach and was mostly away during weekends. Their three children were sick as babies. The wife was unable to cope with the three sick children by herself even though she did not work outside the home at that time. After she lapsed into a depression, she asked her husband to quit his hockey involvement and he agreed. The wife stressed that that was a turning point for their gender relationship. Both took care of the sick children and the husband took up more housework like vacuuming and laundry. The husband had a job as an accountant with regular hours, while the wife had shift duties as a laboratory technologist. The husband became more involved in taking care of the children when the wife went on night shifts. The couple had the second-most non-traditional ROR scores in the Euro Canadian respondent group, with 5/25 and 2/25 for the husband and wife respectively. Their DAS scores were 111 and 115 for the husband and wife respectively. The couple had different temperaments; the wife was easily angry while the husband was very quiet. They learned to compromise in disciplining their youngest son who was their most troubled child. The wife made most decisions in the family.

The Smiths

The Smiths were different from the other Euro Canadian couples in that they came from nearly opposite backgrounds. The wife came from a family where the male made all the decisions while the husband came from a family where the female made the decisions. Wife came from a family with a lot of rules while husband came from a family with minimal rules. The couple was married in 1966, and from the start the husband did a lot of cooking and housework. After their three children were born and the husband was very involved in

his ministerial work, the couple developed a traditional relationship. The husband made most of the family's decisions while the wife did most of the housework. When the husband had heart surgery seventeen years after the couple's marriage, the wife felt very insecure and went back into the labour force. From then onwards, the couple drifted apart and the wife had an affair. The couple was separated for two months. They still communicated as friends during their separation, and their good communication finally brought the couple back together. They re-constructed an equal partnership which both felt very satisfying. The couple had the most non-traditional ROR scores in the Euro Canadian group, 0/24 and 4/24 for the husband and wife respectively. There was a discrepancy in their DAS scores and their narration of their marital adjustment and satisfaction. Their DAS scores were 110 and 119 for the husband and wife respectively.

The Carters

The Carters got married in 1963. They had five children of their own and adopted the youngest daughter. They lived in a farm where the farm work was leased out to other people. The husband was a teacher and a part-time minister in a Protestant church that stressed traditional family values. The wife had been a homemaker since her first baby. The couple's religious faith provided guiding principles for their marriage. Based on a gender belief that men and women are different, the couple defined their gender roles in a traditional well-defined way. They accepted their gender differences, and endured occasional gender misunderstandings. The wife was vocal while the husband was quiet. The couple shared decision-making power as much as another Euro Canadian couple, the Scotts. The couple

had the lowest DAS scores in the Euro Canadian group, 109 and 117 for the husband and wife respectively. Their ROR scores, 14/24 and 19/23 for the husband and wife respectively, consistently reflected the traditional orientation of the couple.

The Chinese couples

<u>**The Chungs**</u>

The Chungs got married in 1960 after three years of courtship, mostly through letters. The wife, who grew up in Macau, an ex-Portugese colony near Hong Kong, had no formal education. The husband worked in Hong Kong as an administrator and got his high school diploma through evening school. The husband patiently taught his wife to write through their exchange of letters. The couple had a son and two younger daughters. The wife learned from other peoples' experiences in marriage how to construct her own rules for building a happy family, and maintaining the devotion of her husband to the family. The couple had well-defined family roles – the husband being the provider while the wife was the homemaker. Their primary aim was to provide a good education for their children, especially the son. The wife saved up the family's money and invested in the realty business. She raised the family's standard of living and generated enough money to send their children to study abroad and later emigrate to Canada. Since the wife perceived her husband as the breadwinner of the family and he also provided financial help to the wife's family of origin, the wife tolerated the husband's occasional outbursts of temper. The couple had lived in Canada for four years at the time of the interview. The husband took up more housework after coming to Canada. The husband also controlled his temper more. The couple enjoyed

their companionship after the children left home. The wife had a high traditional ROR score of 15/25 while the husband had a lower one of 6/25. The wife had a high DAS score of 130 while the husband had 115 (refer to figure 4 for the distribution of the Chinese couples' scores).

The Lais

The Lais got married in 1965. Both came from traditional Chinese business families who had been business partners for a long time. The couple had a son and a daughter. When the couple had their daughter, the wife reluctantly gave up her job. From then onwards, she took up all the household responsibilities while the husband's sole role was to provide. The wife did not like doing housework, but fulfilled her duty as a good wife and mother by taking care of the family. The couple acknowledged that they had a lot of disagreements. I found this couple agreed to disagree since they had the most answers in the DAS that agreed. Both partners may not feel happy sometimes about fulfilling their personal wishes in the marriage. For example, the husband found the wife was not compliant and always disagreed with him. The wife felt she gave up a lot for the marriage. However, both found that their marriage was satisfying because they had fulfilled their responsibilities by raising successful children. The couple had lived in Canada for four years at the time of the interview. They enjoyed more togetherness after they lived in Canada. The couple's DAS scores reflected their lower marital adjustment and satisfaction than the other couples in my study. The wife had the lowest DAS score of 107 in the Chinese respondent group and a traditional ROR score of 14/25. The husband had a DAS score of 111 and a ROR score of 11/25.

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The Wongs

The Wongs got married in 1966. They had three children, two sons and a younger daughter. This couple typified the 'modern' educated group in Hong Kong. The couple's marriage was quite different from the above two couples. Since the wife was a career woman, the couple had hired two helpers to take care of their household work. The wife left the family to attend overseas training courses. The husband recalled that the couple had mostly separate activities when they lived in Hong Kong because they had different types of jobs and different working hours. Their joint activity was their regular family vacation trips. The wife became a homemaker after the family immigrated to Canada, twelve years before the time of the interview. She changed her role to that of a compliant wife and avoided arguments with the husband. She made room for the husband to take up his 'public' role and she comfortably assumed her 'private' role in the family. There was more companionship between them after they moved to Canada. The husband became involved more in housework as he thought that the spouses should work together since they did not have full-time domestic help. The couple felt more satisfied with their relationship after they came to Canada. They had more leisure time together and had a common goal in their commitment to their church and missionary works. The wife had the highest traditional score of 17/25 in the ROR among the Chinese group while the husband had 13/25. Although the wife reported she had a better relationship with her husband after coming to Canada, her DAS score was only 114 while the husband's was 123.

The Fungs

The Fungs got married in 1961. They had a son and a daughter. The couple had the most egalitarian and satisfying marriage in the Chinese group. Their gender relationship changed drastically after the wife took control of the family finances and initiated changes in the couple's household division of labour in the early part of the marriage. The husband was a considerate man who rejected the idea that men should be the head of the family. He performed the most household tasks in comparison with other Chinese male respondents and was involved in housework early on in the marriage. The couple took turns in pursuing their careers and had an equal share of responsibility in raising their children. The husband, a clerk in Hong Kong, and the wife, a vice-principal in an elementary school, took up blue-collar jobs after the couple immigrated to Canada eleven years ago. They held each other's hands through their difficult adjustment to their jobs. They were among the Chinese respondents who had the lowest traditional scores in the ROR (6/24 for the husband and 7/23 for the wife) and high DAS scores (131 and 137 for the husband and wife respectively).

The Tangs

The Tangs got married in 1961 and had four sons. The husband had always been occupied by his clergy work to which he was committed. He was proud that his family was being looked up to as a model Christian family by friends and relatives. The husband regarded his family as a semi-public place for frequent guest visits. However, the wife was expected to take care of everything in the family in order to fulfil the husband's family ideal. The husband perceived his role as that of appreciating whatever his wife had done for him

and the family. He also dedicated all family decision-making power to the wife. Togetherness, no matter whether as a couple or a family, was this couple's priority. No matter how busy the husband was, he attended his wife's concerts which she organized for her school when she was a teacher in Hong Kong. With a change in environment and the wife changing to a part-time administrative job after coming to Canada twelve years ago, the couple had regular time together. As the husband was willing to learn and took up a little more housework, and as he was able to spend more time with her, the wife felt very satisfied with the marriage. The husband had a more traditional ROR score of 15/25 than his wife's 7/25. The couple's marital adjustment and satisfaction were reflected in their high DAS scores, 137 for the husband and 130 for the wife.

Respondents' reactions in the narrative interviews

During the interviews, four of the five Chinese couples acknowledged that they had never talked about their marriages in such depth, even with their close friends. Marriage is a private matter, and even more so for the Chinese. Marriage, to the Chinese, especially Chinese men, is not a topic to be discussed. One Chinese wife remarked, *"men don't talk about marriage. They think these are trivial."* Prior to signing the consent form, one Chinese couple explicitly stated that they would not talk about their sexual relationship in the interviews. Their wish was respected as their uneasiness about the interviews was understandable.

In the individual interviews, the respondents were reminded about confidentiality of their revealed materials. I reminded them that I would not mention these materials in the joint

interview if they so wished. One Chinese female respondent stated that she did not want her husband to know what she said in the individual interview. After she was reassured of confidentiality, she felt easier about telling her story in the individual interview. The other female respondents in both cultural groups were comfortable with me and with the discussion about their marital relationship, probably because I am a female researcher. Although a few male respondents (two Chinese and one Euro Canadian) were uneasy with me, especially in the individual interview, as I was a female stranger to them, they were very cooperative in telling me what they could.

Couples' responses in joint interviews

The joint interviews revealed the dynamics of the couples' relationship, especially in terms of who responded first to my questions, who did the most talking, and who spoke for the other. Who spoke first depended on the respondents' perceived capability to discuss relationship matters and their perception of the joint interview environment. In the Chinese group, more wives jumped into the interview conversations as they thought that they were more skilful at discussing their relationship. This is in line with most of the literature that suggests women are more capable of discussing relationship matters (Nichols, 1988; Lerner, 1989; Josselson, 1992). The wives also spoke on behalf of their husbands, especially those whose husbands were cautious (Mr Lai) or relatively tongue-tied when talking about the relationship (Mr Wong and Mr Fung).

In the Euro Canadian group, some husbands, such as Mr Scott, Mr Smith and Mr Carter (who were all preachers) were more articulate in talking about their relationships.

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These husbands were relatively more dominant than their wives in the interview conversations. The way the Euro Canadian spouses spoke on their own behalf reflected the individualistic context of the Euro Canadian couples. Unlike the Chinese couples, the Euro Canadian respondents never spoke for their spouses.

Husbands of two traditional couples in different cultural groups, Mr Chung and Mr Carter, initiated the conversations following my opening question. I interpreted this to mean that both husbands saw the interview situation as a public situation, so the men initiated conversation as they had more responsibility in dealing with public situations. In the case of the Carters, the husband invited his wife to talk, while the Chinese husband, Mr Chung just responded to my question himself. Chinese wives were more likely to invite their husbands to talk during the joint interviews. Mrs Wong and Mrs Fung are good examples.

In the joint narratives of the couples who had a high level of adjustment and satisfaction, information was shared between them and no hidden agenda was evidenced. Furthermore, the joint narratives of the couples who had a high gender mutuality, like the Fungs in the Chinese group and the Browns in the Euro Canadian group, were sometimes synchronous like an orchestration. The couples said the same thing together or completed each other's thoughts. By contrast, the Chinese wives, Mrs Chung, Mrs Lai and Mrs Wong, who had a lower level of adjustment and satisfaction, were cautious in their choice of words in joint interviews and downplayed the conflicts they shared about their relationship in their individual interviews. In the Euro Canadian joint interviews, all wives were straightforward in presenting their own views and were comfortable in disputing their husbands' views.

Couples' written feedback on the interview experience

In this section, I summarized the responses of the twenty respondents who returned their feedback forms (Appendix IV) after the joint interview. Most of them answered the questions on the form right after the joint interview, while two Euro Canadian couples returned it by mail within two weeks after the interview. Both Chinese and Euro Canadian respondents felt comfortable with the conversational dialogue approach of interviewing. One Chinese couple remarked that it was a novel approach to them. The husband remarked, "It is a good idea to tap the real life of couple in such a way." All Euro Canadian respondents said that they would not tell their experience in a different way if the researcher's first language had been English. One Euro Canadian male respondent found this conversational approach was more stimulating than filling out standard questionnaires.

A majority of the respondents felt it was appropriate to interview them individually first and then have the joint interview. These respondents felt the individual interview helped them to process their own thoughts and feelings. Two Euro Canadian respondents remarked that it allowed the researcher to get to know the respondents as individuals first, then as couples. One Euro Canadian female respondent and one Chinese male respondent felt an individual interview was not necessary since they could be comfortable in the joint interview. Another Euro Canadian male respondent preferred to have the joint interview first in order to feel more comfortable with the interview situation. One Euro Canadian couple thought it might be easier for them to write. I asked this couple to put their responses in writing when I clarified a few areas after their interviews.

All participants said that the interview process allowed them to reflect on their marital relationship. They thought the process heightened their awareness of different aspects of their marital relationship including how the relationship had changed; how they had grown; the factors that had contributed to how they related to their spouse; how well they were doing in the marriage; how much they appreciated their spouse; and the history they created together. The Chinese respondents added that their reflections in the interviews would help them to teach their children. One Euro Canadian wife and one Chinese husband remarked that the interview process helped them reflect deeply on the marriage, and was therapeutic and affirming for the relationship.

Section I: Understanding the couples in their socio-cultural contexts along the conceptual dimensions of collectivistic-individualistic and traditional-egalitarian orientations

Situating the Euro Canadian couples in the socio-cultural context of Canadian marriages

Historical context of marriage and the family in Canada

Canada has a relatively recent history of human settlement. According to Mandell and Duffy's (1995) account of Canadian family history, humans first came to Canada about 30,000 years ago. The aboriginal population, with a diverse ethnic background, settled in Canada 13,000 years ago. Hunting and gathering were the major economic activities at that time. Family kinship networks were strong and interdependent. The status difference between men and women was not marked, although men might have assumed a higher status

because of their strength and knowledge of weapons. Women's economic activities were essential to the survival of the family and they were highly regarded by the family (Conway, 1997).

European colonization in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries altered the original gender relationships among Native Canadians (Fisher, 1992; Mandell & Duffy, 1995). The values and ideals of European marriages contrasted sharply with the Natives' values. The Natives' husband-wife relationship was mostly non-hierarchical, characterized by divorce by consent, interdependence between the spouses, and sexual freedom after marriage for both men and women (Mandell & Duffy, 1995). Native women enjoyed a relatively higher economic and social status than Euro Canadian women during the period of European colonization. The penetration of European practices and attitudes regarding women imposed sexual codes on the Native women and changed the ancient male-female roles fundamentally.

Religion played a crucial role in the marriages of the early Canadian settlers. Kurian (1993) points out that marriage for the Canadians of European descent was "a civil and private contract based on Roman law and rooted in Christianity." (p.113). The enormous influence of Christianity on the lives of Canadians lasted until only three decades ago (The Vanier Institute, 1994b). The doctrines and practice of Christianity de-emphasized the authority of the extended kin unit (Gee, 1982). Social control and sanctions over individual and marital behaviours came mainly from the Church. Euro Canadian's marital conduct was greatly governed by the values and norms prescribed by their religion. Marriage was presumed to be for life, and had procreation as the main function. Divorce was nearly

impossible. Marital relations were hierarchical. The wife was expected to be dependent on and subordinate to the husband (Ramu, 1993; Mandell & Duffy, 1995).

The economic change from an agricultural to an industrialized society in Canada led to enormous changes in the Canadian family and marriage. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries while agricultural settlement increased, economic, social and domestic activities centred around the family. Men and women relied on each other's efforts to keep their families economically functioning (Mandell & Duffy, 1995). At that time, the family functioned as a collective for most Canadians. Although industrial society has a short history of 200 years in Canada, it brought a shift in the functions and values attributed to the family. The industrial nuclear family became the ideal norm for Canadians (Conway, 1997). Families were transformed from a busy workplace and social centre to a private home, especially for middle-class people. Men's and women's roles were based on a sharp division of labour – husbands were responsible for breadwinning and wives for homemaking and child rearing. Men controlled the resources and therefore held the power in decision making. The glorification of women's domestic pursuits after the Second World War put them in a low status position – both at home and in society. Women's greatest contribution to the human species became the source of their enslavement to male patriarchy and male privilege (Mandell & Duffy, 1995; Conway, 1997).

Accompanied by the changes in the structure and values of the family brought about by industrialization and urbanization, there was a general shift of emphasis from the family unit to individuals. Since then, Canadian marriages have been confronted by the increasing individualism which has flourished in North America. Individual desires for autonomy and

self-realization have taken precedence over the collective interests of the family (Ramu, 1993). The values of fulfilling individual potential and self-actualization became dominant in Canada starting in the 1960s (Kersten & Kersten, 1991). The predominantly nuclear structure of Canadian families reinforces the individualistic pursuits, self-containment, and privacy of relationships. Such a structure relies heavily on the joint responsibility of the marital dyad to provide resources and take care of their family. The enactment of female-male roles and relationships in such nuclear family structures is therefore more intense.

Since the late 1960s, family life has been greatly affected by women's entry into the labour force, and by the women's movement. The second wave of the women's liberation movement, and women's increased participation in the labour force, were major forces behind the gradual shift in the evaluation of sex and gender roles in Canada (Mudd & Taubin, 1982; Ramu, 1993; Conway, 1997). However, this evaluation process took a long time to effect change in the gender relationship in marriage in the private household sphere. A number of studies in different areas of Canada, like Halifax (Clark & Harvey, 1976), Calgary (Lashuk & Kurian, 1977), Toronto (Booth, 1979, Michelson, 1985), and Flin Flon, Manitoba (Luxton, 1983), suggested that there was no major change in the couple's domestic division of labour (in Ramu, 1993). Women, no matter whether employed or not, still had the greatest share of household work and child-care duties. These studies confirm the phenomenon of employed women doing a "second shift" as depicted by Hochschild (1989) – one shift is their paid labour, the other is their household work and child care at home.

There are substantial inequities in the division of labour in housework among husbands and wives (Lupri & Frideres, 1981; Mackie, 1991; Canadian Advisory Council on

the Status of Women, 1986 in Ramu, 1993; Lupri, 1991). In the 1990s, more than half the women in dual-earner families are still solely responsible for all daily household chores (Czerny, Swift, & Clarke, 1994). Research in Halifax, Vancouver, and Calgary shows that domestic household work and child care are still disproportionately shouldered by women, regardless of their working status. Despite the increasing involvement of husbands in housework, women continue to be responsible for the overall planning and overseeing of housework (Mackie, 1991). According to the *1990 General Social Survey* done by Statistics Canada, 52% of Canadian wives in dual-earner families took up all daily household work, while 28% assumed most of that responsibility. Only 10% of these families reported an equal sharing of housework (Lero & Johnson, 1994).

How are my Euro Canadian couples situated in the above historical context?

The Euro Canadian couples in my study grew up in a transitional period when their parents were transiting from engagement in agricultural production to industrial employment in the Regional Municipality of Waterloo. A Euro Canadian couple, Mr and Mrs Brown, described the difference in household arrangements between living on the farm and in the city. Originally, the husband and wife lived on a farm when they were children. When Mr Brown moved to live in the city, his mom started working. He and his siblings had to take turns doing the housework. The wife, Mrs Brown, who lived on the farm for the majority of her childhood, had a different experience. Her mom was a homemaker, and so she did all the inside household chores and child care while her father worked full-time outside the house.

The stories told by the Euro Canadian couples in my study indicated that their

parents' generation had marriages that conformed to the descriptions given above, especially those referring to marriages in the mid 1900s. In their parents' marriage, their father was the head of the family and made most of the family decisions. The roles of husband and wife were ascribed according to gender characteristics. The gender division of labour was parallel, in that mothers did all the inside work while fathers were the main providers and they only performed outside household jobs. For men, inside housework was taboo.

My Euro Canadian respondents were married between 1962 and 1966. Four of the couples echoed the voices of the approximately two-thirds of married couples in Canada, in which the wife is in gainful employment (Kurian, 1993; Ramu, 1993). These four couples were described as "transitional families" by Conway (1997), in which the wife worked till the birth of the first child, stayed home for a portion of the children's younger years, and then re-entered the work force. All four couples declared that they had started their marriages under a set of gender norms similar to their parents' and experienced pressure to reexamine their gender roles in marriage when the wife returned to the labour force after their children reached school age. The remaining couple, in which the wife stayed home as a homemaker, were among the just 19% of Canadian husband/wife families in which the husband is the only breadwinner for the household.

Situating the Hong Kong Chinese couples in the socio-cultural context of Canadian marriages

Historical context of Chinese marriage and the family in Hong Kong

Hong Kong was under British colonial rule from the late-nineteenth century to 1997.

Most of the population in Hong Kong are descendants of southern Chinese who settled in Hong Kong as refugees after the Communist take-over of China in 1949. Hong Kong has been an interface between Eastern and Western civilizations under British governance. The ethos of Chinese society in Hong Kong is distinctive from that of other Chinese societies such as Mainland China, Taiwan, and Singapore, as a result of the differences in their respective political structures (Lau & Kuan, 1988).

Chinese traditional thought, Confucianism and Taoism still prevail in the attitudes and behaviours of people in Hong Kong, 97% of whom are Chinese (Ma, 1991). Despite the influence of Western individualism under the British educational system, Hong Kong Chinese still have a collectivistic culture. A person's identity is embedded in a collective network of social relationships, in particular the extended family. Family, rather than the individual, has been regarded as the basic social entity throughout the long history of the Chinese (Lau, 1981; Hui & Triandis, 1986; Ho, 1998). As Ho (1998) noted, "social life is marked by a fundamental relatedness between individuals, not autonomy." Harmony and cooperation among group members, acceptance of authority, social interdependence, and mutual compromise are upheld as "ideal" in interpersonal relationships (Hui & Triandis, 1986; Tafarodi & Swann, 1996). Acceptance by the larger community and having "face" are a strong impetus for individual behaviours. Ho (1998) defines the Chinese construct of "face" as "the reciprocated compliance, respect, and/or deference that each party expects from, and extends to, the other party" (p.99) in personal interaction.

Traditional thought on marital relationships prescribed a hierarchical gender relationship. In the patriarchal society, based on an agrarian economy in ancient China,

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marriage allocated status, claims, privileges, and obligations in differential ways for men and women. Historically, gender relationships in China fit no doubt the Western characterization of inequality and male domination (Watson & Ebrey, 1991). Women, being the property of their husbands and their families, were in an inferior and subordinate relationship to men. This subordinate relationship was sustained by the code of ethics which guided the moral conduct of husband-wife relationships.[13]

The meaning of marriage to men and women is reflected in the Chinese language. The Chinese character for marriage for men is 娶, that is, to acquire a woman; while that for women is 嫁, which means leaving her own lineage and family of origin and marrying into her husband's family. The term 'woman' means an inside person. The traditional characters of 'marriage' for men and women signify men's possession of women in a marriage. Marriage is intricately connected with social hierarchy – men assume a higher social status than women. The social hierarchy is embedded in a system of social reproduction in which status, rank, and class differences are passed from one generation to another (Watson & Ebrey, 1991).

The rapid industrialization and urbanization processes which have taken place in Hong Kong since the 1960s transformed the marital relationship from an instrumental

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[13]In traditional Chinese society, principles like the "three cardinal guides" underscored the hierarchies of human relationship: the monarch guides the citizens, the father guides the son, and the husband guides the wife. The "three obediences" expected of a woman are to her father before marriage, to her husband after marriage, and to her son as a widow. The "four virtues" referred to a woman's (1) virtues, (2) speech, (3) appearance, and (4) work (in the family).

relationship to a conjugal relationship (Wong, 1973; Hong, 1973; Young, 1995). The dominant dyad in Hong Kong Chinese society is now the conjugal pair (Young, 1995) rather than the traditional parent-child pair (Hsu, 1965; Hendrick & Hsu, 1985). The marital system, rather than the extended family system, has become more the centre of the family system. A marital relationship is built upon emotional bonding and interdependence between the spouses. The convergence of Eastern and Western ideologies in Hong Kong, especially the influence of Western individualism, has had a further impact on marriages in Hong Kong. Following the Western model of love relationships, mate relationships in Hong Kong based on love and mutual attraction became the norm, replacing the traditional arranged marriages (Chaney & Podmore, 1974; Young, 1995). A gradual dilution of traditional values and practices is envisaged (Young, 1995; Law et al., 1995).

Gender relationships in Hong Kong Chinese marriages have undergone a re-definition over the last few decades as well. Increased educational opportunities for females, and the tremendous influx of females into the labour force since the 1960s, has also changed the status of women in Hong Kong (Tam, 1996; Pearson & Leung, 1995). Although the Western feminist movement has never taken hold in Hong Kong, the structural changes in Hong Kong society definitely transformed the status and roles of women in society, and to a certain extent, in the marital relationship. Women gained more influence and power in family planning and family resources. Young (1995) finds that although gender role differentiation among married couples remains conventional, the conjugal relationship is more than ever before characterized by companionship and sharing in a number of respects in daily living, particularly in decision making. However, women are still primarily responsible for

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household work (H.K.Y.W.C.A., 1982; H.K.B.G.C.A., 1984; Cheung, 1990; Lee, 1991b; Young, 1995; Law et al., 1995). A comparative study indicates that Hong Kong men spend fewer hours on average on household work than men in the cities of Guangzhou and Beijing in Mainland China (Law et al., 1995). The disproportionate share of household tasks for women, especially for working class women, results in role conflict and overload which may be even worse than that experienced by women in Western industrialized societies (Ma. 1991).

Traditional Chinese precepts such as "the mother's role is to nurture the husband and children" and "the husband should be superior to the wife" are still prevalent among Chinese married men and women (Ma, 1991; Law et al. 1995). The social ethos emphasizes that married women should be involved in the family. In her study of 102 couples in Hong Kong, Young (1995) discovered that women naturally give top priority to the role of housewife when making decisions regarding their self-development. She also found that both husbands and wives agreed that the husband's work is more important than the wife's. Women still perceive that they assist their husbands' career success and not vice versa. When women find their career hinders their family roles or their husbands' career development, they will give up their own career or change to a more flexible job (Ma, 1991).

Acculturation process for the first generation Hong Kong Chinese immigrant couples

The first generation Hong Kong Chinese immigrants in Canada have an additional process of acculturation in their host country. It is recognized that acculturation is important for immigrants to "adapt to their new cultural environment and thus learn to function

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comfortably in the context of norms that may differ greatly from those of their native country" (Rosenthal & Feldman, 1990, p.495). The adjustment process is immense for first generation immigrants. For example, they must reconcile the differences or contradictions in the values and norms of the host culture, counteract their loss of cultural continuity, deal with the feelings of uprootedness and loneliness, and struggle to reorganize their lifestyles and internal and external relationships. The marital dyad, as well as the family, needs to adjust to the cultural variation of collectivistic-individualistic values in the new societal context. Lee and Cochran (1988) discovered a polarized tension between this collectivism-individualism in fifteen women, aged 20 to 33, who had emigrated from Hong Kong to Vancouver three years or more before the time of the study. Most of their respondents regarded the new Canadian cultural values as contrary to their original Hong Kong Chinese values.

Lam (1982) conducted an in-depth study of 42 Chinese heads of intact families (28 male and 14 female), who were first generation immigrants in Toronto. The majority of them came from Hong Kong and were mostly dual-earner families. These respondents, with the median age of 26 and 29 for women and men respectively, unequivocally upheld that the family is their primary focus. Lam also found that these couples' decision-making patterns were quite egalitarian as the majority of decisions in such respects as finance, social activities, child care and home maintenance were joint decisions.

During the acculturation/adjustment process, we should not neglect the close connection between the immigrant couples and their fellow immigrants from Hong Kong and their continued connection with friends and relatives in Hong Kong. Turner (1991) suggests

that a "trans-context" lifestyle (elaborated in Chapter Three) for immigrants has been made possible by contemporary advances in technology. The older middle-class immigrant couples have constant telephone communication with relatives in Hong Kong and pay frequent visits there. The Chinese communities in Canada are very close-knit. With the immense immigrant population in Canada, places like Scarborough and Markham are nearly a replication of Hong Kong. The Chinese immigrants still socialize with their own friends and relatives from Hong Kong. Married couples, especially those long-term couples who have less proficiency in English, may mutually reinforce their old gender values and rules in their own circles.

How are the Chinese couples situated in the Hong Kong and Canadian socio-cultural contexts?

The Chinese couples included in my study went through the above-mentioned socio-economic development in Hong Kong. Industrialization and urbanization took place in the 1960s when these couples were married. Three out of the five Chinese wives worked full-time. Since they were middle-class professionals, they hired other women full-time or part-time to take care of their housework. The other two homemakers considered going out to work, but due to opposition from their husbands or parents, stayed home and took up all household and child-care duties.

Berry et al. (1992) introduced four modes of acculturation – marginalization, separation, assimilation, and integration along the dimension of maintaining one's own cultural identity and characteristics versus establishing relationships with other cultural groups in the mainstream society. The Chinese couples in my study ranged from being

slightly assimilated to mostly separated. The couples who immigrated earlier (the Wongs, the Fungs & the Tangs) had relatively more exposure to mainstream Canadian culture through mass media and local connections. The newcomers' exposure (the Chungs & the Lais who had been in Canada for four years at the time of the interview) was mostly confined to contact with the Hong Kong Chinese group in Scarborough, with only some contact with their non-Chinese neighbours.

The couples' own Chinese cultural identity was sustained by the close-knit Chinese community in Toronto and their continued connections with Hong Kong. They maintained strong contacts with the Chinese immigrant community in Toronto through Chinese churches, Chinese-speaking community clubs, and courses like English as a second language and citizenship classes. Only the three couples who immigrated earlier had some contacts with other cultural groups through paid work or voluntary work. However, the couples' interaction with other cultural groups was minimal, either as a result of their lack of proficiency in English or their identification with the Chinese group. Despite their length of stay in Canada, the Chinese couples' friends were mostly fellow Chinese immigrants. Most of them were exposed to Chinese media – newspapers, television, magazines. Nonetheless, these Chinese couples were assimilating to the gender relationship in marriage of mainstream society. The Chinese husbands in my study did more housework, to varying degrees, after coming to Canada. Even though their values about the gender relationship stayed the same, their practices in marriage, in particular their gender division of labour, represented an acculturation to the wider context of the Canadian culture – partly due to a nuclear family structure, the high cost of hiring maids in Canada, and the couples' empty-nest phase in their

family life cycle (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989).

Describing the couples along the traditional-egalitarian continuum in relation to their Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) and Role Orientation (ROR) scores

The traditional-egalitarian continuum among Chinese couples

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                                                            ----> lower ROR

Traditional                                                      Egalitarian
---!--------------!----------------------!-----------------!-----
Wongs(H:13/25,W:17/25) Lais(H:11/25, W:14/25)    Tangs(H:15/25,W:7/25)Fungs(H:6/24,
                                                                    W:7/23)
                                                  Chungs(H:6/25,W:15/25)


                                                            ----> higher DAS

Lower marital adjustment & satisfaction
---!--------------------!-----------------!-----------------!-----
Lais(H:111, W:107)    Wongs(H:123,W:114)  Chungs(H:115,W:130)  Fungs(H,131,W:137)
                                                               Tangs(H:137,W:130)
```

Notes:

a) H represents husband and W represents wife:

b) The upper continuum represents the traditional-egalitarian dimension. The higher the ROR score, the more traditional the gender role orientation.

c) The Fungs had a different base for the ROR score because they had no clear cut yes or no answer for a few statements.

d) The lower continuum represents the DAS scores of the couples: the higher the score, the higher the level of marital adjustment and satisfaction.

e) The scores along the continuum represent an ordinal rather than ratio scale.

Figure 4   The distribution of the Chinese respondents' ROR and DAS scores

Figure 4 displays the Chinese couples' DAS scores and ROR scores along the traditional-egalitarian dimension. The ROR measures the marital partners' gender role orientations, which reflects their perceptions of marital and parental sex roles (Snyder, 1989). The pattern in figure 4 suggests that the lower the couple's ROR scores, the higher their DAS

scores. This means that the more egalitarian the couple, or the more unconventional their gender role orientation according to the ROR, the higher their level of marital adjustment and satisfaction. In the case of both the husbands and wives, the Lais and the Wongs had higher traditional ROR scores and relatively lower DAS scores, while the reverse was the case for the Fungs. In other words, the Fungs had a more egalitarian gender role perception and they achieved a high level of marital adjustment and satisfaction. These findings were confirmed by the couples' narrative data.

There are exceptions to this pattern when the couples had contrasting ROR scores. Mr Tang had a high score on the DAS but also a relatively high traditional score on the ROR (15/25), although Mrs Tang had a low ROR score (7/25) and a relatively high DAS score as well. On the other hand, Mr Chung had a low score on the DAS but also had a low traditional score on the ROR (6/25), while Mrs Chung had a high score on the ROR (15/25) but also a high score on the DAS. Among these two couples, an inverse relationship is found between the one partner's DAS score and the other's ROR score. In the case of the Chungs, the wife had a higher DAS score while the husband had a lower ROR score. In the case of the Tangs, on the other hand, the husband had a higher DAS score while the wife had a lower ROR score. This finding is explored in the narrative texts in later sections.

The laughter that occurred during the interviews also corresponded with the higher DAS scores. When the DAS score of one or both spouses was low, such as in the case of the Chungs, the Lais, and the Wongs, the atmosphere, especially in the joint interview, was more tense while there was more laughter in the interviews with the Fungs and the Tangs.

While I adopted a Western definition of traditional and egalitarian marriages for

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purposes of my study, I need to note that there is another dimension when looking at Hong Kong Chinese marriages along the lines of traditional and modern marriages. The term 'traditional' carries a different meaning in Chinese in the Hong Kong context. Whether a Hong Kong Chinese couple is described as traditional depends on the extent to which the couple practises their marriage according to the traditional thinking of Chinese philosophies, which can be traced back to Confucian thinking (in the following text, I put 'traditional' in inverted commas when I refer to the Chinese meaning of the term). Today's 'traditional' Chinese couple's gender role construction, though behaviourally similar but ideological different from the Euro Canadian tradition, is based on men being the income earners and women being the homemakers. The 'traditional' values of Chinese marital practice, which has been discussed in the section on the *historical context of Chinese marriage and the family in Hong Kong*, were mostly acquired through family education or the Chinese traditional educational system.

Among my five Chinese couple respondents, Mr Chung and Mr Lai were proud to declare that they upheld the Chinese 'traditional' values in their practices in marriage. Mr Chung talked about tolerance and forgiveness as his global theme for getting along with the spouse, which was an important element in his long-term marriage. He quoted Confucianism on what is meant by respect:

H: Respect includes two concepts, one is to tolerate. As Confucius taught us, if someone slaps you or spits on you, you don't get angry right away. ..try to endure, don't hit back. Even if someone slaps you, don't... immediately, you look at what that means. Even if people spit on you, humiliating you, you don't even wipe it off. In ancient days people are great, just let it dry. The other concept is to forgive. Whether it is a friend, relative, children, or

husband and wife.[14] *They, they will do something wrong. Wrongdoing should be forgiven.*

He further explained respect in a Confucian sense to me:

H: that means respect each other as if she's a guest, like a guest, like you and me.

The other three Chinese couples, who had higher educational levels, went through the British Hong Kong educational system where 'traditional' Chinese thinking was less emphasized. The Wongs and the Tangs attended schools which were run by Western church denominations in Hong Kong, while the Fungs were educated in schools that had a communist ideology, and Mrs Fung also taught in this type of school. Such communist schools in Hong Kong strongly critiqued the 'traditional' Chinese values. They viewed 'traditional' Chinese ideology as oppressive, and upheld equality among human beings. Although the Wongs and the Tangs were traditional according to the definition in Western literature, they were considered 'modern' in the Hong Kong context. They were different from the 'traditional' couples in that all the three 'modern' wives received professional education, had no hesitation about working in the labour force after they were married, and continued their career after they had children. Their husbands also agreed that the wife should work in order to share the economic responsibilities of the family. Mr Wong agreed to his wife going abroad by herself several times during the course of their marriage for further training. Mr Wong volunteered to have a vasectomy after they had three children, which no 'traditional' man would ever do.

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[14]Note here that the wife only ranked last in his list of the five categories of people.

The traditional-egalitarian continuum among Euro Canadian couples

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                                                      ----> lower ROR

Traditional                                                   Egalitarian
___!_____!_____!_____!_____
Carters(H:14/24,W:19/23)   Browns(H:6/20,W:14/24)      Taylors(H:5/25,W:2/25)
                                 Scotts(H:9/25,W:9/21)    Smiths(H:0/24,W:4/24)



                                                      ----> higher DAS
Lower marital adjustment & satisfaction
___!_____!_____!_____!_____
Carters(H:109,W:117)    Smiths(H:110,W:119)    Browns(H:120,W:130) Scotts(H:133,W:134)
                        Taylors(H:111,W:115)
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Note: Most of the Euro Canadian respondents did not have a base of 25 in their ROR scores
because they found they could not give a yes or no answer to some of the statements.

Figure 5   The distribution of the Euro Canadian respondents' ROR and DAS

scores

The ROR scores of the Euro Canadian couples in figure 5 in general were lower than

the Chinese couples' scores, which means the Euro Canadian couples had a less traditional

gender role orientation than did the Chinese couples. Except for the Carters, who had an

inverse relationship between their ROR score and DAS score, the Euro Canadian couples

displayed a more diverse relationship between their DAS and ROR scores than did the

Chinese group. Mrs Brown had a high ROR score (14/24) while she had a high DAS score

(130), and her ROR score was different from that of her husband's (6/20). However, the

same inverse relationship between the wife's high DAS score and the spouse's low ROR

score was found in this couple, as in the cases of the Chinese couples who had contrasting

ROR scores. The two couples (the Taylors and the Smiths) who had the lowest ROR scores actually had relatively low DAS scores.

When I examined the couples' narrative texts, the Smiths were very satisfied with their present relationship. Mrs Smith described the couple's relationship as *"probably better than it's ever been."* Both spouses scored high in marital satisfaction but low in marital adjustment in their DAS scores. A possible reason might be their opposite personalities as they came from different family backgrounds (see the couple's story in the section *Summary impressions*). Another possible reason might be that the DAS could not capture the dramatic changes in the couple's marital relationship which they experienced over the last fifteen years.

The Taylors' narrative texts also revealed that they were very satisfied with their marital relationship. The possible reason for their lower DAS score might be their lack of interaction because of the increased number of nights the wife was working at the time of the interview. The low DAS scores of the two above-mentioned couples, the Taylors and the Smiths, might reflect a lack of sensitivity of the scale to change, rather than the actual low marital adjustment and satisfaction of the couples. If my extrapolation is correct, the Euro Canadian couples, except the Carters, had a high level of satisfaction in their marriages when they had a low ROR score. In other words, Euro Canadian couples needed a more unconventional gender role orientation in order to achieve a higher level of marital adjustment and satisfaction than the Chinese.

Section II: Understanding the meaning of marriage in the two cultural groups

The responses to my question of "how often do you think about your marriage?" were random among respondents from both cultural groups, meaning that equal numbers of men and women in both groups did not think often about their marriages, and as many who thought about their marriages often as those who did not. Marriage is a day-to-day living experience that most respondents were not reflexive about. The uneasiness of the Chinese men in discussing their marriages in the interviews was reflected by the minimal use of pronouns in their narratives. Furthermore, the Chinese men always used the term "natural" when describing their marriages:

M: how often do you think about your marriage?"

Mr Chung: Haven't thought much.. My view is that it's just natural, get married, raise children, and continue on.

The Chinese couples, though aware of the rising divorce rate in their own society, emphasized more the long-lasting nature of marriage. The Chinese men held that it was taken for granted that a marriage was to last. A 'traditional' Chinese man, Mr Chung, expressed the following view:

"Especially for Chinese, if you got married, then expect, that it is to last. This is mostly Chinese tradition. After married, of course a companion, so always treat her as my companion... We Chinese don't need to do something special. That is feel very natural, and live this way throughout marriage.... This is different from Westerners, they need to hug their partner every minute, or tell jokes to make her happy. But in our Chinese tradition, we don't need to do that. Just don't need to."

According to Wallerstein and Blakeslee (1995), North American culture is a divorce culture. My Euro Canadian respondents, be they like the Carters, who stressed that their marriage is forever, or like the others who thought the permanence of marriage was

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conditional, all felt they needed to try hard to work toward their marital satisfaction. In my study, the Euro Canadian men worked harder than the Chinese men in cultivating their marriages as we can see in the coming sections. This might suggest that the Euro Canadian had higher expectations of their marriages and that they had a different meaning of marital satisfaction than their Chinese counterparts. Four of the five Euro Canadian couples had attended either couple workshops, or communication workshops, or had gone through counselling to learn ways to enrich their marital relationship. In the Chinese group, only one couple attended a similar type of marital communication workshop after they came to Canada. At the time of the interview, none of the couples was in marital counselling. The following narratives of two women from different cultural groups, in response to my question "how do you find yourself being a wife?", reflect their beliefs about marriage and divorce:

Euro Canadian	Chinese
Mrs Taylor: I think I always grew up wanting to be married and having children so I never um .. *it's what I wanted and I don't find it [umhum],* *it would be strange I think not to be married [umhum],* *and lonely not to be [umhum].* *But then I didn't have somebody who'd beat me and said nasty things to me and [yeah], you know, so,* *I also believe that marriages have to dissolve if they're bad.*	*Mrs Wong: I feel when a woman decides to choose a partner for lifetime,* *you need to consider thoroughly before you get married.* *But I think once you make your decision, whether the marriage is good or bad, you need to take it.* *Divorce, like nowadays, is not a solution.* *The point is you need to think clearly before you get married.* *Don't follow the present trend that people think about divorce when they get married.* *That would be problematic....* *It would be worse if you have children since we have our motherhood nature...* *I think we need to learn from our tradition, no matter what happened, we should maintain our family, for the sake of children.*

Mrs Taylor's narrative reflected the societal context of the prevalence of violence in Canadian marriage. She did not think all marriages should last. The Chinese wife came from a different societal context where violence is less prevalent. Mrs Wong stressed that one should maintain an unhappy marital relationship, for the sake of the next generation. Mrs Wong's narrative was in response to the rising trend of divorce in her societal context – both in Hong Kong and in her twelve years of experience in Canada. She later remarked that she could not speak on behalf of those women who were suffering in their marriages. Her emphasis was on trying to tolerate the marital situation as much as one could if one had decided to get married and have children.

Blurred boundary between family and marriage among the Chinese couples

Chinese men and women saw family and marriage as interchangeable, while Euro Canadian men and women saw the two systems as distinct. The following findings and interpretations of findings were confirmed by couples during the 'member check.' The Chinese couples treated the two systems, marriage and family, as nearly the same system, while placing higher priority on the family. The meaning of marriage, to the Chinese couples in my study, is
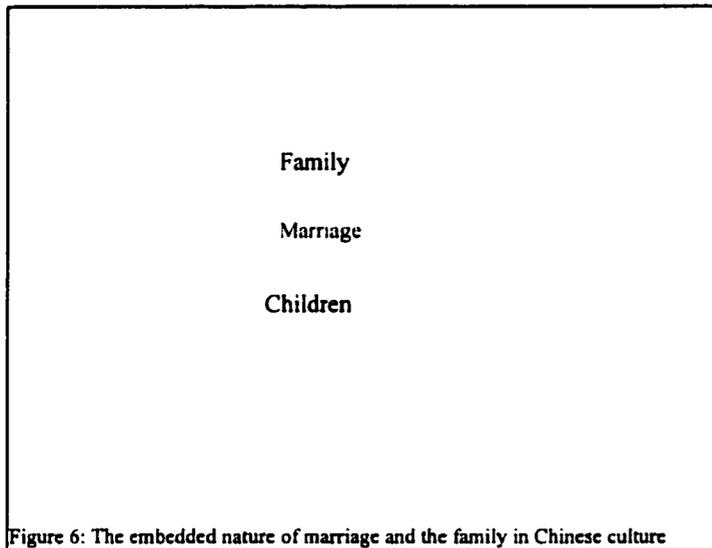
Family

Marriage

Children

Figure 6: The embedded nature of marriage and the family in Chinese culture

submerged or embedded in the family system, in which children are part and parcel of a marital system (Figure 6). Although the Chinese respondents' family structure is basically a nuclear family, the respondents referred to family not only as the immediate family, but also as the extended family. For example, Mr Tang included his god children as members of his family. Mrs Lai stressed that a marriage is between two families even though they did not live under one roof.

To the Chinese, a successful family is a successful marriage. One Chinese wife, Mrs Wong said,

"We need to fulfil our role in a household or in a family, otherwise our marriage will be in jeopardy."

In her view, family, household and marriage were equivalent terms. Another Chinese wife, Mrs Tang, said,

"If a family is a close-knit unit, a network, each feels bonded to one another. This is a good marriage. This is a major criteria."

I clarified with her whether she really meant that when a family is close-knit, it has a great impact on the bonding of the marriage. Her answer was affirmative. The Chinese couples always used family and marriage in a parallel or interchangeable way like:

"No matter marital relationship, or family life.."

"In a family, besides the two loving each other, they need to love God."

Children are an integral part of the Chinese couples' marriages

The categories of marriage and children were also intermingled in the couple's narrative. The Chinese couples always grouped their spouse and children together as an entity. For example, Mr Fung said, "must treat children and wife well;" and Mr Lai said, "no matter my wife or children." When Mrs Wong talked about her critical change in her relationship with her husband after coming to Canada, she said, *"That means more time to be with the family, and more time with the children."* The Chinese couples' romance sometimes centred around their children. Mr and Mrs Fung recalled one Christmas when they still lived in Hong Kong and wanted to do something romantic, they took their children out in the middle of the night to see Christmas lights.

The Chinese couples involved their children in discussing family matters like finances, work, relatives, family disputes, and church matters. Some couples like the Fungs and the Tangs included their children in making decisions on such issues as immigration.

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Some couples like the Lais and the Wongs involved their children in expressing opinions on the couple's disputes.

Children are crucial in maintaining the Chinese family and therefore greatly affect Chinese couples' marital relationships. Both men and women saw their children's success as key to their marriages. Mr Wong said,

"many people think that marriage only includes the couple, but if children do not have a healthy growth, they would have great effect on the couple relationship."

He further said,

"if the children turn bad, the couple would blame each other for the rest of their life."

Children also played an important role in enhancing the couples' relationships. Mr Tang considered the presents his children bought for the couple, such as bath oil, as a constant reminder for them to be happy together.

Couplehood is a distinct system in Euro Canadian marriages

Among the Euro Canadian couple respondents, their couplehood was a discrete system which was clearly differentiated from other family subsystems. For them, family and marriage belonged to two different levels as illustrated in figure 7. Such a distinction was illustrated by Mrs Smith's narration:

"For me personally, and for {short pause} us together [umhum] and then I think for us as a family [umhum] on, so it's on different levels [umhum]."

Their definition of family only included members of their nuclear family. Extended family belonged to another system, as did children. The clear distinction between the couple subsystem and children subsystem was further supported by the language the Euro Canadian couples used. The couple used mostly "we" (couple) and "they" (children), in contrast to the Chinese's "we" (couple and children).

Similar to the Chinese, the Euro Canadian couples treated children as their priority and they were children-centred and family-centred, especially when the children were young. Mrs Scott remarked, *"to us our family is still THE most important definitely."* Her husband said, *"in my life, God is number one, my family is second, and my career is third."* Mrs Taylor recounted a major conflict with her husband around their son:

"I said to {husband} one time if we were ever to divorce or separate, it would be because of the conflict that {son} has caused us."

Family of Origin

.

Nuclear Family

-

Couple

.

Individual

Figure 7: The distinctive levels of
marriage and the family
in Euro Canadian culture

Nonetheless, she saw children as not part of herself nor of the couple's marital system. For example, she said:

"I mean your children are not you...."

"maybe that's [their sickness] made, made us a closer family actually [umhum], because they had so much alike [umhum] that maybe they're closer than what some siblings are."

Unlike the Chinese, the Euro Canadian couples did not mention their parent-child interaction if it was not relevant to the

narration of their marital experience.

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In contrast to the Chinese couples who emphasized family togetherness, the Euro

Canadian couples emphasized their couple togetherness – the couple's time alone to nurture

their relationship – and how they were distinct from their children. All my Euro Canadian

respondents had their couple-alone activities. They had their getaways each year, even when

their children were young. They all found that these couple-alone times benefited their

marital relationship. Mrs Carter talked about the benefit of the couple's regular getaway:

W: I think usually at those times my mind would be refreshed and you can get ideas and you'd see things from a different perspective when you're away from the place [yeah], and get enthusiasm to go back.

M: Umhum, umhum. So what kind of perspective? Like..

W: Well, just things, maybe the problems don't look as big or you, a different way of looking at them.

Another Euro Canadian couple (the Smiths) set aside half an hour of exclusive couple time

each day for the last twenty years in order to catch up with each other's day. Mr Smith

remarked:

"we agreed that we would not talk about the children or the business of running the household [umhum] or any of the decision-making things, it would be just [umhum] time to be together"

This is in great contrast to the Chinese couples whose primary topic of communication

between them was children.

Individuality/Separateness in Euro Canadian marriages

A balance of separateness and togetherness in a marital relationship is advocated by

Western marriage studies and family therapists (Beavers, 1985; Josselson, 1992; Willi, 1992;

Robinson & Blanton, 1993; Martin-Knudson, 1994; Whitaker & Minuchin in Becvar & Becvar, 1996). In my data, individuality/separateness in marriage was a distinctive cultural factor which contributed to the Euro Canadian couples' marriages. The Euro Canadian couples highly respected each other's individuality. Maintaining their individuality and separateness were equally important as couple togetherness for their marital relationship. As the Taylors emphasized, *"we do a lot of things together [yeah], but we also do things on our own."* Even the most traditional Euro Canadian husband (Mr Carter) said, *"I have to let {wife} be her own person and she has to let me be my own person."*

For the Euro Canadian respondents, preserving their spouse's individuality was essential to the well-being of the marriage. As Mrs Brown remarked,

W: Well, I think, I think that's important because I think you still have to be an individual. As much as you grow alike by being married, the longer you're married, I think you still have to have your own individual time [right], and um, and likes and dislikes [right].

Of the Browns, Scotts, and Taylors, each spouse had one night out regularly and they enjoyed their own separate activities. Among the Euro Canadian couples, the Scotts were the couple who emphasized the importance of doing things together as a couple. As Mrs Scott said, *"We were never once to do things separately.....you can't lose sight of the fact that you have to do things together."* Despite the couple's emphasis on the importance of being together in many places of their narratives, they did not look forward to being with each other all day long when the wife anticipated her upcoming retirement. The following was the couple's dialogue:

W: I don't look forward to being with him 24 hours a day [M: right] hmm 365 days a year. [M: right] And I think he feels the same way.

H: We need our space too.

W: We have to have something that we do as individuals to keep our indi·iduality, [M: hmmhmm] I think that's the big thing.

The Euro Canadian couples found that it was beneficial for their marriages to have separate activities and meet different people. Sharing things from their separate spheres of life could enrich their lives as a couple. By contrast, the Chinese couples found the enrichment of their relationship through enjoying their couple time together with other couple friends. One Chinese wife, Mrs Fung, commented that the couple had a lot to share after the joint activities with other couples, as both spouses participated in the same event. These differences between the two groups of couples under study reflect their different locations on the collectivism-individualism dimension.

The Euro Canadian respondents could respect and feel alright about their spouse doing things on his or her own. For example, Mr Smith was a camper and canoer while Mrs Smith was not. Mr Smith went on trips alone every year and the wife felt fine. On the contrary, one Chinese wife, Mrs Chung, tried to find different ways to persuade her husband to join an elderly centre's activities with her when she wanted to join. The couple always did things together. As the wife recounted,

"He never goes out to buy his clothing, never.
He'd asked my opinion about his choice.
I'm very used to follow him wherever he goes,
and now he follows me wherever I go.
We've been always together.
No matter where we go, or whether we had children with us, we're always together.
We never did things separately, never."

Mrs Chung also emphasized that couples should not have separate activities, which she

regarded as neglect of the spouse. One time, despite her husband's objections, Mrs Chung returned to Hong Kong to see her mom before she died. However, she felt guilty after she came home and found her husband was sick and had lost ten pounds because he could not cope with managing the family when she was away. This would not have happened to the Euro Canadian couples. For example, both Mrs Taylor and Mrs Carter mentioned that their husbands were perfectly fine if they went on a trip on their own.

Section III: Understanding the meaning of marital satisfaction in the two cultural groups

Marital satisfaction is a subjective concept about what vital factors constitute happiness for a person in a marital relationship (Gurman & Kniskern, 1991; Kaslow & Hammerschmidt, 1992). There are many paths that lead to marital satisfaction, depending on the standards and expectations on which the married couple based their union. I examined the contrasting features of the two cultural groups' marital expectation as reflected by their response to my question, "what makes your marriage satisfactory?" Their responses reflected the collectivistic-individualistic orientations of the two cultural groups.

Sources of marital satisfaction as reflected by the global themes of couples' narratives

As described in Chapter Four, global themes are the overall intention and beliefs of a person's narrative. In analysing the respondents' overall intent of their narratives and the local themes of their core narratives, I found a coherence between the two. In other words, there is a 'global coherence' in each cultural group's narratives. Consistent with the above-

mentioned characteristics of Chinese and Euro Canadian marriages, the Chinese couples placed more emphases on fulfilling their duties as a marital partner and as a parent, and derived satisfaction from those family roles. On the other hand, the Euro Canadian couples placed more emphases on the intrinsic factors in a dyadic relationship such as enjoying doing things together, being with each other, sharing joy and sorrow, respect, care and concern for each other. Although the Chinese couples also had enjoyable couple activities and the above-mentioned intrinsic couple qualities, these themes were not as important as fulfilling their family responsibilities.

Chinese couples' satisfaction was more contingent upon their fulfilling family responsibilities, in particular to their children. All five Chinese couples had achieved their common goal of building a family with first priority given to the success of their children. Both spouses were proud of the achievements of their children. The Euro Canadian couples also had a global theme of building a happy family – having a house and children. Unlike the case of Chinese couples, children's success was not the Euro Canadian couples' source of marital satisfaction. They gained their satisfaction from their partner's companionship, sharing, and personal accomplishments in the marriage. For example, Mrs Carter derived a lot of satisfaction from her foster care of over eighty children.

Couples from both cultural groups were pleased that they shared similar values with their spouses and agreed on their priorities in life. In comparing the global themes of the two groups' perception of marital satisfaction, *security and trust* – a feeling of security in the relationship and family and mutual trust between the couples – were the major themes among the Chinese group; while *companionship* – being able to work well together to achieve the

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couple's goals, to raise a family, cope with difficulties, and have fun – was the global theme of Euro Canadian couples. The Chinese couples perceived relationship and duty as two sides of the same coin. The dyadic relationship was not the only intrinsic factor in their marital satisfaction. Fulfilling spousal duties and responsibilities to the family is a Chinese cultural expectation, and is internalized as an individual expectation in a marriage. The global themes in each cultural group's narratives were confirmed during the 'member check.'

The above-mentioned global themes discovered in couples' narratives serve as the connecting threads throughout the reading of the following findings and discussion chapters. The following two segments of narratives from each cultural group, in response to my question: "what makes your marriage satisfactory?", illustrate the different global themes.

Euro Canadian	*Chinese*
Mr Brown: *Both my wife and I work well together, play well together and [umhum], and {pause} respect each other [umhum] and got along well...* *as {pause} far as our marriage, a general statement, most things we're doing when we're doing it we have, are having fun, or are enjoying ourselves [umhum]. Even at work uh, you know, both {wife} and I have a pretty good sense of humour and [oh yeah], and uh {pause} we're, you know, some people would see us doing some things as work but we really don't consider that work.*	**Mr Lai:** *My feeling is that with this family and this wife, I feel very secure......* *With my wife and children, I feel very trustful in this group...and we are for the children.*

Marital adjustment and satisfaction of the two cultural groups as reflected by the Dyadic Adjustment Scale

Although building the family and raising children were more central to Chinese couples' marital relationships, their level of marital adjustment and satisfaction, as reflected by their DAS scores, was slightly higher than that of their Euro Canadian counterparts. The Chinese couples attained a higher average DAS score (123.6) than the Euro Canadian couples, who had an average of 119.8, despite the fact that the Chinese group had a lower cut-off score (100, later on raised to 107) than did the Euro Canadians (110). Although it was expected that the Chinese group would score lower on average on the DAS because a few scale items were biased in favour of Western culture, the Chinese group actually attained a higher score than the Euro Canadians on the DAS. The Chinese couples did score lower on these items. For example, four out of five Chinese couples responded "rarely" or "occasionally" to the item: "Do you kiss your mate?" while four of the five Euro Canadian couples responded with "almost every day" or "every day" on this item.

The mean scores of both groups were higher than the mean score of Spanier's normative population (Spanier, 1976) which was 114.8, and that of the Hong Kong population in Young's study (1995), which was 116.4. The following breakdown of the range and average DAS scores presents a more detailed picture:

(1)   Chinese wives were 107 - 137, mean = **123.6**;

(2)   Chinese husbands were 111 - 137, mean = **123.4**;

(3)   Euro Canadian wives were 115 - 134, mean = **123**;

(4)   Euro Canadian husbands were 109 - 133, mean = **116.6**.

The average scores for both groups of wives and for the Chinese husbands were very similar with an average of 123. This average score was close to the one found by Kaslow and Robinson (1996). Their mean score of 125.1 was reported to be one-half a standard deviation above the mean for the normative group reported by Spanier (1976). However, the Euro Canadian husbands' average score was only slightly above the mean score of 114.8 of the normative population in Spanier's (1976) study. In my study, all Euro Canadian wives had higher DAS scores than their spouses, indicating the Euro Canadian wives felt a higher level of marital adjustment and satisfaction than did their respective husbands. My finding that the Euro Canadian men had lower marital satisfaction than their wives was not typical in the findings of other research, which found men had a higher level of satisfaction in marriage (Sporakowski & Hughston, 1978; Rhyne, 1981; MacKinnon, MacKinnon & Franken, 1984; Gilford, 1986; Peterson, 1990; Kaslow, Hansson, & Lundblad, 1994; Levenson, Carstensen, & Gottman, 1994).

Variation of marital satisfaction among each cultural group

According to the range of DAS scores mentioned above, there is a spread from the cut-off score to a high score of 137 in the Chinese group and of 134 in the Euro Canadian group. The Chinese couples, the Chungs, the Lais and the Wongs, in which one or both spouses had a lower DAS score, emphasized mostly the couple's mutual trust as a source of their marital satisfaction. They trusted each other to fulfil their roles in building the family. The two other Chinese couples, the Fungs and the Tangs, who achieved a higher level of marital adjustment and satisfaction (both spouses had DAS scores at around 130), enjoyed

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a deep personal sharing with each other, good communication and mutual consideration in addition to mutual trust. Nonetheless, one of the overarching themes, as mentioned in the above section, was the fulfillment of their responsibilities towards the family.

In the Chinese group, the Lais' case illustrate a distinction between marital happiness and marital satisfaction. The experience of the wife, Mrs Lai, was contrary to the claim in the literature that marital satisfaction equates with marital happiness (Stinnett, Carter, & Montgomery, 1972; Lauer & Lauer, 1986; Lauer, Lauer & Kerr, 1990). Mrs Lai had the lowest DAS score (107) of all the respondents. She described herself as not very happy yet satisfied with her marriage since she got most of her wishes fulfilled in her marriage.

As noted before, there was a discrepancy between the DAS score and narratives of two Euro Canadian couples, the Taylors and the Smiths. Of all the Euro Canadian couples in my study, only the Carters were less adjusted and satisfied in their marital relationship, as reflected by both their DAS scores and narratives. This couple and three other Euro Canadian couples, the Browns, the Scotts, and the Taylors, emphasized their common background, common interests, common religious faith and common morals and values as the global themes of their marital satisfaction. "We both think along the same lines" was the typical statement for the Browns, the Scotts and the Taylors. One Euro Canadian couple, the Smiths, stressed that they were very different, and had opposite upbringings. They experienced a lot of struggles, even to the extent where they were once separated for two months, in order to achieve an equal relationship which was considered satisfactory to both of them.

Chapter Seven

Findings and Discussion II: Social construction of gender and culture in satisfactory

long-term marriages

The gender relationship in a heterosexual marriage is co-constructed by the husband and the wife, according to their own and their spouse's expectations of gender roles. In this chapter, I analyse the couples' responses to my questions regarding their roles as husband or wife and their expectations of their spouse's role with regard to their marital satisfaction. I explore the social construction of gender and culture in the marital experiences of the two cultural groups, and the construction process of gender relationships in the two cultural groups in achieving their long-term marital satisfaction. Lastly, I examine one's sense of self as a husband or a wife in the two cultural groups.

Culture constructs male and female roles (Worden & Worden, 1998). Gender roles are internalized as gender schemas by an individual (Ho, 1995; Worden & Worden, 1998), as noted in Chapter One. Such gender schemas affect how one views oneself as male or female and how one views the opposite sex. The gender schemas also prescribe gender behaviours and how others react to those behaviours. A couple's gender role expectations in marriage are influenced by the gender schemas they have acquired from their culture and daily interactions since childhood.

Section IV: Understanding the social construction of gender from the two cultural groups' gender role expectations in marriage

"Men and women within a given culture are more likely to share similar gender schemas." (Worden & Worden, 1998, p.10). My data are in line with the view of Worden & Worden (1998) in that they show more between-group differences than within-group differences in gender role expectations in marriage. That is, men and women were more similar in their gender role expectations in the same cultural group. Thus, the gender role expectations of Chinese women were more similar to those of Chinese men than to those of their Euro Canadian counterparts, and vice versa. The gender role expectations of each cultural group were confirmed by couples of the respective group during the 'member check.'

Gender role expectations in Euro Canadian marriages

Both genders of the Euro Canadian group respected individuality and expected their spouses to treat them with respect. Although Mrs Carter emphasized financial security and her husband's fidelity as the global themes of her marital satisfaction, she valued her own freedom in the marital relationship, as much as any other Euro Canadian male and female respondent, as a constituting factor for her marital satisfaction:

Mrs Carter: I'm free to be my own self [umhum], I don't feel under his domination or anything [umhum, yeah]. Like if I want to take something up or do something or go somewhere, I can do it.

A good husband, to the Euro Canadian women, was supportive of what his wife wanted to do. One Euro Canadian wife, Mrs Taylor, talked about her husband being very

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supportive of her as a source of her satisfaction in the marriage. She was well aware that this was not a given when she compared her husband with other husbands in her culture. She mentioned three times in different places that her husband encouraged her to go back to work after the children were at school, and she compared him with other men.

Mrs Taylor: *He has always encouraged me to work, where I think some people in our age group, the husbands want them at home [yeah], doing everything for them [umhum].*

The Euro Canadian wives appreciated their husbands' qualities of being kind and caring, understanding, considerate and able to adjust to them. They liked their husbands for not being chauvinistic, not complaining, and doing what they expected him to do. A husband's responsibilities in the marriage were to work well with the wife, appreciate what the wife did, and give her the best. Mr Brown described his role as a husband,

"Just doing whatever I was, was expected to do, or help her to do what she, what her goals were."

All Euro Canadian wives remarked that their husbands were very supportive of what they desired to do and respectful of their choice, no matter what it was. This might partially explain why all five Euro Canadian wives had higher DAS scores, which signified their higher level of marital adjustment and satisfaction, than their respective husbands.

The global themes of Euro Canadian husbands' expectations of a good wife included being a confidante and partner, and sharing life together in a meaningful way. Although the Euro Canadian wives shared similar expectations, the Euro Canadian men held them more strongly. A typical case was Mr Carter, who treasured his wife's sharing, while Mr Scott, Mr Taylor, and Mr Carter mentioned similar things too:

Mr Carter: *Now I think women make better friendships than men often do, at least in our*

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case, I don't think I have any really close friends [umhum] and um, it's best if I tell her a few things about some people, and there are some people she talks about you know that I don't know very much about but it does give us, I think it enriches our lives a little bit if we tell each other some things, we don't have to know all the details but [umhum] find out something that goes on in the other part of her life and she in the other part of my life [umhum], and I think that, I think that helps overall that we do have outside interests but we do talk about them.

In an individualistic society like Canada, the most intimate interpersonal relationship is a couple's relationship, although more Canadians seek alternatives other than marriage, such as common-law relationships (refer to figures showing the growing number of common-law relationships in Canada in Chapter One). The Euro Canadian couples, who are situated in an individualistic society, yearned for an intimate companionship that would be fulfilled by their marriages. The five couples achieved this goal, which made them feel very satisfied in their marriages.

The Euro Canadian husbands, like Mr Scott, Mr Taylor, and Mr Carter, mentioned that they had nearly no intimate relationship with people other than their wives, whom these husbands regarded as their best confidante. As Mr Taylor said, *"I don't have any other friends except her [wife] actually [umhum], really close friends. She's my closest friend."* The Euro Canadian husbands' expectation of their wives being their confidantes was much stronger as a source of marital satisfaction than their expectation that they should take care of the children; or maybe the latter expectation was taken for granted. Only one Euro Canadian husband, Mr Brown, said that he expected his wife to take care of the kids while they were growing up and to make lots of decisions when he was not around.

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Gender role expectations in Chinese marriages

Both cultural groups stressed that marriage needs to be shared between the spouses, but this meant different things in each group. The Euro Canadian couples emphasized sharing of earnings, resources, body, mind, feelings, and even housework, though the Carters' sharing was more limited as they had more defined roles. Even compared to the Carters, the Chinese, especially the 'traditional' couples, had a more defined role in their meaning of sharing in marriage. For them, each spouse had his/her roles to fulfil in building the family:

Mr Lai: When we got married, we already knew that this family was shared,
just like a partnership in a company.
We both share the responsibilities.
There is no hierarchy of who is higher or lower.
Each just performs his/her role...
Most of the tasks are shared.
I do those that are suitable for me, so I go to work.
Wife doesn't need to work, she then does housework.

Growing up in a collectivistic society, the Chinese couples' gender role expectations were more defined according to the ascribed roles of husband and wife. It is in sharp contrast to the Euro Canadian couples' expectations which centred around a dyadic relationship. In the Chinese group, a good husband was expected to provide for and love the family. Providing financial security was his primary job. Loving the family meant treating the wife and children well, and being willing to spend time with the family. Both husbands and wives treasured their family time even though they rarely had couple-alone activities when the children were young.

The Chinese wives had a different set of gender role expectations of marriage than

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the Euro Canadian wives. The Chinese wives, especially Mrs Chung, Mrs Lai and Mrs Fung, felt satisfied with their husbands being dependable, faithful, and responsible to the family. Mrs Lai remarked,

"Even if he treats me well but rebels me behind my back, I won't feel secure and won't feel satisfied."

In the Chinese sense, "rebel" means having extra-marital affairs. Mrs Chung, Mrs Lai and Mrs Fung explicitly expressed their expectation that their husbands be a responsible provider and bring money home to support the family.

The Euro Canadian wife, Mrs Carter, also had an expectation that her husband be a responsible provider – bring money home and manage their money. Both Mrs Chung and Mrs Carter explicitly stated that they were satisfied with their husbands' faithfulness, and that they felt secure in the marriage. However, their narrative brought out their differences in gender role expectations:

Euro Canadian (Mrs Carter)	Chinese (Mrs Chung)
M: Like maybe you think of something that you feel was satisfactory in your relationship. What do you find satisfactory? Mrs Carter: Well, my husband is faithful to me. M: Umhum. Faithful in what sense? Mrs Carter: Like he hasn't been flirting with anybody else or [right] going to bed with anybody else [umhum] or even tempted to as far as I know [right]. And I trust him completely [umhum]. I wouldn't be looking to see if there was lipstick somewhere or whatever [yeah], you know. I would trust him completely [umhum, umhum].	Mrs Chung: He didn't flirt around, never... As long as he didn't come home after midnight, I don't care what he does. As a way of life, we need to take it easy. As long as he didn't give trouble to me i.e bring other offspring home.

Both women expected their husbands to be faithful. In Mrs Carter's narrative, she had complete trust in her husband's fidelity. Her narrative was a typical low context one, which was straightforward and explicit. On the contrary, Mrs Chung's narrative was a high context one. There were more embedded meanings in the narrative of her expectations of her husband's faithfulness. The socio-cultural context provides important clues to understanding her expectations. According to her narrative, she did not know whether her husband was really faithful to her or not. As long as her husband came home before midnight, she allowed for some ambiguities. Her worst nightmare was to be like her mom, who had to take care of her father's children from his extra-marital relationship. The respondents' generation, who married after the War, was the first generation to practise monogamous marriage in Hong

Kong. Those who grew up in a 'traditional' Chinese family typically had father who had concubines. Some of my Chinese respondents witnessed the complicated family relationships resulting from polygamous marriages in the last generation, which cast shadows on their own marriage.

For the Chinese couples, a good wife was expected to master the household and discipline the children well. All Chinese male respondents, except Mr Fung, expected that the wife, whether she worked outside the home or not, would take care of all the household-related matters so that the husband would not have to worry about the family. The majority of these Chinese men expected their wives to look after the household matters, and discipline their children, although final authority rested with the husband. The three Chinese working wives hired maids to do the household chores and child care, so the couple's gender division of labour was camouflaged.

In a more 'traditional' Chinese marriage, the wife was even expected to be the one who nurtured and took care of the husband as well as the family. Mr Chung expressed such an expectation of his wife in response to the following question:

01 M: Like your relationship with wife, what makes you feel satisfied?

02 H: She can take care of me
03 That means have a partner, simultaneously, we have talks and chats,
04 then feel satisfied.
05 Better than being alone eh...

Line 02 was the first time in ten minutes of conversation in the individual interview he used a pronoun for himself and referred to his wife. Line 05 ended with a non-lexical utterance. Notice his missing pronoun and this qualifying statement which reflected that his preference

for being married was just "better than being alone." The casual and subtle way in which the narrator made his remark about expecting the wife to be a companion suggests that such an expectation was quite taken for granted by this Chinese man. Mr Chung later elaborated that the "care" provided by his wife (see line 02), included taking care of his meals and all aspects of his daily living. The expectation that a wife should nurture her husband was not exclusive to this 'traditional' Chinese man. Even Mr Tang, who claimed to be open and educated under a Western educational system, expressed a similar expectation that his wife serve him during his conversation but only in a more subtle way. I referred to this in Chapter Four under the section of "non-lexical utterances."

In the collectivistic society from which the Chinese respondents emerged, a couple's relationship is not only a two-person relationship, but also a relationship between two families. As Mrs Lai commented,

"Getting married means not only adjusting to your husband but also adjusting to the husband's extended family."

It was the Chinese female respondents who shouldered the cultural burden of preserving the extended family relationship and taking care of the parents' generation, whether they worked outside the home or not. Even the most egalitarian couple among the Chinese group, the Fungs, was proud that Mrs Fung had served her grandmother-in-law when the couple lived with her in Hong Kong. For Mr Fung, his wife's care for his extended family members contributed to his satisfaction with his marriage. In particular, this care included her financial commitment to his nephews' education after their father died.

Whether the wife worked outside the home or not, all the Chinese female respondents

took care of the family's socio-emotional tasks. Mrs Wong, a successful and busy career woman in Hong Kong, recalled that she had to buy gifts and arranged all birthday dinners even for her husband's extended family. Her husband's responsibility was to only attend the dinner. Mrs Wong remarked, *"never bother him with such kinds of matter, he sees it as too trivial."* Although socio-emotional tasks were also mostly performed by wives in the Canadian culture, a few Euro Canadian husbands took up these tasks occasionally. Mr Brown always enjoyed shopping for his wife's gifts and Mr Scott bought Christmas gifts for his wife, family and friends when his wife was too tied up with other tasks. In my Chinese group, only one husband tried to do a similar task, but it ended up in a joke that his wife enjoyed talking about. Mrs Tang recalled that her husband bought her a pot of flowers for her birthday, but the pot had been decorated as a baby shower gift. She was very glad that her husband remembered her special day, but commented, *"never expect your husband to buy you an appropriate gift, because he doesn't know how."*

Apart from the 'inside' function of mastering the household tasks and preserving the extended family relationship, the Chinese men also expected their wives to fulfil their outside function, that is, to be presentable in their social circles. Mr Chung mentioned this as a source of satisfaction in his marriage: *"My wife is presentable in the social circle of friends and relatives."* The word "presentable" in Chinese has a connotation of handling relationships in an all-round manner that "gives face" to the family, basically to the husband, so that the husband can feel proud of her. Mrs Wong verbalized vividly the expectation of Chinese husbands that their wives be an all-round "superwoman," a term used by the Chinese wife, Mrs Tang to describe the expectations concerning the multiple roles of being a Chinese

wife[15]. Mrs Wong's narrative referred to the educated 'modern' women in Hong Kong and also reflected her identification with Chinese men's values:

"Nowadays women need to have at least some basic education.
I think husbands expect their wives to be all-rounded.
You need to be presentable in social circles;
you need to fulfil your outside job requirements;
you need to know how to cook when you come home.
I think if I were a man, I would expect the same for my wife.
Don't you think this is very natural?"

The expectation of having a compliant wife was unintentionally brought out by one traditional Chinese husband. This quality of compliance was not an explicit expectation in the narratives of the Chinese husbands since such an expectation is considered taboo and overly conservative today. Mr Chung expressed this expectation in his response to his wife's comments in the joint interview. He protested against his wife's argumentative nature, which indicated his dissatisfaction in the marriage (he had a lower DAS of 115 while his wife had a high DAS of 130). He said,

"So that's why you always argue. You want to be the first. Definitely there are arguments.
If you don't pursue, there won't be arguments."

The wife, in her individual interview, had mentioned that her husband complained that "you always like to argue." During the joint interview, Mr Chung said the above-quoted statement in such an irritable manner that I noticed his expectation that his wife comply was important to him. This is a subjugated phenomenon that I discovered in the joint interviews where

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[15]The construct of "superwoman" was also discussed by a Hong Kong scholar, J. Ma, in her article (1991) on "REFLECTIONS FROM THE FIELD Meeting the changing roles of women: a call for a new policy strategy in Hong Kong."

couples seldom spoke disgustedly in front of a third person (myself). This is contrasted with the atmosphere I experienced in the joint interview with the Euro Canadian couple, the Scotts. Mrs Scott laughed in a contented and satisfying way when she agreed with her husband's claim that he would shut up when the wife asserted her views. The Euro Canadian husbands expressed more respect for their wives' individuality than the Chinese husbands in my study.

Two seemingly shared gender role expectations between the Chinese and Euro Canadian couples were practised differently in the two cultural groups

Expectations about husbands' participation in housework

Both Euro Canadian and Chinese wives felt very satisfied when the husband participated in housework. An interesting phenomenon was that all the Chinese male and female respondents agreed with a statement in the ROR that *"a woman should expect her husband to help with the housework."* The Euro Canadian men and women (except for Mrs Brown and Mrs Carter) also agreed with this statement. However, going by their narratives, the Chinese wives expected far less involvement from their husbands in housework than the three Euro Canadian women who expected their husbands to help in housework. This was due to a cultural phenomenon; in Hong Kong Chinese society, men are not expected to do household chores. The Chinese wives began to expect their husbands to help with housework only after they immigrated to Canada.

When I compared the Chinese wives' narratives with those of the Euro Canadian wives who expected their husbands to participate in housework, I found that these Euro

Canadian wives emphasized reciprocity in the amount of housework each spouse did. Their Chinese counterparts expected less from their spouse in this regard. This notion of reciprocity is reflected in Mrs Scott's quotation:

"If I can make his life a little simpler by going out assisting with that I will do that [hmmhmm], as he does with many things in the house."

When compared to the Chinese husbands, the Euro Canadian husbands did a lot more household chores and child care. The Euro Canadian husbands, except for Mr Carter, were actively involved in child care, especially when the children were young. Two husbands changed diapers and one washed dirty diapers. One husband bathed the children, and another husband woke up in the middle of the night to put his children back to bed. Two husbands did Christmas shopping when the wife was too busy. Most of the husbands looked after the children so the wife could go out to work or do grocery shopping to give her relief. None of the Chinese husbands changed diapers or bathed their kids. There was only one husband, Mr Tang, who woke up with his wife to look after their baby in the middle of the night, and another husband, Mr Fung, washed all clothing even before they had a washing machine. The Euro Canadian husbands were better at shopping for clothes for their wives and children than were their Chinese counterparts. They bought flowers and gifts for their wives on special occasions like their birthdays, and on secretary day. The Chinese men seldom bought things for the family. Instead, some of them (Mr Chung, Mr Lai and Mr Tang) relied upon their wives to buy personal things for them.

In contrast to their Chinese counterparts, the Euro Canadian wives had less of a struggle in getting their husbands to do housework in that they did not reject their requests

for help. The Euro Canadian wives found satisfying that their husbands offered their assistance promptly when it was needed. One Euro Canadian couple, the Carters, was an exception since they had a more strictly defined gender roles in their marriage based on their religious faith. The Euro Canadian wives, except for Mrs Carter, were appreciative that their husbands did not sit around while they were doing housework and offered a hand when they had time. In the Chinese group, only Mrs Fung felt free to say that if her husband just folded his hands and did nothing, she would feel mad.

Trost (1991) believes that the higher expectation one has of one's marriage, the lower the satisfaction with it. Since the Chinese women had a lower expectation, they were easily satisfied when their husbands performed one or two bits of housework. On the other hand, the Euro Canadian husbands needed to do more in order to satisfy their wives' expectations regarding housework. The Euro Canadian husbands said that they sensed the pressure and expectations from their wives to perform housework. Although Mr Carter had consciously chosen a well-defined division of labour with his wife, he expressed guilt that he could not cook. Husbands, like Mr Scott and Mr Taylor, were apologetic about not doing as much of the traditional 'women jobs,' such as cooking, as their children's generation does. By contrast, the Chinese husbands did not express any guilt feelings even though they performed fewer household duties than their Euro Canadian counterparts.

Belief in motherhood

Another major area that demonstrated the similarity of gender role expectations in marriage among men and women in each respective cultural group was the belief in and

practice of motherhood. Both cultural groups, and both men and women, believed it was a mother's nature to look after her children. However, the two groups manifested their beliefs differently because of the different societal contexts. Except for Mr Smith, all Euro Canadian men and women agreed with the ROR item *"the most important thing for a woman is to be a good wife and mother. "* Mr Scott's essentialistic view that it is the mother's natural instinct to take care of her children represents the majority view among the Euro Canadian respondents:

"And I think {pause} probably because of maternal instinct, you would still be that way more so than what what I might tend to be. I think [W: yes, exactly] it's more than natural and and I don't say this from a sexist stand of standpoint. I think it's more than natural eh for the mother's maternal instinct to kick in than it is for the paternal instinct to kick in [hmmhmm] when a child is sick during the night [hmmhmm]....And I think there is a closeness and a bond [hmmhmm] that that is developed that never ends."

This Euro Canadian couple, in their commitment to motherhood, agreed with Pointing's (1986) Canadian national sample, 64% of whom were in agreement with the statement "when children are young, a mother's place is in the home" (in Ramu, 1993, p.109). The Euro Canadian men and women strongly believed that it was important for the mother to take care of her children when they were young. All the Euro Canadian couples made a conscious decision that the wife should stay home and look after the children until they started school.

All Chinese men and women also fully agreed with the above ROR item. However, due to the competitive economic situation in Hong Kong, all the working female respondents, unlike their Euro Canadian counterparts, continued working after they had children, except Mrs Lai. The Euro Canadian women explained during the 'member check'

that they could afford to quit their jobs to take care of their young children for a few years and could find a job easily when they decided to return to the work force. As the working environment is more competitive in Hong Kong, a woman would be unlikely to find a comparable job after she had quit hers for a period of time. In Hong Kong, the educated women feel obliged to work in order to actualize what they have learned and they are motivated to climb the career ladder. As a result, it is typical for a woman in Hong Kong to return to work right after her six weeks of maternity leave.

Mr Wong, who was a nurse at the time when his children were born, described the couple's pragmatic decision to put all their three children in a nursery once they were born, while his wife went back to her work. The husband recalled proudly the couple's decision.

"We put our children in nursery for the first few months once they were born. It was a cruel method but worked for us as a couple. It gave us sleep and that lessened a lot of unnecessary fights that are due to sleep deprivation."

The exceptional case of the Chinese wife, Mrs Lai who never returned to work after her first child was born, illustrated the collectivistic cultural orientation of the Chinese society. Her decision to stay home to take care of her child was complicated by interference from her parents. After Mrs Lai had her first baby, she struggled with the quality of care provided by her hired nanny while she was working. Bound by her cultural values and persuaded by her family members, Mrs Lai felt compelled to give up her job and stay home to look after her children. She has not returned to the workforce since then and this changed her bargaining power in the marital relationship. She lamented,

"At the same time, my family, including my parents opined that it would be better for me to look after my children. So I didn't go out to work. But actually I prefer to work."

Mrs Lai's case represented one of the ways that the Chinese wives reconciled their traditional expectations regarding care for children with their expectation of working outside the home. The other Chinese wives also had different kinds of adjustment, or even sacrifice, even though they had continued their jobs after they had a baby. Mrs Wong, who had a successful career, reconciled the above-mentioned conflicts between children and career by switching to an office-based post in her field of education in the earlier part of her career. The post allowed her to have more after-work time with her children. Mrs Tang stopped working and looked after the three children during the years when her husband worked in another country. Since she discontinued her career for a period of time when the family moved to another place, she sacrificed her chances of promotion in her career while her husband built his career.

Chinese has no word for 'gender'

In the Chinese language, there is no such word as 'gender.' Male and female are categorized under the word 'sex.' This was confirmed during the 'member check' with Chinese couples. If we follow the Western differentiation between 'sex' and 'gender,' where sex denotes the biological disposition and gender the socially attributed factors (Veevers, 1991), the Western cultural conception of gender does not apply to the Chinese. This was evidenced by one Chinese husband's description of the couple's division of labour after coming to Canada. Though their division of labour was typical of the Western type where men took care of the 'outside' tasks while women took care of the 'inside' tasks, he spoke in a way that implied he was totally unaware of the Western notion of gender division of

labour. He commented,

M: Talking about division of labour, besides your wife cooks and you wash vegetables, how about other jobs?

Mr Wong: Ah, this is very weird. I do most of the outside work, those mechanical things...

Other evidence regarding the different conceptions of gender included the very different views of the most egalitarian couple in each cultural group. The Chinese egalitarian couple, the Fungs, unlike its Euro Canadian counterpart, the Smiths, did not share the Western concept of gender that Mr Smith expected when he discussed his marital satisfaction based on an equal partnership:

"I need a partner [hmm]. Um, I need someone who isn't just going to be into um {short pause} children and [umhum] you know, um, uh, the ladies who go to bridge clubs and [umhum] have their little parties and stuff [umhum]. I want somebody who can be there with me [umhum]. You know, I want, I want, I want somebody who's an equal, not, yeah, sort of an equal [umhum]. I don't want um, a housekeeper [umhum], you know [umhum]."

The Chinese egalitarian husband Mr Fung did not share a similar 'gender' ideology of equal partnership with Mr Smith. To Mr Fung, fulfilling his responsibilities to the family was his primary role as a husband. What distinguished Mr Fung from other Chinese husbands in my study was that he considered doing housework as important as a provider:

M: How do you see a husband's role?

Mr Fung: Not a big deal. I feel I need to support the family.
Ha, and be good to the wife;
and must treat children and wife well.

M: How do you support the family?

Mr Fung: Bring money, also do things.
Like what I said, clean up places, give a hand, and even help in washing clothes in those days.

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Section V: Understanding the social construction of culture from the Chinese couples' reconstruction of gender relationships in marriage in a new cultural context

As I postulated in Chapter Three on the social construction of culture, to most people, culture is not transparent. Culture generally operates outside one's awareness although every member of a culture is participating in the day-to-day construction of it. Culture patterns what and how we think, feel, and behave. As McGoldrick (1993) recapitulates, culture "plays a major role in determining what we eat, how we work, how we relate, how we celebrate holidays and rituals, and how we feel about life, death, and illness" (p.335). It is not until a couple experiences a different culture that they might sense a difference from their own. Saleebey (1994) discusses the hidden aspect of culture. The author stresses that we come to realize our particular cultural heritage only when we become immersed in another culture or when someone or some events call our existing meaning and behaviours into question.

The change in marital interactions of the Chinese couples illustrated how they restructured their marital roles and tasks in a Canadian context after they immigrated to Canada. Their change is a reaction to a new cultural context. Though they may not be totally conscious of it, the couples made their changes according to the demands from the new environment. It is from the couples' changed behaviours that I infer the social construction of culture. In this section, I also will discuss the change in the couples' marital relationships which enhanced their marital satisfaction in a Canadian context.

Change in gender division of labour

Division of labour is culturally defined

As mentioned in the last section, housework in the Chinese respondents' generation in Hong Kong was culturally defined in a way that dictated it be performed by women. Both Mr and Mrs Lai came from big 'traditional' families and never needed to do housework. Neither knew how to do housework when they were first married. The cultural message about gender predominated since the first day of the couple's marriage. It was taken for granted that the wife took up all the household tasks. Mrs Lai recalled that after she and her husband were married, even though both worked, she took up all the household responsibilities because it was expected of her.

A redefinition of household responsibilities after the Chinese couples immigrated to Canada

The Chinese respondents started their marriages with a belief that housework was definitely a woman's job. Mrs Tang, who had a very satisfying marital relationship, described her husband as not chauvinistic, but he thought women should do most of the housework. The Chinese men did not participate much in housework. As the Lais recalled, the only housework that the husband was involved in while they were living in Hong Kong was to take his older daughter to school when his wife was busy with smaller children. Mr Tang took turns with his wife to get up for the baby at night when both were working. Mr Fung, who did the most housework among the Chinese male respondents, started to wash clothes when the wife first got pregnant, and became involved in more housework later on.

In the Hong Kong context, where most of the population live in high rise condominiums, the Chinese couples had no distinction between 'outside' and 'inside' housework as it was defined by their Euro Canadian counterparts. For the majority of Euro Canadian respondents, women's chores inside the house were treated as 'inside' work, while men's outside chores were considered 'outside' work. When the Chinese couples immigrated to Canada, they had no concept of 'inside' or 'outside' household chores as the local Canadians did. Those who could afford it, like the Wongs and the Tangs, paid people to do the heavier jobs like shovelling snow and mowing the lawn. Otherwise, all household chores, whether 'inside' or 'outside,' fell to the wives. Mrs Chung, for example, did the Canadian 'men's' jobs, such as shovelling snow and mowing the lawn, in addition to the 'women's' jobs, like cooking, laundry and cleaning. Another wife, Mrs Tang, did all repair work as she performed this job better than her husband.

The Wongs and the Tangs hired maids to do household chores and take care of their children in Hong Kong, which postponed their gender division of labour until they came to Canada and could not afford to hire maids. Although Mr Wong felt that he should participate in housework, his concept of participation in housework was limited: *"my physical presence in the kitchen while my wife is cooking is a form of participation."*

More Chinese men gradually took up minor household work after coming to Canada. Some men started to do some outside work, like Mr Wong, who did repairing and fixing. Mr Lai took out the garbage and shovelled snow. The men did little things inside the house. Mr Tang, for example, started putting away the dried plates in the cupboard, and at the time of the interview, washing dishes had become his duty. Mr Chung and Mr Lai boiled water and

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made tea. Mr Wong and Mr Fung did some food preparation for the wife's cooking. Since the men did not define housework as their primary responsibility, they refused to do it when they did not feel like it. These men acknowledged that participating in housework did help them appreciate how hard their wives had been working in this highly demanding job. Only Mr Fung saw doing housework as supportive and as a way of treating his wife well. He did all the household cleaning and laundry. He was the most willing to learn to do housework among the Chinese male respondents.

The Chinese couples redefined their household responsibilities differently in Canada according to physical accessibility and their English proficiency. Since the retired husbands, like Mr Chung, Mr Lai and Mr Fung, had more time, and they drove better and spoke English better than their wives, they took up the redefined 'outside' jobs. like grocery shopping and banking. The following conversation illustrates such change:

M: Who buys groceries now?

Mr Chung: I buy more now because I drive. She doesn't know how to drive...
I check out what we need, she doesn't need to tell me.
Don't have much to do here [both laughed],
and I like going out, like going to the library.
So I pick up some groceries on my way home.

Since these husbands wanted to occupy their time and they liked to go out, it was convenient for them to pick up groceries on their way home. Two of the three men who bought groceries had to rely on a list given by their wives, while only Mr Chung would know when to buy major items like sugar and milk. These husbands also took up banking because they spoke better English when dealing with the bank tellers. The wives felt their English proficiency was less adequate, and so they relied more on their husbands to perform these 'outside' jobs.

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The men were willing to take up the above-mentioned jobs because they demonstrated their abilities in dealing with outside matters. They also perceived participating in housework as a mainstream cultural practice, and believed that they should conform to this practice.

How Chinese men became more involved in household chores

The case of the Chungs illustrates the couple's meaning-making process in defining new gender roles in the relationship and the cultural context from which the couple constructed their meaning. As mentioned earlier, when this couple moved to Canada four years ago, it was the wife who did all household chores including shovelling snow and mowing the lawn. When Mrs Chung observed that these 'outside' jobs were performed by men in her neighbourhood, she then said to her husband,

"Look at your neighbours {who were non-Chinese}, the men do these jobs. If I do it, they'll laugh at you."

The wife was clever in using the Chinese "saving face" concept – not publicly embarrassing oneself – to get her husband involved in the heavy jobs outside the home. In the husband's narrative, he still did not regard the above-mentioned 'outside' work as his duty. In the following narrative segment, he said he "helped" his wife in shovelling snow:

*"We usually shovel the snow together, because it's quicker.
Sometimes she does it herself, I'll help her."*

Other women like Mrs Wong and Mrs Tang slowly taught their husbands to become involved in housework. Mrs Tang laid down a rule that whoever cooked did not do the dishes. Since she cooked, and the children were gone, her husband had to do the dishes. However, he could only fulfil his duty occasionally when he did not have evening

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appointments. Nevertheless, Mrs Tang proudly remarked that her husband had changed a great deal in paying attention to the 'inside' housework after coming to Canada. She said that her husband could not tell garlic from an onion when they first moved to Canada. Mrs Tang, who was a teacher in Hong Kong, taught her husband patiently, as though he were her student, to involve himself in housework. She asked him in a nice tone of voice and used verbal reinforcement. Both Mrs Wong and Mrs Tang came up with effective ways to involve their husbands in household chores. They figured out that they had to let their husbands do their kitchen work: (1) at their own pace, (2) in their own way, and (3) at the right time when they were not busy. This strategy on the part of Chinese wives was similar to that of one Euro Canadian wife, Mrs Scott. They built on their success by gradually asking for more help from their husbands. One Chinese wife, Mrs Wong, said,

"I find he's not reluctant to do them [housework].
Only he doesn't pay much attention to help you out.
But if you remind him he will do it.
After one or two successful experiences that he does when I ask,
I ask more."

The Chinese wives also used other people's stories (referential genre) to persuade their husbands to learn to be more self-sufficient in cooking. They would remind their husbands of friends who were helpless after their wives died because they did not know how to take care of their own daily needs. Mrs Tang also remarked that people around the couple, like children and relatives, always reminded her husband to participate in housework. Like the Euro Canadian husbands, the Chinese husbands participated more after the children left home. Mr Tang became better at cleaning up and slowly became involved in minor household jobs. For example, his wife could rely on him to turn off the stove if she left food

steaming while she went out.

Another Chinese husband, Mr Wong – who earlier considered standing in the kitchen while the wife was cooking as participation in housework – performed more household tasks after twelve years of living in Canada. He washed vegetables and rice, and fixed the bed voluntarily. He remarked, in a culturally reflexive manner,

"This is a kind of involvement.
Although she is in charge of the kitchen, I feel uneasy to just eat without participating.
This is a kind of sharing.
When no one washes the dishes after supper, I volunteer.
This is a big cultural difference as this would not happen in Hong Kong."

This couple's sharing in housework was also motivated by their hope to set a good model for their children who were going to live in Canada. The couple had observed that husbands in Canada participated in housework. They opined that their children should adjust to Canadian culture by participating in housework if they decided to live in Canada. Mrs Wong expressed the couple's concern for their children:

"We want to help our children to realize that it's not only women who do all housework.
Otherwise women would work to death while men don't do anything at all.
We told the children that if you live in North America, you need to adapt to their culture and we should learn from their good qualities.
So the couple needs to set a model for them."

Change in marital satisfaction after a change in societal context

Environmental change improved the Chinese respondents' married life. Immigration to Canada changed the Chinese couples' marital satisfaction and expectations. The Chinese couples in my study achieved more satisfaction in the areas of companionship, privacy and realization of care and support after they moved to Canada. Immigration, interacting with the

Chinese couples' family life cycle at their time of immigration, created more time and space for the couple. Among the five couples, only one husband (Mr Tang) and one wife (Mrs Fung) still worked full-time. The others were either retired, or held part-time jobs. Three of the five couples no longer had children living at home. The couples had more time together to nurture their relationship and enjoy their joint activities, such as swimming, attending concerts, having lunch together, and joining club activities. Mr Wong mentioned that he felt more satisfied with his marriage after coming to Canada. During the individual interview, he reflected that it was as though they were re-experiencing their honeymoon. The couple had sex more often after coming to Canada since both were not as busy as in Hong Kong. Other couples also acknowledged an enhancement of their marital relationship after their immigration.

Mr Wong commented that the Canadian environment was more family-oriented and therefore more conducive to family life. He remarked,

"In the Canadian environment, the concept of family is stronger here than in Hong Kong.
In Hong Kong the place is small, you have a place to go after work.
Here just go home after work. No one goes...,
except for going fishing."

The Chinese couples' described their couple space in Hong Kong as more apart than together. The husbands had their own world and circle of friends, and the wives had theirs. In Canada, the Chinese couples had common circles of friends which enhanced their togetherness. After the couples immigrated to Canada, they built their friendship circles together, through learning English together and joining in church or community activities together.

Facing a new environment together during their immigration, the husband and wife expected to be able to rely more on each other, and to receive care and support from each other. Another reason for such expectations was that the couples were aging. As reflected in the Chinese respondents' profile, this group of couples had an older average age than the Euro Canadian group. This factor of aging might interact with the Chinese respondents' experience in immigration. One obvious effect of age in the Chinese group was that the husbands had more leisure time after their retirement. This might have affected their willingness to take up some household chores and spend more time with their wives.

The couples' experience of starting a new life in a new environment was one of the positive elements that bound the partners together. They relied more upon each other's care and support as they had fewer social support networks after moving to Canada. The couples realized more of their mutual concern and dependence. Some couples, like the Chungs, the Wongs and the Fungs, reported fewer quarrels after coming to Canada. Even when they had arguments, the couple spent less time than previously getting over their disagreements. They let go of their own opinions as they found having a united front to survive in the new environment was more important.

The Fungs had a profound experience of struggling against job discrimination during their beginning years in Canada. This couple was the only couple who changed their employment status from middle class professional to working class. Among the five Chinese couples, the Fungs had the most difficult experience in their immigration. In the eleven years after moving to Canada, the husband had been laid off three times and went through a number of jobs before he retired a few years ago. His wife changed from being a vice-

principal in an elementary school in Hong Kong to doing a packing job in Canada, which required much physical strength. She needed to stand straight for eight hours and in case of overtime, eleven hours. She said her legs were practically numb when she got home. In addition, they experienced discrimination in their job situations. The wife mentioned that during their struggles, she and her husband supported and comforted each other by holding hands when they went to sleep every night. The stream of warm energy that flew through the couple's hands gave them the courage to get up and face their struggle again the next day. They helped each other through the hard times. Although the couple had already achieved a satisfying marital life before they immigrated, their struggle together made them realize more about their love and mutual dependence. Mrs Fung remarked that the couple's struggle elevated their love relationship to a more spiritual level than they had ever experienced.

Immigration served as an escape route for Mrs Lai allowing her to enjoy her exclusive nuclear family without the interference from her husband's extended family. Mrs Lai had a difficult relationship with her husband's complicated extended family, which caused conflict between the couple themselves. The extended family was a strong motivating factor for Mrs Lai to emigrate to Canada, and leave these problems behind. However, more couple-alone time resulted in an increase in the couple's minor arguments since her husband criticized her more for her way of doing things. Another possible reason for the annoyance the wife expressed was that she did not accommodate as much to her husband as before; she fought back more. However, overall, she felt more satisfied with her life after coming to Canada.

The couples' stories of how they adjusted to a new socio-cultural context illustrates

the changing nature of culture. When the Chinese couples faced a new environment, they reconstructed their gender roles and tasks according to the demands of a new environment. Although the change process might be less conscious for some couples, their reactions to cultural change were manifested in their behavioural practices.

Section VI: Explicating the process of the construction of gender and culture in achieving long-term marital satisfaction

According to the definition I provided for traditional and egalitarian marriages in Chapter Five, I discovered that the gender relationships of couples in both cultural groups varied along the traditional-egalitarian continuum. However, the couples' meaning and manifestation of these relationships varied according to their internalized cultural context. In this section, I will retell the stories of three couples, two from the Chinese group and one from the Euro Canadian group, which demonstrate best the construction of the couples' gender relationships in marriage in order to achieve their long-term marital satisfaction. The three stories were accepted by the three respective couples in the 'member check.' Each couple's story conveys a different sense of self being a man or woman, the couple's decision making, communication, mutual understanding, roles and power distribution, and hence their marital satisfaction level. I will look at the factors and the process of change in the evolution of their gender relationship. From their lived experiences, and from those of the other seven couples, I derive the meaning of gender relationship, in which the different components serve as themes in exploring gender factors which contribute to satisfactory long-term relationships in the next chapter. The different components of gender relationships, according to the

themes of the couples' narratives, are comprised of: (1) household division of labour, (2) decision making and negotiation, (3) compromise of differences and disagreements, and (4) communication and mutual understanding.

Two contrasting stories to explicate the evolution of the gender relationship in Chinese marriages

The Wongs and the Fungs were born in and grew up in Hong Kong, exposing them to a similar socio-cultural environment for a similar period. Both husbands had a lower educational level than their wives. One couple, the Wongs, evolved into a more traditional gender relationship from a more 'modern' Hong Kong type of marriage while the Fungs evolved from a traditional marriage to an egalitarian one.

The story of the Wongs

The Wongs were typical of an educated, wealthy, middle class, and Christian Hong Kong Chinese couple. Specifically, the wife came from a rich 'traditional' family, and was a university graduate with an advanced professional diploma in education from Britain. The husband came from a family which was not as well off as his wife's. He received nursing training but was a businessman for the last twenty years. He started his career in business by helping his father-in-law manage his hotel in Hong Kong. After he lost his job over a family dispute, Mr Wong worked very hard to build his own business career and earning capacity, and when he immigrated to Canada, he ran his own business. Because of their discrepancy in their educational and family backgrounds, the husband emphasized the value of equality

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as a source of his marital satisfaction. In response to my question of what contributed to his

marital satisfaction, he said,

"God made men and women. Human beings are equal.
Even though there may be differences in backgrounds, religion won't treat you differently.
So this eliminates a lot of undesirable effects.
Most of the time it is male chauvinism, while some women look upon themselves as inferior;
this happens in many traditions.
But if you understand Christianity more thoroughly, God creates humans on the basis of
equality; there is no hierarchy among the two sexes."

Mr Wong, bringing culture and religion into his narrative context, with the typical

lack of pronouns, claimed that he was equal with his wife. Although he did not agree with

the statement that "the husband should be the head of the family" in the ROR, in his

narrative, he felt that men should be afforded a higher status than women in the family. The

following is Mr Wong's perception of men's role in a marital relationship:

M: When a man and a woman get married, do you think one party should be the head of the
family?

Mr Wong: It seems like men should assume a more important status.
Although I won't overrule her, in this society, men should assume heavier responsibilities
than women.
It doesn't mean they are more powerful, but they should have more responsibility.

M: As a man, how do you define your responsibility in the family?

Mr Wong: Of course it is for economic protection. This is the first point.
Then it is to decide the future of the children,
and then make my own future arrangements.
Men should give much more consideration to these areas.
Maybe women are more straightforward in thinking. Not everyone is like that, some are very
smart.
Men are more perceptive. They think a few steps ahead.
Because I'm in the business field, when I consider one thing, I already see a few steps ahead.
If you have a short vision, you would always be in a disadvantaged position.
So you have to train yourself to be up for that {he laughed in a very proud way}
So it seems like I purposefully grasp those areas [finance, investment] under my control,

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but there's nothing you can do,
you are smarter than her, so no dispute.

Mr Wong used a lot of generalizing objects and pronouns like "men" and "they" to justify his privileged position as a man. He used "you" in a lot of places where he should have used "I." He might not feel comfortable saying "I am smarter than my wife," although he indirectly said that twice in the above narrative.

Judging from Mr Wong's tone of voice when he mentioned that his wife was a department head in the Ministry of Education in Hong Kong, he was proud of her success in career. At the same time, I found he had intense competition with her whenever he compared his career with his wife's. He acknowledged his inferiority complex about his wife's high education:

Mr Wong: At the beginning, I had some complex, yeah had some,
as she's graduated from university while I was from college.

M: What's your complex?

Mr Wong: Inside I feel she had a university degree {he laughed}, that's it.
Well, I'm not just graduate from elementary school. In fact our educational level is nearly the same.
Sometimes X had such feeling. At the beginning, inside there is XX.
But as I performed so well in the business field....I took a lot of extra-mural courses in the university. {he was in a tone that he was proud of himself} (Note: X represents missing pronoun or words.)

In various parts of Mr Wong's narrative, I found he reconciled his feeling of competition by emphasizing that he and his wife were in different businesses, and yet, he outperformed his wife. Consistently in his narratives, Mr Wong stressed that he demonstrated his calibre in meeting the challenges from his business field and in being successful in expanding his business. He also suggested his career as a businessman required higher abilities than his

wife's career as a conservative government bureaucrat. From both spouses' narratives, it was

clear that the wife came from a richer family. However, the husband tried to downplay the

couple's different family backgrounds:

"In fact our family background is similar. Well, she has a higher educational level {he's muttering here}.
But when you survive in a society, a higher education doesn't give you special advantages, but it depends a lot on X abilities......
She worked for the government which is very conservative. I worked in the reality business which is more risky. Those were two different careers...." (Note: X represents a missing pronoun.)

Mrs Wong was a daughter of the concubine of her father. Her father and mother got

married because of free love whereas her father's first marriage had been arranged. Mrs

Wong's mother was an independent woman compared with what was expected of her age

group. She was a nurse and insisted on living by herself with her own children, instead of

living in the same household as her husband's first wife and children. Mrs Wong grew up

under great pressure to perform well because of the competition between the siblings of the

two households. She outperformed all other siblings, including the sons from her father's

first wife, by finishing a university education. Like her mom, Mrs Wong did not get married

until her late twenties, after she had established her career. She went abroad for training

before and after she got married. She climbed the career ladder in her field of education and

became the head of a department of the Ministry of Education in Hong Kong, a high-ranking

government position.

Mrs Wong perceived that she assumed an unconventional female role in Hong Kong,

representing a new generation of educated career women. Her two maids and mother

assumed all the household and child-care duties, which provided her with the time to

advance her career. With the consent of her husband, Mrs Wong went to England for a year to receive professional training when her first son was only one year old. According to Mrs Wong's narration, she made most of the household decisions in Hong Kong, without much consideration of her husband's view. Despite her husband's occasional comment about her dogmatic views, she insisted on doing things in her own way because she believed her way was always right. She bought whatever she wanted with her own salary and did not rely upon the income from her husband. Because she was university educated, she was invited to assume more consultative posts in church in Hong Kong than her husband was. Mrs Wong reported that the couple had frequent conflicts in Hong Kong, especially in the early part of the marriage, mostly in the form of a "cold war," where the couple did not talk with each other for two to three days.

Things changed after the couple emigrated to Canada. The 'outside' role of the husband and the 'inside' role of the wife became very distinct. The wife retired early and chose to assume the role of a full-time housewife and mother. She proudly recalled,

"In my children's kindergarten books, it always said, 'Dad goes to work and mom cooks at home.' But my children never experienced this when we were in Hong Kong. But now I have the chance to be a real housewife."

After immigration, Mrs Wong took care of all the household tasks and looked after the three children, who were mostly teens by the time of their emigration. With a long-deferred role as a stay-at-home mother, Mrs Wong found herself adjusting well to her 'inside' role and found interests and rewards in fulfilling her role as mother. She reflected,

"it took me a long time to realize that a woman does have her role to perform in the family."

She assumed all cooking duties while her husband was ready to do some outside work.

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Although Mr Wong felt that he should share in household tasks because they did not have maids anymore, Mrs Wong felt it was her responsibility to cook, and she discouraged her husband's participation in the kitchen at the beginning. It was not until she felt too tired after a few years, that she allowed her husband to help in the kitchen.

The gender roles constructed by this couple were different in Hong Kong than in Canada. The change was mostly on the wife's part. Mrs Wong, being a 'modern' Western-educated, assertive and successful woman, which is atypical for Chinese women in Hong Kong, became more 'Chinese' after she came to Canada. She resorted to traditional Chinese values to guide her search for being a wife and mother. Being more submissive and accommodating to her husband, Mrs Wong found a way to achieve a more satisfying marriage. She recalled her enlightening realization that she should not let her own success overshadow her husband's. She said explicitly that *"I should let him be the head of the family in the eyes of others."* The following is her elaboration:

"I later on realized more that men are different from us.
Men need to feel a sense of achievement over their wives.
For so many years in our Chinese tradition, there embedded a belief that men should surpass women.
That is why there are so many broken marriages nowadays.
It's because there are too many "successful" women.
It's alright for women to be successful;
but once you are back in the family, you need to perform a wife's role. This is very important."

Mrs Wong's traditional view of her role as a wife was further reinforced by her Christian beliefs. In the individual interview, Mrs Wong admitted that she had been dogmatic in making most of the decisions. She used a biblical metaphor of an angel's wings to illustrate her insight that she needed to change and become a more submissive wife in order

to achieve marital satisfaction. Mrs Wong learned about the metaphor from a pastor. The wings signified the angel's ability to cover up or conceal her qualities. Mrs Wong noted that she needed to acquire this ability to hide her qualities and conceal the fact that she might be more successful than her husband.

She proved herself right by refusing to take up a respectable position in her present church until her husband had taken up the same position. With Mrs Wong's conscious choice of letting her husband further study theology and become involved in missionary work while she cooked for the family and looked after the children, she found her husband much happier about the couple's relationship than when they were in Hong Kong. Both spouses were actively involved in their church and missionary activities. Mrs Wong could fulfil her wish to share her Christian faith with her partner. She observed,

"from then onwards, I hide away my calibre. I put myself in a hiding position {both laughed}.... I should give him back the position of the head of the family. He should be ahead of me."

She said it was wrong for her to surpass her husband either consciously or subconsciously and feel that she was better than him. The above-mentioned metaphor helped Mrs Wong understand that her husband could be quite hurt by her public success, even though he did not express it. She said,

"somehow subconsciously I feel that once in a life time I should let him surpass me. That is to balance out the possibility that I have surpassed him for so many years. A feeling that he might not have expressed. I'm glad that I've taken that position. It seems to work out very well."

Mrs Wong's DAS score was 114, which is below the average of 116 in Spanier's population (Spanier, 1976). In the next section on respondents' sense of self, Mrs Wong

presented a lower sense of self as compared to the egalitarian Chinese wife Mrs Fung who

had a DAS score of 137. In her particular circumstances, by taking a submissive position,

Mrs Wong juggled her way to find a more harmonious and satisfying marriage than she had

in Hong Kong. Based on her experience of what worked in her gender relationship in

marriage, she concluded with the following gender notion:

"I think I'm a very traditional Chinese.
Like I think men and women should have equal opportunity and pay in the job world.
But inside the home I still find that men should be the leader of the family.
If the woman overshadows the husband, like the couple we met in South America,
they are deemed to have problems.
Because this is Chinese tradition for thousands of years,
we can't ignore it so easily."

Her change in considering more of her husband's view greatly enhanced the couple's

relationship. They had fewer arguments after coming to Canada. Mrs Wong remarked,

"He makes decisions over career, property, or money. As long as I find it's not out of line.
I don't feel I need to insist."

With more experience as she grew older and maturer, she was glad that she learned to see

their different qualities as more complementary, which was her *"biggest change ever."*

The story of the Fungs

The Fungs, unlike the Wongs, had no religion except worshipping their ancestors.

They started their relationship in a quite traditional manner although both worked in the

labour force. The wife, without a question, did most of the household chores and the husband

took control over money. However, the couple reconstructed their gender relationship into

an egalitarian marriage such that the wife felt empowered and fulfilled in her marriage. The

couple shared their decision-making power. During their marriage, each spouse took turns to work on a career while the other spouse looked after the family. They respected each other's needs and struggled together to start their new life in Canada. The couple was among the most adjusted and satisfied in the Chinese group, which was evidenced by their high DAS scores and their personal and joint narratives.

Mrs Fung did not have the struggle experienced by Hong Kong educated women such as Mrs Wong (refer to her story). Mrs Fung attained the highest DAS score, which was 137, among all wife respondents in both the Chinese and Euro Canadian groups. Mrs Fung was so satisfied with her marriage that she told her husband she would seek him out as her husband again in her next life. Mrs Fung emphasized at the very beginning of the interview that the couple's relationship was built upon their spirituality rather than sexual desire. The wife commented that their relationship had been sublimated to a more caring and supportive one even though they had not had sex for some years. In the interview, the Fungs could talk about their sexual relationship, feelings, and sensitive areas, things that Mrs Wong felt she could not discuss with her husband as he would see these matters as "too trivial women matters."

The change in the couple's gender relationship took place because of a very traditional expectation of Mrs Fung – security. Moreover, Mrs Fung's story of her early "rebellion," in her own words, was instigated by her need for a fairer division of labour, more understanding from her husband, and more control over money because she believed she could do a better job taking care of the family's finances than her husband.

When the couple first got married, Mrs Fung recalled that it was just natural for the

man to control money, as both her and her husband's father had done. After ten years of marriage, Mrs Fung felt her husband did not handle their money efficiently, so they ended up with few savings. She commented, *"just like other men, he was too generous in spending."* She hoped they could save up enough money for their children's future education. She had requested a few times that the husband transfer the financial management to her, but he refused. They ended up having arguments, quarrels and conflicts, like a cold war, over the financial matters at that time. She then told her story of what she named her "revolution."

Mrs Fung felt that she was being robbed, and she would visit her sister after she and her husband quarrelled. Her husband did not give the comfort and consolation she needed. Instead, he criticized her for going to her sister's place too often. Mrs Fung said she was very angry with her husband's inconsideration and lack of understanding, and so she stayed at her sister's place for two weeks. She then negotiated with her husband over transferring financial control, sharing in the division of labour, and apologizing for hurting her when she was being robbed. She threatened to a divorce and leave the children with her husband. She reflected, *"When I went out, there was a time to calm down and could think of many ways to maintain the marriage."* It is paradoxical that she used the threat of divorce as a strategy for maintaining her marriage. She did it for the sake of the children, as she thought, *"the children are growing up. We can't live without money all the time."*

Mrs Fung succeeded in her "coup d'état," (again named by herself) and got her apology from her husband. From then onwards, she took over the family's financial matters. She said she allocated a generous portion for her husband's pocket money each month. She invested carefully and their savings grew. She noticed that her husband appreciated her

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efforts in managing their family's finances so that they could have the financial capacity to emigrate to Canada. The couple also shared more in housework. Mrs Fung requested that her husband wash dishes and he has washed dishes since the 1970s. Mrs Fung remarked that since their earlier troubles, their relationship has been stable and satisfying.

The redefinition of division of responsibility after immigration to Canada helped the Fungs to reduce further their potential conflicts. Mrs Fung explained that she handed the financial power back to her husband after coming to Canada because the husband's English skills were better than hers. She also commented that they did not need to invest as much as in Hong Kong since they felt satisfied with the standard of living as they had job and owned a condominium. She remarked that if they were still in Hong Kong, they would have had more conflicts because of their different opinions about investments.

I tried to explore what made this couple's gender relationship so different from that of the others who were also exposed to the Hong Kong Chinese socio-cultural environment during the same period. Mrs Fung pointed out the difference between her and her mother who was also discontented with the way her husband managed money, but could not achieve the same result that she did. Mrs Fung remarked,

"But my time is different, I have economic power.
So I can have a revolution.
Therefore I said economic power is very important.
She also stressed the importance of education. When one had education, she could have independent views and economic power."

The gender relationship is constructed by both parties in the relationship. In this case, the wife took the initiative and risked her relationship to bring about change. Moreover, Mr Fung was willing to comply with his wife's suggestions. He reflected on the gender

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relationships that he witnessed in the previous generation and committed to having a different marriage. He disagreed with how his uncles treated women when he was a young boy. In his uncles' families, women could not eat with men at the same table. They had to serve while men were eating. Mr Fung commented, *"even maids nowadays eat with the host family together."* He thought it was wrong that men were treated like lords. Although he accepted that such a practice was the norm during his uncle's time, he decided he would treat women differently when he grew up.

Among the Chinese men in my study, Mr Fung had reflected the most on whether men should be the head of the family. He was an exemplary Chinese man in an egalitarian relationship, who did the most housework of all the Chinese male respondents. He was willing to admit that at the beginning of his marriage he believed – though not strongly – that men should be the head of the family, before the children were born. He inherited the idea that men should make decisions in the family, but now he believed both men and women should make decisions. As he put it,

"As I don't like the past feudalistic system, I reject this idea [being head of the family] as well, right?...
As I like to discuss matters with others, of course I reject the idea of man being the head of family, right?
That means I don't insist to act on my own."

Another possible reason for the couple pursuing an egalitarian marriage was that both partners had been influenced by pro-communist ideology in Hong Kong. Both had been educated in pro-Communist schools in the 1950s. They read a lot of pro-Communist books and only read pro-Communist newspapers before and shortly after they were married. The couple's pro-Communist ideology was very different from the Hong Kong Christian

ideology, which emphasized a political status quo, an ideology held by the other Chinese Christian couples in my study. The Fungs upheld progressive ideologies like equality and fairness. Both spouses claimed that they had a strong sense of justice when growing up. When they were young, the Communist ideology in Hong Kong had appealed to young people as a means to critique Chinese traditions. It strongly objected to the oppression of people (including women) by Chinese traditional values. However, the Communist ideology lost its appeal to people in Hong Kong when Mainland China launched a series of campaigns beginning in the 1960s that disrupted people's lives. Mrs Fung used the analogy about the lack of security she discovered later on connected with the Communist ideology to stress the importance of security for her in the family:

Mrs Fung: I had no sense of security in the family. [she meant marriage].
Why should I live together with you then.
I said [hmmhmm] I said 'everybody looks for a secure life, a good life, right?'
I said 'in fact I abandoned Communist ideology at that time because it does not give people a secure life. They just fight every day and night.'
Life can't be like that. Life can't be like that.
So I didn't like the ideology. [yeah]
But if my marriage is like this, I won't like it if it has similar
points, I mean no security."

The evolution of gender relationships in Euro Canadian marriages

All five of the Euro Canadian couples started with a traditional gender division of labour. At the beginning of their marriages, they practised what they observed in terms of gender division of labour in their parents' generation. The women thought taking care of children and doing all household tasks inside the house like cooking, cleaning and laundry were their jobs, while men looked after the 'outside' chores like mowing the lawn, shovelling

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the snow, doing house repairs and painting. The Carters maintained pretty much a similar well-defined gender relationship over their 33 years of marriage. The other four Euro Canadian couples evolved to different degrees towards a more flexible or egalitarian division of labour. Among these four couples, whichever spouse had the time would do what needed to be done. There was a less rigid division of labour than in the previous generation, or at the time that most of the couples got married. Among these four couples, the Smiths underwent the most dramatic shift from a traditional gender role relationship to the egalitarian marriage the husband had hoped for, based on his gender ideology.

The story of the Smiths

Since Mrs Smith's narration of her story was close to the classical form of the structure of a story depicted by Labov (1972), I used this author's framework for analysis (refer to Chapter Three under the topic of "story") to organize the couple's story about their struggle in the marriage based on Mrs Smith's first person narration in her individual interview, supplemented by her husband's:

Abstract

Mrs Smith: *I think our our marriage in the last I would say in the last fifteen years has undergone such major stuff, and it's sort of all been happening one thing after the next.*

Orientation

Hmm when {husband} was 37 he had heart surgery. And that sort of began, and this is from my perspective [M: for sure, yeah]. Hmm it began series of events which hmm happened very difficult.

Orientating and justifying how hard the struggle was

I think it's mainly because of hmm {pause} you know one thing that happens you can deal

with it [hmm], and then you can have time then you sort of have time to sort of adjust or adapt, or feel from it, but if you have things that are happening quickly [M: on and on], it starts feeling very overwhelming [right].

She later on added that she experienced too much change: *"Not not too many people like change [yeah]. But I really don't like it. But it keeps coming."*

Complicating actions

We had a lot of moves. We moved a lot. Hmm so thirty years we've been I would say 7 or 8 different moves, which is a lot [yeah]. And that means leaving friends and uprooting with children as well, we have four children [right]. So you know it's sort of difficult [M: from place to place]. And hmm then {husband} became sick, then after that, and I think often when people sort of have that hmm brush with death, kind of experience. You know everything changes [yeah]. And I think he sort of like he was a minister in the church. I think he began to question what he was doing, is this what he wants to do.

Then she described her response to the above stress:

But my my experience with that was tremendous insecurity because I had grown up and I had expected and I had wanted to stay at home much of... Hmm I never have wanted to be outside of my home. I enjoy my home. I love my home. I want to I want to be a mother and a wife. [Hmmhmm] Now my mother was at home. My mother did that, but she didn't like it. She wasn't happy with it [oh]. That's what I wanted but [M: What did she want?]. She wanted to be a career woman [M: I see]. But in those days, if you are a good mother and wife, you stay at home [yeah]. But I was the opposite. I I was very happy, genuinely happy with the traditional role of being mother and wife [yeah]. Eh I love to work with my hands. I love to sew. I love to cook. Eh I love to refinish furniture [yeah]. I love that [hmmhmm]. And hmm when my husband became sick, I was aware I probably needed to get back to work, in case something did happen. [M: right, so lot of] So lot of insecurity, and always being afraid maybe he would not live very long [yeah]. And four children to raise, it's lot of children [yes, yeah].

So then there had been moves since then. Hmm being a minister's family is stressful, very difficult. It wasn't a role I felt comfortable with. But I could do it [hmm]. Hmm it was hard on the children [right] particularly the older children.... He got involved in drugs [hmmhmm] and I was very very frightened, very difficult. Hmm marriage started to fall apart and we separated. I had an affair. And hmm {pause} I I guess I had a point I I wasn't sure what what was happening [yeah]. And like life is very difficult [yeah]. And hmm so hmm {pause} I wasn't sure I wanted to get back in. At that point I wasn't sure I wanted the kids [hmmhmm]. I had a lot of things to work out [right]

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After her husband's heart surgery, Mrs Smith felt she could not depend on her husband as the breadwinner. Out of insecurity, Mrs Smith went back to work after taking care of her children for seventeen years. Mr Smith's narration supplemented the complicating action of the couple's story which started with his heart surgery. According to him the trigger for change was his mid-life crisis. The following is Mr Smith's narration:

"My reaction to having uh, a heart operation was to uh get back on the horse and ride even harder, and so I ended up working even harder trying to prove to myself [yeah] that I wasn't an invalid and that I wasn't sick.

{wife} was beginning to realize that what she had experienced at the time of my operation which is that, you know, I could die [yeah], I might not be there, became a reality that in fact I wasn't there [yeah], uh, and, she was needing to find her own life, so she got, started joining community groups, and she had her own group of friends that I didn't even know [umhum] and became much more, just sort of our paths separated [umhum]. Up till that point they had been very sort of, we had been sort of siamese twins [umhum], you know [umhum], now we sort of, I did what she didn't do and she did what I didn't do [umhum] and so, and all of a sudden, we went separate ways [umhum]. To the point where we really actually separated [yeah], so, so that was, and then coming back together was .. was really a new relationship."

Resolution

Mrs Smith: *So hmm in the long run I did come back. And hmm it took it took a number of years to feel like I wanted to be back, about two years, three years maybe [right].... And now I decide to go back to university [right]. So that's sort of been my route. I'm sort of I'm finding myself now doing something [yeah]. I'm not really sure I want to do. I still have this dream I would like to be back home. [yeah?] So it's been a it's been a journey [yeah, yeah]*

Coda

I regard her last sentence "*So it's been a it's been a journey*" as a coda that rounded up her story and brought the narrator back to the present.

Mrs Smith, like the Chinese wife Mrs Fung, went through a dramatic change in the gender relationship in her marriage as triggered by a sense of insecurity but in a different

context. Mrs Smith, who came from a rigid traditional family, wanted to be a traditional wife and mother and lead a life different from her mother's. Mrs Smith exclaimed, *"I think because of {pause} her inability to nurture [hmm] I wanted to nurture."* Mrs Smith considered being a nurturing mother, staying home, and raising children as her career.

Mrs Smith lamented that she had gone through many difficulties and much confusion during her life. She struggled much and experienced pressure from female peers who were reexamining womanhood. These women repudiated the value of motherhood and criticized the traditional role of women as not valuable. Mrs Smith recalled,

"Hmmhmm, just about that time. It was just a shift [that's right]. There were some women who believe we are doing the traditional thing and feeling good [right] seeing it as a vocation, seeing it as a career [yeah] and feeling good about it. But then there was a a growing [yeah] increasingly growing large number of women who said no that is not okay."

Mrs Smith felt angry about those growing ideas denouncing the traditional value of women and, to some extent, felt oppressed by these ideas.

Mr Smith, on the other hand, came from a very different family background than his wife. His mother, whom Mr Smith identified with, was as dominant and public as his father. Coming from a family culture where the woman was strong and assertive, and had at least an equal say with men, Mr Smith wanted an equal partner to share his life. He did not expect his wife to stay home and take care of the children and household chores. When the couple first got married, the husband cooked and shared a substantial chunk of the housework. After Mr Smith's theological training, he made a special request for a job in Ontario so that his wife could find a job because she was trained as a teacher in Ontario.

Having come from a different family background where her father was dominant and

her mother was submissive and assumed all household responsibilities, Mrs Smith experienced guilt when her husband did household chores, as she felt he was doing her job. When the couple had children and the husband launched his clergy career in western Canada, they slipped into a traditional division of labour. The husband was the dominant one who made all the decisions, while the wife was the submissive one who accepted the husband's decisions unwillingly. Most of the household work was shouldered by the wife while the 'outside' jobs were performed by the husband. His only child-care duty was to bathe his young children after he came home from work. Although Mrs Smith felt overloaded with the three children, she did not feel right asking for help because she perceived this as incompetence in fulfilling her job.

The couple's separation was a watershed in their relationship. Upon reflection, the couple realized that they had outgrown their old relationship, which the husband proclaimed as *"a merciful death."* They believed they had to resort to separation in order to get enough distance to reexamine their relationship. The wife said, *"that was kind of the, the final thing that had to happen before we could look at ourselves [umhum] uh, as new beings. "* The couple still maintained friendly communication during the time of their separation. They had not created a lot of emotional scars *"in terms of trying to hurt or destroy each other, "* which enabled the couple to come back together. During the separation, both spouses worked with therapists individually. The husband remarked, *"so we had a language and [yeah] a conceptual frame [yeah] in which we could understand what we were doing."*

The couple re-created an enjoyable equal partnership that the husband cherished and a depth in sharing of life that the wife, being a twin, yearned for:

Mr Smith: Well I think it's a lot nicer to be a husband with an equal partner, rather than a husband who has to um, carry the responsibility, all the responsibility for the relationship. Um .. I guess I feel that uh, um {pause} I feel now that I have a partner who uh, who loves me but also respects me [umhum]. Um, who isn't submissive [umhum], uh, but, but in her disagreements with me still uh respects who I am [umhum], um, who will make decisions on our behalf, uh, which you know, means that I am not always having to be the one who makes the decision and also gets blamed if it doesn't go very well [right, yeah]. We share the responsibility for the right decisions and for the wrong ones [yeah]....

Mrs Smith described the couple's sharing:

"so it's not just discussion [umhum] around function in the house, ... it has to do with an exchange of [umhum] who we are as people and our thoughts [umhum], and our feelings about things, our ideas you know [umhum], so it's more, it's more equal that way [umhum, umhum]."

After the couple had gone through their tough journey of re-evaluating their relationship and their own identities, the wife did not feel guilty about her husband's sharing in housework and the couple had a flexible arrangement for their household chores. Before the wife went back to school, she took care of their money, including paying the bills. At the time of the interview, the wife was pursuing her master's degree and the husband looked after their money and paid the bills. The husband also did a load of laundry when he saw the basket was full, did more vacuuming and often did the dishes. Mrs Smith described her change:

Mrs Smith: And now I can ask [umhum] and I don't feel guilty, I feel okay, thirty years! {she laughed}

M: What's the change? How did you change?

Mrs Smith: I guess you know part of it probably is just that the culture has changed. [right] So it's sort of like hmm what has changed is yeah since I started to go out of my home, go to work, then it feels okay to share because I am bringing in some income. And then it's ok. When I was working at home, when I was, eh when I saw my vocation as being a wife and a mother, then I felt that was my job to look after ALL

the house inside.

The children were very proud of their mom and respected Mrs Smith more. Her husband commented,

"That's been important for her because she never would have believed before that her children could be proud of her because she was only a mother and a home maker [umum], a housewife. She was a nobody, that's was how she felt."

Mrs Smith felt more secure and relaxed as a person, a spouse, and a mother. The couple had their individual relationships with the children and felt comfortable with them. The wife described her change:

"It took a couple of years for that new growth to really get clear...I started feeling uh, good about myself, better about myself...it felt better for me because I began to feel more of an equal.

After the separation I started to feel better in a lot of ways, so that I was able to reach out to my children [umhum] and finally sort of give them more of me [umhum] than I had before.

I had a solid, a more solid sense of who I was [umhum], um, I was a real person."

The wife was very appreciative of her husband's unconditional forgiveness by letting her go when she was involved in an affair. She underscored that she did not feel any condemnation, blame, nor judgement from her husband, although she knew she had hurt him badly. The wife recapitulated,

"It was the depth of love [umhum] that I all of a sudden became aware of in his ability to let go [umhum]." {short pause}

While acknowledging the hurt and pain that he had gone through, Mr Smith seemed to have no regrets:

"It's very difficult for me to understand how that, how I would feel that because uh the person that I let go was, was weak and scared and needy and dependent [umhum], and the person I got back was beautiful and strong and (?) [yeah], so, what happened in that other

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relationship was good for me [yeah], you know."

After the couple's years of struggle, both spouses experienced growth individually and in their relationship. They discovered that their difference was a training ground for each other, so they could learn from each other. The husband learned to be more considerate and sensitive while the wife learned to be more assertive and expressive of what she thought and wanted. The couple achieved a clearer sense of what they wanted out of the relationship, and were open to asking for what they wanted, and subsequently had their needs met. The couple did not have as much conflict after their renewed relationship. They did have disagreements, but those were mostly misunderstandings which could be well-contained. The couple concluded with the following evaluations:

Mrs Smith: *Even in our opposites we're very joined [umhum, umhum]. We're still very unique and individual but we [umhum], we have, I think, I think there's a very strong intimacy that we feel for each other.*

Mr Smith: *And also I think, and we don't have to be phoney [W: no], I'm not having to take care of you or look after you or perform in a certain way so you won't get upset [M: umhum], and I don't think, I think the other way around too, that you feel more like an equal partner.*

Although the Smiths had transited from a traditional marriage to an egalitarian marriage, which was very satisfactory for both parties, Mrs Smith said, "*I guess having been through it, I wouldn't recommend it*" because of her great struggle with her guilt over her affair. Nonetheless, it was a process that the couple felt they had to go through in order to achieve a renewed relationship, as portrayed by Krantzler and Krantzler (1992).

The construction process of gender relationships in long-term marriages

Whether the couples were conscious or not about the process of construction of gender relationships in their marriage, most of the couples in my data experienced change in their gender relationships during the long course of marriage. As a summary of this chapter, a conceptual model of the construction process is formulated in figure 8 which articulates the social construction of gender and culture from the couples' narratives:

Dominant cultural
ideologies passed on
by family of origin,
mass media, peers,
and education

Gender schema of
each spouse brought
into the marriage

Societal change
manifested in social
discourses through
mass media and
peers

Couples' individual
experience of changes in
their circumstances that
led to change in gender
behaviours
e.g. wife worked,
immigration

Flexibility to   Reflexivity to
accommodate   incorporate
changes   /   changes

Marital Satisfaction

Figure 8: Process of construction of gender
         relationships in satisfactory long-term
         marriages

In the Euro Canadian group, the 'themal coherence' (refer to Chapter Four under the section on *Locating themes* for the meaning of the term) in both the individual narratives of spouses and their joint narratives of 'wife's going back to work' was a process marker for changes in the sharing of household work. The following reflection of Mrs Scott echoed the change process of the Smiths mentioned above and elaborated the gender schema and the instigating change factor presented in figure 8:

Mrs Scott: We came up there again our background dictated a lot of that [hmmhmm]. Eh when we were first married, I basically felt that my role was doing everything in the house. [hmmhmm] That was my role. [M: right, so inside] Basically, yes, yes. All the housework, all the cooking, all you name it, all the washing, [right] looking after the children [yeah]. That was my role. Eh as years went on, and of course I went back to work, things started to change a little bit. Hmm We had to share a little more. {husband} had to help a little more. And ironically since there are no children here, he helps me more in the house than he ever did {laugh} But I think it's a sign of the time as well. Men are helping more IN [respondents' emphasis] the home than they ever did before. But we weren't raised that way.

The above defined gender relationship and the conceptual model of the construction process of gender relationships will guide my exploration of the gender factors which contribute to satisfactory long-term marriage in the next chapter.

Section VII: The construction of sense of self in marriage in the two cultural groups

Sense of self is both an antecedent to the construction of gender relationships in each cultural group and a consequence of the couple's construction of gender relationships. The couple's self-identities as male or female are an important part of the construction process of gender relationships. Over the course of marriage, the sense of self is evolving. It evolves in the interaction between a couple and their socio-cultural environment. It evolves as well

as a result of the gender relationship constructed by the couple in their marriage. In this section, I will examine the sense of self among Chinese wives, Euro Canadian wives, Chinese husbands and Euro Canadian husbands in my study.

In recent Western literature, women scholars like Chodorow, Gilligan and those from the Stone Centre have advocated a different human developmental theory based on women's experiences. These authors emphasize that relationship, an inner sense of connection to others, is a central tenet of human development. Women have been using their relational powers to enhance those of others, but this essential aspect of development has been subjugated in the male-dominated versions of human development. The quality of relational connection is pertinent to women's sense of identity and growth (Stiver, 1991; Miller, 1984, 1986, 1994). I found in the narratives that the sense of self of the Chinese wives, in their collectivist cultural context, was more "self-in-relation" (Surrey, 1991) than that of their Euro Canadian women counterparts who were raised in an individualist society. On the other hand, a Chinese husband's sense of self was more centred around his own identity than that of a Euro Canadian husband, whose sense of self was in relation to the couple's relationship. In my data, the "self-in-relation" characterized both Euro Canadian husbands and wives.

Contrasting Chinese wives' and Euro Canadian wives' sense of self

The self identity of Chinese wives was embedded within the family as a collective. Their sense of self was connected to their husbands and children. The Chinese women's "self-in-relation" was articulated by Wolf (1974), who challenges the conventional perception of Chinese women as weak and helpless, and being viewed as "property" or

"machinery for procreation." In her anthropological studies of Chinese women, the author

discovered that Chinese women are active and able to learn different survival politics in

interpersonal relationships, such as various kinds of diplomatic skills to sustain their position

in the family. Beginning very early in Chinese women's experience, for instance, when

taking care of their younger siblings, they receive training in building relational skills

through a varied repertoire of promises, threats, evasions, and diversions. They learn to

assess moods and evaluate the consequences of their own and other's actions, to be sensitive

to attitude changes, and to understand and make use of emotional relations.

The above apt characterization of Chinese women was vividly portrayed in Mrs

Chung's narrative. Mrs Chung, who was adopted by a poor family during the Second World

War, learned different relational skills while she was a girl growing up in Macau (a more

traditional and less developed ex-Portugese colony near Hong Kong) before she married Mr

Chung in Hong Kong. Although she had no chance of receiving formal education, Mrs

Chung used her observational power to figure out what worked and what did not work for

other people's marriages and carefully applied this to her own. She acquired different skills

to relate to her husband, the couple's extended families, and her husband's social circles. In

a patrilineal Chinese marriage, a woman's full adult status in society was conferred by her

marriage which also determined her life destiny – from which she derived her status,

privileges, satisfaction and self-esteem. A woman's major responsibility was to give birth

to sons, that is male descendants, successors for the husband's ancestral lineage. The first

success that Mrs Chung achieved in her marriage was giving birth to a son as the couple's

first child. The son was so important to Mrs Chung's identity and her marriage that he

assumed a 'centre stage' in Mrs Chung's long narrative. Mrs Chung learned to take contraceptive pills to prevent too many pregnancies in order to maintain the quality of care of her children. With a high DAS score of 130, she proudly explained that she had achieved what she wanted in a marriage after thirty-odd years.

A good Chinese wife preserves and builds a good family even if it means sacrificing herself for the betterment of others. It seldom occurred to the Chinese wives in my study to pursue their own interests and personal satisfaction, especially when their children were young. The Chinese wives' stories were full of struggles and sacrifices to fulfil their duties in building a successful family. For example, Mrs Chung's narrative disclosed a 'themal coherence' of "I don't have my own life." On the other hand, the Euro Canadian wives' stories focused on their enjoyment of freedom and individuality in their marriage.

Both Mrs Chung and Mrs Carter were full-time homemakers. Both skimped and saved money for the family by making clothes for their children and cutting their hair. Although Mrs Carter shared with her husband the expectation that he be the main provider of the family, Mrs Carter's stance was that she had her own personality and she respected that her husband had his, thus both of them had to work out their differences. They found ways, like attending marriage workshops, to enrich their relationship and compromise. Mrs Carter did not see herself as any less powerful than her husband although she had no economic power. The Euro Canadian wives felt they could say what they needed to say, and voiced their opinions in a straightforward manner. This was evident in the couples' joint interviews. The Euro Canadian women were comfortable in disagreeing with their husbands while the Chinese women, except for Mrs Fung, held back and reframed ways of saying things in front

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of their husbands. Even if Mrs Tang disagreed with her husband, she denied her husband's view only in a cute and laughing way by saying, *"no, he's lying."*

Mrs Chung was not alone in feeling that she had to make tremendous sacrifices in her marriage; other Chinese wives echoed this feeling. Mrs Chung, Mrs Lai and Mrs Tang said they had given up things they liked to do such as socializing with friends for many years while the children were growing up. Although Mrs Tang felt her husband was very considerate and she felt very satisfied with her marital relationship, she sacrificed her career for the sake of the family.

Mrs Tang: I could have my own career,
but because there is a big family, and my husband's job is so special.
In these circumstances, somebody must be at home for the children.
So the wife adjusts and compromises her career.

She gained her satisfaction from an intimate relationship with her husband who appreciated her efforts in the family and from the successful raising of four children. The following song of sacrifice recited by Mrs Tang contrasts with the enjoyment portrayed in the Euro Canadian wife, Mrs Carter's narrative:

Euro Canadian	Chinese
Mrs Carter: *Umhum. I know I can distinctly remember when I was, when we were married, oh, I don't know, four or five years, I thought that you know, this is just perfect, like this is just what I wanted [yeah], a house and two little children and you know, I was in my glory. I remember, I mean I'm not saying I never was since then, but I just remember distinctly that it was a very very happy time in my life [umhum], I was just, I just had everything that I wanted [umhum] and there couldn't be anything added to it.*	**Mrs Tang:** *There is a Chinese idiom song which said, 'If you marry a chicken, you follow the chicken. If you marry a dog, you follow the dog. If you marry a monkey, you follow him and run all over the hill.' So I have that value. Our relationship has been very good, so it's impossible to be apart.*

The Euro Canadian wives enjoyed their personal freedom and did not feel they gave up much being a woman/wife in the marital relationship, in contrast to their Chinese counterparts. Mrs Carter, the most traditional one among the Euro Canadian wives, did not claim everything in the household as her job. She had her priorities with reading and studying, and fostering 88 children in her seventeen years of marriage. She said,

"Cleaning is not my top priority [umhum]. I try to keep it relatively clean [umhum]. I don't want to spend my whole life just cleaning.... I'm aware I need to be at least half-presentable till ten, so I took a nap in the afternoon."

Mrs Carter was proud of being herself as a woman in a marital relationship:

M: Yeah, just your, you know, yeah, as opposed to being a man, and you know, how do you feel being a wife, do you have any, anything to add?

Mrs Carter: Well, I wouldn't want to be anything else [yeah].
I'm happy with, with who I am,
I think, well, (??) happy with my life {laugh}.
Um, but I'm, you know, I'm really pleased with playing the part that I do [umhum] and being a woman [umhum].
I've never wished to be a man but [umhum]
I'm glad that I'm who I am.

A typical reason for the Euro Canadian wives' satisfaction in their marital relationship was that they tended to get their way in the relationship. Mrs Brown said, *"if I want to do something and he wants to do something, usually we end up doing what I want to do."* Both Mrs Brown and Mrs Carter felt they were less patient than their husbands, but glad that their husbands were able to put up with them even though they had a quick temper. In the Chinese group, only Mrs Fung, who was in an egalitarian marital relationship, had this privilege. She claimed that the ratio of her husband's giving way to her versus her giving way to her husband was seven to three. The Euro Canadian women felt free to do whatever they wanted and assert their needs. They also enjoyed the freedom of refusing to do what they did not like to do. For example, Mrs Brown enjoyed doing the books for the family but Mrs Scott and Mrs Carter did not like doing that kind of job, and so they refused to do it, while the husbands were happy to take up this task. However, the Chinese women did not feel free to refuse any jobs that they and their husbands perceived as their role. Mrs Lai did housework throughout most of her life even though she disliked housework. Only the Chinese men had the privilege, like the Euro Canadian women, of refusing to perform certain household duties.

Contrasted with the individual freedom of the Euro Canadian wives, the Chinese wives were more constrained by the rules they had created to accommodate their marriages. The Chinese women, except for Mrs Fung, saw themselves as less important than men. They put their needs after their husbands' and identified with Chinese society's view of men's privileged status. The followings are some of the strategies Mrs Chung used to keep her husband faithful to her and the family:

- *"I don't disturb my husband in the morning. I wouldn't feel good if he didn't have enough energy for work."*

- *"I endure his temper, so as to make him feel attached to me and have fidelity toward the family."*

- *"I won't talk back to him even if he annoyed me especially in public, as I give face to him. I did get back when it is safe at home."* Home was her secure territory.

Mrs Wong and Mrs Tang learned from Chinese newspapers and magazines that reading newspapers was a man's prime time. They established a rule of not asking their husbands to do housework when they were reading newspapers. The Chinese wives also learned such rules from socializing with their female friends.

Compared to Western society, Hong Kong Chinese society places less value on a wife's tremendous homemaking role in the family. Mrs Chung and Mrs Lai did not regard what they did for the family as a significant contribution. Mrs Chung generated a lot of income for the family through her careful investments in Hong Kong realty. Although she might have generated more money than her husband had earned, she still felt obligated to respect and take good care of the 'official' income-earning husband. Her narrative was full of gratitude to others, to her family for raising her in difficult times, and to her husband for taking care of her family of origin when they experienced financial difficulties. Mrs Lai's lack of a sense of value as a homemaker was reinforced by her husband, who easily dismissed her views by saying that she had not enough experience to make relevant judgments. In comparison with the Euro Canadian respondents' experience, the privilege assigned to the 'public' sphere over the 'private' sphere was more apparent in the Chinese respondents' experience.

Although Canadian society also tends to value the 'public' sphere more than the 'private' one, the Euro Canadian male respondents recognized the contribution of women's work at home. Mr Brown said, *"they [women] were doing things at home and that was a full-time job."* The Euro Canadian men did not look down upon their wives even if they did not work outside the home. Mr Carter, in his church circle, even glorified the importance of wives' roles as mothers and homemakers. Mr Carter said,

"We've felt it's society undervaluing the role of um, of uh a mother [umhum], and a homemaker [umhum]. And I think, I think we've tried to resist that...in our circle at church, we try to emphasize that motherhood is important, you put a lot into, and it's very important to put, take care of the children, give them the love and the nurture and the tenderness and [umhum] the uh all the things they need [umhum] that can't be supplied by somebody else and we say, and we try to emphasize that that's more valuable than any career [umhum]."

The gender relationships which the couples constructed during their marriage had a strong influence on a woman's sense of self. Although Mrs Fung emerged from a Hong Kong Chinese context, the openness in her family of origin and the egalitarian marital relationship gave her a very empowering and positive sense of self. She had a positive outlook on women in Hong Kong:

Mrs Fung: I appreciate our Hong Kong very much.
Why? I look around the world, in many societies, women's status is not as high as in Hong Kong.
Hong Kong is very top. So those Hong Kong girls are smart.
They are really well, like the Princess of Heaven.

She thought education was of prime importance to a woman's status. She said,

"the importance of education is that it gives you social status, your independent view, you have your economic power today."

The above narrative was in great contrast with Mrs Wong's. Her view reflected her sense of self as she went through her own struggle in the gender relationship in her marriage, although

she intended to generalize to women in Hong Kong:

Mrs Wong: I think now we women are too bright most of the time,
we have too much opportunities, too much education.
So in a way we women face a great dilemma, I find being a woman is much more difficult
than being a man. Won't you agree? [I laughed]
If there are no opportunities for women to get education, you suffer, like those days when
women had to bind their feet;...
My husband cares less, he can walk away just like that.
But I would worry about my girl and my boys, and worry about millions of things.
I can't give up my responsibility. So you get frustrated forever.
You need to perform well outside. In your career, you need to perform one hundred percent
better than men in order to get appreciated. So you work yourself to death.
By the time you are home you have no energy left. So how can you take care of your family?
But then you feel very guilty.
I always remember what I was like when I was working. I felt very guilty when I couldn't
spend time with my children because I needed to work."

Later on she also captured the second shift taken on by women in Hong Kong:

"Once you get home, you need to be a full-time mother."

Change occurred in the sense of self among both Chinese and Euro Canadian wives

during the course of their marriages. This is consistent with empirical findings that women

become more assertive when they grow older (Gilford, 1986; Huyck & Gutmann, 1992). One

Chinese wife, Mrs Chung, who tried every means to accommodate her husband because she

valued him as the family's provider, indicated that the older she became, the more of a

temper she had. She put up less with her husband's temper and fought back, probably

because she did not feel she needed to accommodate her husband after she had achieved

what she had dreamed of achieving in her marriage, that is, the success of her son in his

career. Another Euro Canadian wife, Mrs Scott, who was a timid woman at the beginning

of her marriage, discovered her assertiveness during the course of the couple's relationship

which changed from one based on traditional gender roles to one that was more flexible. Mrs

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Scott described herself as much more timid years ago, and was afraid to cause an argument. She became more vocal after she returned to work. She would force an issue if she felt that she was not satisfied. She now had her own thinking and was able to express her opinion. Her husband commented that they, as a couple, had reached a closer balance in asserting themselves in the marriage than they had thirty-five years ago. He recalled that their roles had nearly reversed over the thirty odd years. He said,

"Years ago she could tell me to shut up and I would shut up {Wife laughed} [hmmhmm] okay. [hmmhmm] Today if I were to tell her to shut up, we would have an argument. [hmmhmm] That's the difference.

He later lamented,

"You {wife} became more assertive that I would not in my wildest imagination have expected you to become."

Contrasting Chinese husbands' and Euro Canadian husbands' sense of self

Developmental theorists have argued that forming an autonomous identity is the prime characteristic of male development (Erikson, 1950; Freud, 1961; Mahler, Pine, & Bergman, 1975). Western literature emphasizes that men's identity centres around work rather than relationships (Nichols, 1988). However, the narrations of the Euro Canadian husbands in my study were centred around their marital relationship, as reflected in the coming quotations of their narratives in this section. These men demonstrated a strong sense of relatedness and orientation to their wives. In the following, I chose an example from Mr Brown, who was <u>not</u> a church minister, to illustrate his sense of relatedness to his wife:

"Whether it would be going golfing, or going to a baseball game or going somewhere we've never gone before, if I knew she was gonna be happy and enjoyed it, well then those things, I'd lot lots of enjoyment out of."

On the contrary, when responding to my relationship questions, the Chinese husbands revealed an identity around work and themselves. Four of the five Chinese men, Mr Chung, Mr Lai, Mr Wong, and Mr Tang, strongly presented their sense of self in relation to their career achievements. As far as the self-other relationship is concerned, the Chinese men, except for the egalitarian husband Mr Fung, were the most self-centred of all four respondent groups. Their self-centredness was in sharp contrast to the other-orientation of the Chinese wives. According to the narratives, spouses of the egalitarian couples in the two respective cultural groups were equally focused on their relationships.

Most of the Chinese men, Mr Chung, Mr Lai and Mr Wong, referred to their work to illustrate their marital relationships. Mr Chung and Mr Lai always drew parallels between work and marriage. Mr Chung remarked, *"like in my career, my marriage is smooth all along."* Mr Lai used his work experience to illustrate how he accommodated to his marriage:

"this is natural, because as a man who works as an administrator, X need to overcome any people or matter, solve them." (Note: X represents a missing pronoun.)

Mr Wong, the only respondent who emphasized stable finances as an essential factor for a good marital relationship, talked about his success, wealth, and extravagant lifestyle in Hong Kong when he responded to my question on the couple's division of labour:

M: How are your divisions of labour?

Mr Wong: I do most of the outside work, those mechanical things. I'm quite a handy person. Air conditioning, water. I had an air conditioning company before, it was very big. I once was a general manager in a hotel. Although there were ten, twenty departments under my supervision, I didn't sit there. Whether an air conditioning system, and a lot of functioning, and operations in the kitchen, I comprehended them quite well.
I learned things fast...
In Hong Kong..doesn't need, there were maids who did all household chores.
Our hotel was big, with over ten professions. Anything happened, X just call someone up

to fix.
And I owned an air conditioning company...
Not to mention food. 15 years in hotel business. I owned a fast food shop too {he laughed and was self indulgent} X pretty choosy in food.
So I didn't need to do any household work, with two maids.

M: Now do you need to do those things on your own?

Mr Wong: Now I, I think it's more healthier to me, because you have time you are occupied. Secondly you have some exercise, which is better. (Note: X represents the missing pronouns in the narrative.)

In response to my question of what kind of housework he performed, Mr Wong's narration consisted of a recounting of his handiness and career success. He used 'I' frequently, which centred around himself when he recounted his successful career, and used it less when he resumed talking about his involvement in housework. The use of "you" represents his detachment from the topic. In his above narrative segment, there was no room for his wife.

None of the Chinese men articulated changes in their marriages, though most of the wives reported many changes. When I asked the Chinese men about any changes in their marital relationships after coming to Canada, they easily identified changes in their career, their physical changes, and even environmental changes, but not changes in their marital relationship. A Chinese wife's comment regarding her husband's unwillingness to talk about their marriage might explain this. Mrs Wong commented, *"even if they [the relationship] change, he usually won't tell you."* This observation was confirmed by Mr Fung. When I asked him to give examples of the couple's change in marital experience, he remarked that those matters were too trivial to talk about.

Compared to their Chinese counterparts, the Euro Canadian husbands were more

articulate and expressive in locating changes in their marital relationships. Being aware of the changes that were taking place in society's views on women's roles, the Euro Canadian men were able to talk about how those forces affected, or in Mr Carter's case, did not affect their marriages. Mr Scott narrated the changes that took place in his marriage:

"In fact for the early years, I didn't prepare food at all [umhum], I mean it was, I think you have to understand, Maria, that in our generation, when we left home, there were still very defined roles [right]. The woman was at home for the most part [yeah]. The man was out in the work force earning the income. The woman looked after the house and reared the children, the men went to the factory, or to the office, made the money, came home, attended to the outside chores, the lawn maintenance, any repairs [right], those types of things and {pause}, as I say, that was very defined, um, we, we fairly early on uh recognised that society was changing and the expectations of male versus female were changing...."

Three Chinese men, Mr Chung, Mr Lai, and Mr Wong, had a sense of superiority over their wives. As noted before, in the patrilineal Chinese marriages, men were conferred a privileged status. These three Chinese men assumed an "I know better" stance in their gender relationships with their wives. They believed they had more experience and exposure than their wives, especially in the areas of finance and investment. Having a temper was a common trait among these three Chinese husbands, as reported by their wives in their narratives of how they tolerated this trait of their husbands. Mr Chung and Mr Lai directed their temper toward their wives who were homemakers, while Mr Wong directed his temper to his mother rather than his wife. Mr Lai justified men's temper:

Mr Lai: I have to shoulder a lot of things by myself, especially those complicated matters. It's not that we as men are more privileged.
But in our society, there are a lot of things you can't change.
That is men always go outside to work. When you work outside, you have more experience in society.
So would you be better than housewives in handling those external matters?
....
Because men go out to work, they have more exposure, a wider contact, it easily calls for

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more frustration.
So sometimes the emotional state is not that stable.

M: What would you do when you are not that stable emotionally?

Mr Lai: When it is not good, X maybe make little excuses to burst out.
I find this kind of situation is just normal. It's better than if he ventilates in some other
undesirable ways. (Note: X represents a missing pronoun.)

Mr Lai's above narrative was a vivid representation of a Chinese cultural preference of

'public' over 'private.' His use of pronouns like 'we' 'you' and 'they' instead of 'I' implied

that he thought his position was shared by other men.

Euro Canadian men felt that their wives were as much individuals as they were, and

they respected their wives' individuality. Mr Taylor's view about the impact of his wife's

work contrasts with that of Mr Wong. Mr Taylor's view reflects the Euro Canadian

husbands' respect for their wives' individuality and their wife-orientation:

Euro Canadian	*Chinese*
Mr Taylor: I think it has been good for her to work, she's self-reliant.	*Mr Wong: It's very good for the marriage. Also she learns that making money is not easy... Work preoccupies a person. If she is only a housewife after marriage, with no other commitment, she would think about some other things, like those rich wives who didn't work, they only know how to spend money.*

In the above two statements, the Euro Canadian husband spoke positively about the

achievements of his wife. In contrast, the Chinese husband commented on his wife's work

from his position as a man and how her work benefited him in the marriage. Embedded in

the narrative of Mr Wong is an assumption that men are the major breadwinners, and so if

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the wife worked, she could then understand how hard it was for men to make money.

Mr Brown, the only Euro Canadian man who used his work to illustrate his marital experience, had a very different attitude towards his wife than his Chinese counterparts:

M: Right. Well, being a husband, can you describe what, what is it like in your marriage being a husband?

Mr Brown: Being a husband.

M: Yeah.

Mr Brown: {pause} I don't know how to answer that. {long pause} I think, I'll answer it this way, uh {pause} at most times I would say I try to be a good husband and my own satisfaction, my own feelings [umhum] always turned out to be the best when I was doing something to make {wife} feel better or have things go better and I guess I get more pleasure out of trying to give her pleasure than, than creating pleasure for myself [umhum]...
Being patient with each other, and it ended up, you ended up, you got all the rewards or all the good feelings that you could possibly ever dream of having.

The Euro Canadian men, like Mr Brown in his above narrative, gave their best to their wives and did things to make them happy, but in turn gained more enjoyment and satisfaction from the relationship.

In Mr Scott's narration of his experience of being a husband, he talked about the give and take in the couple's marriage. His following narrative illustrates the unconditional love he received and his particular sense of being a provider in his marriage:

"In a receiving sense, she's given me three beautiful children [umhum]. She has given me care, warmth, understanding, tolerance, patience, all of those things. She's all I could have ever asked for in a woman [yeah]. Um {long pause} it's been an unconditional love. Uh, and I can't, I can't put enough emphasis on the unconditional aspect of that because regardless of how well a couple know each other, how hard they work at their marriage, how natural their marriage may be, there will from time to time be disagreements [umhum], however minor [oh yes], however infrequent or insignificant, there will be disagreements. But in spite of that, there has always been a knowledge that her love is an unconditional love."

Then he discussed what he had given his wife in return. He said he was very conscious of giving his wife what she needed: *"I was always very conscious of being a provider [umhum]... as a husband and as a father."* He stressed that *"they deserved nothing but the best"* twice in his narrative. The following is Mr Scott's narration about being a provider:

"As a provider, and I don't mean that just in the, the strictest financial sense, uh .. I guess in some sense I would but in some sense I wouldn't in that .. I would be more prepared to spend more to provide for them than what they would have been prepared to spend for themselves."

The Euro Canadian men, and one Chinese man, Mr Fung, were more reflexive about their roles as a man today than were the other Chinese men. Lupri (1991) points out that most Euro Canadian men are in a "transitional state," rethinking their roles as husbands. Mr Scott's following narration echoed these Euro Canadian men's voices:

"I think it goes without saying that it took many years, and I'm still learning, and I think in general, uh, my feeling is that the male element of society today is struggling [umhum] with really where we belong, where we fit. It, it's, it's very spelled out for the woman [umhum], but I think the male element uh today is, at least for our generation is struggling more so than perhaps our children's generation [umhum] because they've seen what we've been doing...."

Without administering a formal self-concept measure, I could only draw upon the respondents' narratives to make comparisons regarding their sense of self. All the Euro Canadian respondents, no matter whether men or women, developed a positive sense of self during the course of their marriages. Although the Carters had a more traditional marriage with strictly defined gender roles, they were conscious of their choice and valued the wife's mothering role. On the other hand, the Chinese husbands, Mr Chung, Mr Lai and Mr Wong, maintained their sense of superiority as men. Their wives had a lower sense of self. These wives perceived women to have a subordinate role to their husbands. The sense of self of the

only egalitarian couple in the Chinese group, the Fungs, was comparable to that of the Euro Canadian couples. Furthermore, I found that the Chinese respondents who had a higher DAS score, like Mrs Chung, and Mr and Mrs Tang, had a relatively positive sense of self compared to those with lower scores. For example, I found Mrs Lai, who had the lowest score, have the lowest sense of self among the respondents.

Chapter Eight

Findings and Discussion III: Contributing factors to

satisfactory long-term marriages

In this chapter, I build upon the empirical findings of research on long-term satisfactory marriages and compare my own findings to this research. In particular, I elaborate on the gender and cultural factors which contribute to long-term marital satisfaction. I present my findings on the four components of gender relationships which I derived from the stories of the couples (see Section VI in Chapter Seven) – namely, household division of labour, decision-making power and negotiation, compromise of differences and disagreements, and communication and mutual understanding. In *Section IX: summary discussions*, I discuss the gender compatibility factors and summarize the cultural factors which contribute to long-term marital satisfaction in the two cultural groups under study. Lastly, I reformulate my conceptual model (figure 10) on the construction of gender and culture in satisfactory long-term marriages.

Section VIII: Gender qualities that contribute to satisfactory long-term marriages

1. Household division of labour

The couple's household division of labour is a major theme that elucidates gender relationships, as described in the last chapter. Moreover, one of the important manifestations of gender roles in marriage is the couple's division of labour with respect to household chores and child care. In this section, the focus is mainly on the evolving household division of labour of the Euro Canadian couples, as the change in division of labour among the

Chinese group after immigration to Canada was discussed in section V. Comparisons are made between the two cultural groups. Both groups are included in the discussion of how the couples' household division of labour contributes toward marital satisfaction.

As discussed in Chapter Six on the socio-historical development of Euro Canadian marriages, despite the socio-cultural changes in gender ideology, there is still a long way to go before Canadian couples will have achieved a truly egalitarian gender division of labour. Women still do most of the housework. Research finds a great discrepancy between married couples' ideology and practice in gender roles (Hiller & Philliber, 1986; Hochschild, 1989; Blaisure & Allen, 1995; Statistics Canada, 1998). Many couples who believe that they are egalitarian are actually traditional in practice, and vice versa. One of the major discrepancies is in the area of household division of labour (Kome, 1982; Kurian, 1993; Mandell & Duffy, 1995; Conway, 1997). Couples' division of labour is one of the most critical issues of dual-earner couples (Kluwer, Heesink, & Van de Vliert, 1997). The five-year study by Ed Bader (1980) in Toronto revealed that a couple's most heated and frequent arguments centred around housework (in Kome, 1982).

A similar discrepancy between ideology and practice was evident in my couple respondents' household division of labour. Despite adhering to a strong ideology that emphasized sharing in household tasks in marriage (the Carters were the only exception), the major division of labour for three couples, the Browns, the Scotts and the Taylors, was still based on traditional men's and women's jobs. My research findings indicate that the kitchen was still the women's domain in both cultural groups. In the Euro Canadian group, women were still mainly responsible for cooking, grocery shopping, and general cleaning, while men were responsible for repair and 'outside' jobs. Nonetheless, two of these three Euro Canadian couples, the Scotts and the Taylors, underscored in their narratives that they had evolved

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from a strictly defined division of labour to one that is more flexible, which they found crucial to their marital satisfaction, especially for the wives.

The evolution of division of labour among Euro Canadian couples

At the beginning of the Euro Canadian couples' marriages, their division of labour was more strictly defined than at the time of the interview. These couples automatically followed the last generation's pattern of division of labour when they were first married. Mr Scott captured the socio-cultural changes that affected the couple's division of labour:

" I think that hmm it was something that came about not just within our relationship and marriage, but within society as a whole when the woman started going back to work, and this is a only a thirty year phenomena. I mean there have always been some women in the workforce, don't misunderstand me, and you are aware of that. But to see the percentage of women [M: yeah] in the workforce is you know, a thirty year phenomena."

Mr Scott's narrative suggested that the last thirty years have been a turning point for couples as far as the evolution of their gender relationship is concerned. In the following, I use the experiences of two Euro Canadian couples, the Scotts and the Taylors, to expound their evolving household division of labour that led to marital satisfaction, as it was illustrated in figure 8 (Chapter Seven).

The story of the Taylors

Mrs Taylor remarked that the couple's evolution in their household division of labour was critical to her marital satisfaction. The Taylors raised three sick children when they were young, with the first and second only fourteen months apart. It was a stressful time when the second baby came, as explained in the wife's narrative. Mrs Taylor stayed home all the time to take care of the children while her husband worked full-time as an accountant, and

managed a hockey team in the evenings. He was gone a lot during weekends as well. Mrs Taylor lapsed into a depression and could not cope with her daily life. Out of desperation, she asked if her husband would consider quitting the hockey volunteer job. The husband responded positively and quit his hockey team the next season. Mrs Taylor recounted,

"We didn't sit down and have long discussions, it was just {short pause} uh, like he could have said no, I'm not stopping hockey and that probably would have changed our whole pattern even though that was very early on in our marriage."

Mrs Taylor appreciated that her husband's decision was difficult for him because he was teased by his friends in the hockey team who said he was "hen-pecked." However, it was important for Mrs Taylor that her husband was able to share the responsibility of taking care of their sick babies. Another critical event in the evolution of the couple's household division of labour occurred when Mrs Taylor began to work full-time when the children started school. She hired a cleaning lady to help out with the house cleaning. However, Mr Taylor did not like the cleaning lady. The couple worked out an arrangement that had Mr Taylor help with vacuuming. Since then, Mr Taylor has done the vacuuming without requiring any reminder from his wife.

The story of the Scotts

Mrs Scott came from a traditional family in which her male role model never did any inside housework and considered that taboo. Like all the other Euro Canadian wives, Mrs Scott assumed a traditional woman's role at the beginning of her marriage. Returning to work after the children were at school gradually changed her thinking and she began to expect more participation from her husband in housework. During coffee breaks at work she

learned how others shared household tasks in their marriages. This is what she said about that experience:

*"It [work] **broadens** [respondent's emphasis] your perspective of things...*
Hmm I think after a while too once you are out in the working field and perhaps just with talking to other women in the workplace, hmm you start to realize that men are doing more things in the home. But then on the other hand, I also do a fair bit of work outside [Hmmhmm] helping him. So I think it's both ways. [right] We were finding we're helping each other [yeah] on both sides.

Both of the Scotts were exposed to gender discourses in their workplaces and friendship circles. They heard stories about a husband who resisted change in the division of labour with his wife and how this doomed the marital relationship. Through casual conversations and comparing notes, the Scotts decided what would work for the betterment of their relationship. Mr Scott said that since he wanted the couple's relationship to work, he was willing to change. He learned to do laundry and to cook even though he had to learn almost from scratch.

*Mr Scott: So when you get together as couples or as families [hmmhmm] you discuss, [yeah] what what's working, what's what's changing in society. Oh {wife} back at work now, you know, it bothers me she doesn't have as much time on her hands or she's going to bed every night, she falls into bed and she's dead [hmmhmm] you know and why is that.... So what does that entail? That means **change.** I think with any successful marriage you are continually striving to to maintaining longetivity within the marriage [hmmhmm], to making it work... because we love each other.*

Similar to the Chinese wives following their immigration to Canada, Mrs Scott started to experiment by asking her husband to lend a hand in household chores, especially in the kitchen. As the husband assumed more tasks inside the house, the wife asked him to do more. The Scotts gradually changed their division of labour:

H: Over the years I'm sure there there've been times when we have discussed certain things eh.

W: It's not that cut and dried.

H: It it might be [hmmhmm] something very very subtle very simple like '{husband}, I, you know, I really appreciate the hand with this [hmmhmm] tonight' and, you know, I may be lend a hand, hey, it isn't so bad, [hmmhmm] you know, I can do this.

What have most Euro Canadian couples achieved in their household division of labour over the course of their marriages?

Most Euro Canadian husbands and wives were aware of their flexibility evolving in their household division of labour. During the interview, Mrs Scott contested my use of the word "division" when I asked about the couple's division of labour. She preferred to use the word "share" because she and her husband no longer divided their jobs as they did when they started their marriage:

"But eh you know, it's it's not as near as defined as what it was like thirty years ago, not near to. [yeah] It's much you know more give and take, sharing."

One husband, Mr Taylor, was also aware of society's gender discourses:

M: Umhum. Well, how do you look at what's men's work and what's not men's work?

H: Well now, in this day and age, there really isn't a lot of difference any more. At one time, pretty well whatever was in the household was the lady's work and whatever was out was the man's work, but it's not that way any more, like that's the changes.

Except for one Euro Canadian couple, the Carters, who consciously maintained their parallel division of labour, the other Euro Canadian couples described their gender division of labour as flexible. The Euro Canadian couples' flexibility in their division of labour, in varying degrees, included the husbands being more ready to take on some 'inside' work when there was a need, and the wives not mind mowing the lawn or shovelling snow

occasionally when their husbands were busy. What the men tended to do more of was washing dishes, vacuuming, doing the laundry occasionally, and helping their wives with gardening and canning, which they had never done before. Instead of following a rigid definition of roles, these couples did their housework according to what needed to be done, who was available, and who was better at doing the job.

There were still certain household activities that the Euro Canadian husbands did not do. For example, Mr Brown still did not do any ironing because he believed that it was not a man's job. Another job that neither of the Euro Canadian men, except for Mr Smith, was actively involved in was cooking. One husband said he felt intimidated by his wife who was an excellent cook. Another husband said, *"I don't cook, that's one thing I don't do, not barbecue too. Anything else I'll do."* One man claimed that he cooked simple things like spaghetti for the children when mom worked in the evening, but it was sporadic. The Smiths were the most flexible; whoever came home first would start the cooking. In the first year of their marriage, the husband cooked most of the meals when he worked flexible hours at home. Because the husband had just changed jobs at the time of the interview, it was the wife who usually came home first, and so she cooked more. One or two husbands did barbequing. Barbequing is an 'outside' job which is more easily accepted by men. Since it is also a different way of cooking, the men do not feel the same competition with their wives as they would in the kitchen.

It was mentioned previously that a Chinese male respondent would likely be in trouble if his wife died because he did not know how to cook at all, while a Euro Canadian male respondent might be more likely to survive. Mr Scott described what seems to be

generally expected with respect to a man's cooking skills in contemporary Canadian society:

"I think all men make fried eggs and bacon and ham and, you know, those types of things, home fries and just some very basics."

Despite the fact that Mr Scott felt intimidated in the kitchen, he started to prepare breakfast on Saturday mornings, and the couple worked together to prepare meals for their sick friends. At the time of the interview, he helped in getting things ready for meals 90 to 95% of the time.

In the case of the Taylors, the husband commented that when the couple were first married 30 years ago, wives were expected to look after their husbands, making the husband's lunch for example. Mr Taylor commented that although some of their married friends maintained such practices, he and his wife did not. Instead, when Mrs Taylor went on the night shift, the husband helped her with her lunch, and prepared her coffee so that she could sleep until she had to go to work. He shovelled the snow for her car when there was a snow storm. Mrs Taylor was very appreciative of him for this.

Although more Euro Canadian wives expected their husbands to be involved in housework, these wives still perceived 'inside' work as their domain, as did the husbands with regard to their 'outside' work. Mrs Scott remarked, *"He doesn't think outside jobs are his duty but he still takes the primary responsibility for that."* The way the husband and the wife talked reflected an interesting mentality. The husband still used the word 'help' in describing his wife's involvement in the outside work. For example, Mr Scott said, *"{wife} also enjoys being outside and helping with that [right]. And I welcome her involvement with that."* Mrs Scott also used the term 'helped' when her husband shared her jobs. However,

Mrs Scott used the word 'help' less when talking about a job that supposedly was her husband's. She said *"If he isn't here, I go out and I start mowing the lawn."* In another case, Mrs Brown stated that *"we always do everything together,"* but basically she meant she did everything with her husband but not vice versa.

Although the Euro Canadian husbands did more housework than their Chinese counterparts, and although they did more now than years ago, husbands like Mr Brown and Mr Scott admitted that their wives still shouldered the majority of the household responsibilities. They acknowledged that they did not do as many household chores and as much child care as their son's generation did. Mr Scott confessed,

"Now, that said and done, I'd be the first one to admit that {wife}, to this day, probably carries more of uh, the household responsibilities [right] than what I do. Um, she still does the, probably 95 percent of the meal preparation [right]. She still does probably {pause} oh, 70 percent, 60 percent of the laundry."

These couples said their sons did more housework like cooking, and their daughters-in-law expected their husbands to do as much as they could in terms of housework and child care. The Euro Canadian couples realized that they did not share housework as much as today's younger couples do, but they believed they tried their best to accommodate change:

Mr Taylor: Not as much as probably modern marriages are sharing but [umhum] I think maybe a little more than someone in our age group.

To recapitulate, the Euro Canadian couples' household division of labour was less rigidly defined than that of their parents' generation, except in the case of the Carters, but it was still far removed from that of their children's generation. As described in the literature mentioned earlier, there still exists a great discrepancy between the couples' beliefs and practices.

The effect of the husband's participation in housework on marital satisfaction

Both Euro Canadian and Chinese wives found that their husbands' participation in housework enhanced the couples' marital satisfaction. The wives felt happier. When Mrs Chung explained that her husband shovelled the snow, it was the first time in her long narrative that she said she was happy. The Euro Canadian husbands' initiatives in helping and their willingness to do so pleased their wives, especially when the husbands appreciated the kind of the jobs they were involved in with their spouses. Mrs Brown felt her husband's spontaneity in doing chores like washing the dishes even when they did not have a dishwasher, vacuuming and barbequing at the cottage was pleasing as she did not need to ask and it was something that she did not expect.

Mrs Taylor pointed out that when she got less tired because some of the household chores were taken care of by her husband, she felt less angry. Mrs Taylor felt that her husband's unsolicited participation in housework benefited the marriage. The following was our conversation:

Mrs Taylor: He just does it... I guess some women don't have that privilege that their husbands don't see those things and [umhum] they have to be told.

M: Umhum. How does that spontaneity affect your marriage?

Mrs Taylor: Oh, probably good because I don't get angry or mad at him because he hasn't done something [yeah]. He probably has more reason to be angry at me because I tend to be messy and he tends to be very neat {laugh}[yeah], so he probably could get, he could probably get, uh, or I think he looks at well, there's other things that I do [umhum], you know, like I do do all the cooking [umhum] and the shopping, grocery shopping [umhum], it's not something that interests him at all, and that's fine [umhum]. I don't push that because there's things that he does do [umhum], so I think that's what we've done, we've kind of looked at well what does the other person do as opposed to what they don't do [umhum]. You know, you could get naggy on what somebody doesn't do [umhum] as opposed to looking at how many things that

they do do.

One Chinese wife, Mrs Fung, opined that a wife could not handle both pressure from working outside the home and housework. If the wife is tired, more arguments would result, which could lead to marital failure. The Fungs discussed their keen observation of the importance of sharing of housework in Canadian families as an essential element of a satisfactory marriage:

M: How does men participating in housework affect a marital relationship?

W: This is very good. It would be very good.
Of course there would be times that has different opinion [she meant small conflict].
But sometimes doing housework together is fun.
The wife would be very grateful to you.
When she's tired, you can wash the dishes for me, she would be grateful.
It enhances your marital relationship.

H: This may be learned from the mainstream society. Most of the Westerners do housework.

W: In mainstream society, they do everything, just everything.

H: May be affected by them and learn from them. (Note: Since the context of this conversation was the couple expressing their views toward Chinese men in Canada. Mrs Fung's use of "she" to signify wife was appropriate.)

The Fungs learned from mainstream society that Canadian husbands participate in housework. They also learned from their Chinese friends that a lot of Chinese husbands shared more housework after they came to Canada. Compared to the Fungs, Mrs Tang had a more pragmatic reason for placing importance on the husband's participation in housework. As she put it,

"I feel more comfortable {She laughed}.
Especially in Canada, you can't expect one partner to shoulder everything.
Because she also works outside the home, so both must share the [household] responsibilities.

If you don't share the responsibilities, not only you work one person to death, that person will be unhappy.
If you want to live harmoniously together, you need to involve.
I think he realizes this. "

One wife, Mrs Tang, felt it would be unfair to have one spouse shoulder all household responsibilities. She opined that a good family life is based on sharing. She felt her husband's participation in household jobs was important for her. However she used more "you" and "she" rather than "I" and "he" in her comments, probably due to the fact that her husband's participation in housework still appeared to be more an ideal than a reality.

In general, the wives did not place high demands on their husbands for involvement in housework. Most of the Chinese and Euro Canadian wives, who found their husbands doing a 'sufficient' portion of housework, felt content; but of course the definition of 'sufficient' varied. One Euro Canadian wife, Mrs Brown, and the Chinese wives, Mrs Tang, Mrs Wong, and Mrs Chung, felt very satisfied even when their husbands merely showed good intentions and did a little more housework.

2. Decision making and negotiation

All of the couples in both cultural groups claimed that the couple discussed and talked about things that needed to be considered. However, there were differences among the couples, depending on who had control over finances and the nature of the decisions to be made.

The decision-making patterns of Euro Canadian couples

When I read the Euro Canadian couples' narratives, there was not much difference

between the traditional couple, the Carters and the couples who evolved into a more flexible gender role like the Scotts, in the area of decision making. More substantial differences were found with the decision making of the most egalitarian couple, the Smiths, although all of the Euro Canadian couples made joint decisions in family matters.

Mr Carter used the metaphor of a team to describe the husband-wife relationship where the husband was the head of the team who had a final say in family matters:

" Marriage is a team or partnership of two people working together at common goals. A team is made to function best when both pull equally, or as they are able. So I think work should be shared according to the abilities, strengths and interests of the parties...I believe men should take their responsibility as leaders, protect, and provide under normal circumstances, being the leader of the team.

I don't think I'm the boss, um {short pause} [M: so you don't think] I think I'm responsible [right], but I'm, but when I'm responsible, I've got to also see that she can have her say and be comfortable about whatever we decide, even if I had to say the final word.

I think a man, and I in particular, need the balance of another point of view [umhum] and I, that's why I think her advice is important. If we're going to live together and share things, then I've got to find out what she wants and she needs to be happy [umhum] about the things that we decide together. I mean if it's our things, uh, then, then she has to have some say about it too [umhum] and, and that's where I came from on that issue."

Mrs Carter used "we" a lot in her narrative to describe the couple's decision making. Compared with their parents' generation, the Carters found they had more joint decisions and negotiations than did their parents. The couple cooperated in making decisions through talking and discussion. Mr Carter insisted that his wife participate in making decisions:

"Even though she was kind of sick I insisted that she had to see the car before I buy one [umhum]... although she had said you just buy anything [umhum], I, I wasn't gonna let it go at that and uh..."

In addition to respecting his wife's opinion, Mr Carter insisted that his wife participate in major decisions on things that would involve her to avoid criticisms and

quarrels. Since the husband anticipated that his wife would grumble over things that she did not feel satisfied with, he would insist that she give her opinion when buying major things. Like the other Euro Canadian couples, this couple made more individual decisions in their area of household responsibility. For example, the wife made more decisions over the food budget as she was responsible for groceries. The couple could only name one or two occasions where Mr Carter had not involved his wife in decision making. Rather, Mr Carter had included their son in the decision to build a shed outside their home, which, according to the couple's defined role, was the men's realm of responsibility. Based on the couple's description of how they made decisions, Mr Carter's claim of being the head of the family was more rhetorical than reflective of what actually happened in the couple's decision making.

Similar to the Carters, the Scotts also sat down and chatted about things that needed to be decided together. Each spouse made more decisions in the areas where he/she had more responsibility. The spouses made each other aware of their rationale for doing certain things, and about what was happening in their individual areas of responsibility:

Mr Scott: In areas where either I or she assumes a more natural position, a more comfortable position, um, if, if one of us is less comfortable, we will just let the other go ahead and do what they see fit, but keep each other informed.

Although Mr Carter had a different attitude towards gender than the other Euro Canadian couples in my study, his description of the couple's decision-making practice was quite similar to that of Mr Brown, Mr Scott and Mr Taylor. On the other hand, the Smiths' story of their decision making reveals certain qualitative differences from that of the others. The couple started off with quite unequal roles in decision making in the early part of their

marriage. Mr Smith was dominant while his wife was submissive. The husband was the one who initiated decisions and the wife either agreed or disagreed without attempting to look for alternatives. She made decisions by refusing to change or *"not to do it differently"* from what she had learned from her family of origin. When the husband could not find alternatives and the wife had to go along with his decision, the husband then was the one who took the blame for having made the decision.

The Smiths recounted that at the beginning of their marriage, the husband proposed that he accepted a new job in another province. Out of fear of leaving her parents behind, Mrs Smith objected, but did not look for any alternatives. Left without a choice, she accepted her husband's decision to move. When the couple fought, she would remind him that he had taken her away from her family. She blamed him for not looking hard enough to find a job in Ontario. Mr Smith recalled his early frustrations:

" I think a lot of our life was like that where uh {wife} wouldn't make the decision but then she would be mad at me for doing [umhum] whatever the decision was [wife: umhum] [oh], but she wouldn't offer any other choices. So it was very frustrating to both of us. "

The husband described their relationship as very good at that time since they were familiar with their roles which they had learned from their families of origin. Coming from a family where the man made all the decisions, she automatically expected the husband to have the final say. On the other hand, the husband came from a family where the man was the one who fixed problems and looked after things, and so he easily took on that dominant decision-making role. The husband commented that the above-mentioned dominant-subordinate decision-making struggle was always present. They both lived with this struggle. As the husband explained,

"I think a lot of couples sometimes can get into patterns and they tend to become just more entrenched [mm], they stay the same [umhum]. Uh, we did a lot of major overhaul [umhum, umhum] in our way of thinking."

After a major overhaul, both spouses took responsibility for making decisions. The wife felt comfortable with participating in decision making with her husband. After the couple had experienced a number of struggles about making decisions, they established sort of a middle ground. The husband learned how to slow down to make decisions so that the wife could have the time to get the courage to say what she really would like. Mr Smith gladly drew the following conclusion:

" Not one of us uh having to be responsible and make all the decisions or the other [umhum] having to, to go along with whatever is being decided or uh, it's not, it's also not just my career any more, we both have a life and so whatever decisions we make, even about career or uh how we earn money as a family [umhum] or how we spend money as a family, um, it affects us both, so we both have a [yeah] responsibility to say what we want, and then to try to find something that works together [umhum, umhum]. So it's nice in that I think nobody feels bossed around and nobody feels the, the heavy responsibility of having to be the boss [umhum]. It's a place where um, we really do share uh decision making, and we also share uh, the setting of goals, and so pretty much all our [yeah], everything we do, we do as partners."

Compared to the Chinese wives, Euro Canadian wives like Mrs Brown, Mrs Taylor, and Mrs Smith, had more decision-making power concerning household matters than their husbands. These Euro Canadian wives made more decisions in the areas of buying furniture or initiating travel plans. Their husbands trusted the decisions they made. For example, Mr Taylor remarked, *"I just put my stamp of approval on it."* In the following, Mr Smith explained how he felt about his wife having a little more say in the marriage:

H: On a scale of zero to ten, if ten is the woman boss and zero is the man boss, we might be six. But I, and I expect that's because she's more skilful at expressing her needs than I am.

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M: That could be, that could be...

H: Yeah. I don't think it's, I don't think we feel any competition about that [umhum], it's just that there are many areas of life where {wife} is much clearer about what she wants [umhum] and I'm not so clear, so [umhum] because she's more clear than I am, we tend to go her way [right, yeah], but I don't feel like I lose in that [umhum].

The decision-making patterns of Chinese couples

Among the Chinese group, the decision-making patterns of the two couples who attained the highest DAS scores, the Fungs and the Tangs, contrasted greatly with those of the other three couples who had lower DAS scores, especially the 'traditional' couples, the Chungs and the Lais. Similar to their Euro Canadian counterparts, Mrs Fung and Mrs Tang enjoyed their decision-making power in the marriage. Mr Tang was so busy with his clergy job that he entrusted his wife with all decision-making power. He said he felt no competition with his wife over family matters – finance and everything belonged to the wife's territory. The following is Mr Tang's view concerning Chinese couples' decision-making power:

" I find in most Chinese families, men in name are the head of the family.
In fact, the women are the heads. Most decisions are made by the women.
They make most decisions in family matters.
Why bother to fight over these things?
You already have so many things you need to make decisions outside. "

The couple's well-defined roles conferred overriding power to the wife with respect to all household decision making – she set the rules, and initiated all kinds of decisions. However, she sacrificed her own career, though she had talent and ambition.

The literature underscores that a couple's disagreements over finances can split up a relationship faster than anything else (Mace, 1982; Kome, 1982; Henslin, 1985; Mackey & O'Brien, 1995; Statistics Canada, 1998). In my data, all couples claimed that they did not

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have problems about money. Two of the five Euro Canadian husbands took care of money while their wives said they hated that job. Two Euro Canadian husbands worked hard to involve their wives in their investment strategies and convinced them to attend investment seminars. Relatively speaking, the Chinese men felt that they needed to control money. Three Chinese husbands, Mr Chung, Mr Lai and Mr Wong, believed they should control the family finances. Mr Wong claimed the couple had no problem with money because he was in control of the couple's investments, and his wife had her own money to spend.

When the husbands of both cultural groups made decisions about money, it was likely that they made more decisions on major spending since they were most familiar with the couple's financial status. For example, Mr Scott assumed a greater role in deciding whether the couple could afford any major spending even though he always consulted his wife. The two 'traditional' Chinese husbands, Mr Chung and Mr Lai, who controlled finances, made more decisions over whether their children went abroad to study since studying abroad involved a substantial amount of money.

Both the Euro Canadian and the Chinese couples claimed that both spouses decided on major purchases like the house, car, and major appliances. In comparison, the Chinese husbands had more final say than their Euro Canadian counterparts, even though the traditional Euro Canadian husband Mr Carter claimed that he should have a final say in family matters. For example, buying a car was usually initiated by the husband, except for the Smiths, in both cultures. The husbands then involved the wife in looking at the details of the car. All the Euro Canadian couples made decisions together, while two Chinese husbands, Mr Chung and Mr Lai, made the final decision on their own. Although the

Chinese husbands would consult their wives, they expected them to fall in with their decisions. The above discussion is consistent with the respondents' responses on the ROR. Three Chinese husbands agreed with the ROR statement that "the husband ought to have the main say-so in family matters," while only one Euro Canadian husband (Mr Carter) agreed with this statement. An example of a Chinese husband who had more say in family matters was Mr Chung. Mr Chung underscored that the couple had a joint account which the wife could access even though she did not work. Mr Chung emphasized that the money belonged to both of them. However, Mr Chung decided what was appropriate for the wife to spend. The husband always used words like "convince her" or "persuade her" when his wife did not agree. The couple recounted a story about a major argument which took place two years before the interview. When Mrs Chung was learning English in order to apply for her Canadian citizenship, she suggested purchasing a talking English dictionary to facilitate her learning. However, Mr Chung judged that his wife was not capable of using such a machine and buying it would only waste "his" money. He said twice that *"No matter what, I insisted not to buy."* The wife experienced major difficulties in learning English. The couple fought over the matter a few times. As a compromise, she finally convinced her husband to record some English words for her in a tape recorder so that she could listen while he was not around. The wife felt so tense about the matter that she had high blood pressure after her citizenship test.

Chinese couples had more arguments in their negotiations than the Euro Canadian couples

The Chinese wives risked forcing an argument with their husbands in order to achieve what they perceived to be a better decision for themselves and their children, especially with respect to their education. On the other hand, the Euro Canadian men preferred to give in to their wives rather than force an argument and risk ending the relationship. Although the Chinese wives, except Mrs Fung, found their husbands had more say in family matters, they participated actively in the family's decision making. This finding is consistent with Law et al.'s (1995) findings about Hong Kong marriages. As women in Hong Kong receive higher education and have more social status in society compared to thirty years ago, they participate actively in decision making with their spouses. All the Chinese female respondents, whether homemakers or income-earners, perceived themselves as active partners in the marital relationships. They expressed their opinions and fought for the best interests of their children and the family.

While Mrs Fung and Mrs Tang were direct in proposing agendas for decision making with their husbands, the other Chinese wives used more indirect strategies like manipulation and arguments to influence the decision making. For example, Mrs Chung asked her son to take care of his youngest sister before she asked her husband to support her daughter's studies in Canada. Mrs Lai also endured many arguments to persuade her husband to support her daughter's studies abroad. Mrs Wong sought her children's opinion in support of her view in making certain family decisions.

With a different gender schema and being homemakers, both Mrs Chung and Mrs Lai

never thought of achieving a balance of power in their relationships. Both spouses in the case of the Chungs and the Lais perceived the husband as more dominant, as supported by their 'traditional' cultural values. Unlike Mrs Fung, who used her economic independence to initiate a major overhaul to change the couple's gender relationship to a more egalitarian one, two Chinese wives, Mrs Chung and Mrs Lai, sustained their traditional gender relationship within the power imbalance of their marriages. Lacking economic power, these two Chinese homemakers achieved their marital satisfaction by arguing and fighting for the decisions best suited for them and their children. For example, Mrs Lai wanted to leave the entangled relationship with her husband's extended family by immigrating to Canada. Her husband did not take any action in response to her complaints about the intrusion from his extended family members, nor did he want to emigrate, which troubled Mrs Lai greatly. Mrs Lai risked numerous arguments with her husband in order to convince him to emigrate to Canada.

The Chinese wives felt that it was worthwhile going through conflicts. They found it necessary and important to straighten things out with their husbands. Mrs Chung explained that she could not bear living with a person without bothering to ask why he did not agree on certain things or did things in a certain way. She said, *"I can't pretend. If I love a person, I need to be genuine to my heart."* She stressed that she needed to understand the crux of the matter even though the cost was an argument. Arguing, to her, meant a way to express her feelings and discuss misunderstandings. Mrs Chung learned from her aunt that withholding feelings between the spouses could cause damage to the marital relationship, so she would rather talk things out. Mrs Chung further remarked that as long as the outcome suited her, she would let her husband win the fights, and she did not pursue the argument further.

The 'traditional' Chinese women, being a subordinate class, fought back at their husbands and were willing to use conflict as a positive means to bring about a more equal relationship, at least in the area of decision making. They used conflict to protect the family, children, and themselves even if they had to risk having arguments and fights with their husbands. Unlike their Chinese counterparts, the Euro Canadian men, being a privileged class in society, gave in to their wives in order to preserve what they perceived as more important – the marital relationship. One Euro Canadian husband, Mr Scott, emphasized that he valued the couple's relationship so much that he did not force an issue. He accepted a little bit of inequity and just backed down:

> *Mr Scott: Now which do I value more, do I value the marriage and then the good times that we have or am I that hung up on this difference [hmmhmm] that I want to force an issue, [hmmhmm] force an argument or whatever, to me is not worth it. [hmmhmm] I'll back off hmm and there there are probably several things that we have never resolved totally, but we put them so far in the back shelf that they don't bother us anymore, that [hmmhmm] you know it's water under the bridge and you know, I'm not going to change her. She's not going to change me [hmmhmm] all the way and probably that's good [hmmhmm] hmm, If if she were to buckle and kowtow under every demand that I made of her, what is that saying about her as an individual. Like I..*

Mrs Scott: like you have to be yourself.

The Euro Canadian couples preferred to use negotiation rather than arguments to deal with their disagreements. According to Mr Brown, arguing carried blame, while in negotiations, one accepted responsibilities and did something about the issue. Mr Brown, who described his marriage as strong, successful, and satisfying, found negotiation was an effective strategy in both his business and marriage:

> *" I find it's a lot easier to, to negotiate than, than argue and, and just get, no matter whether I'm going into my business or if you have a disagreement with somebody, you know you can*

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argue and argue about it and everybody's angry at everybody [umhum], and you might, if, when you're doing the arguing you can see that you're part, you're partly to blame or whatever well then you've got to accept that responsibility and do something about it [umhum]...rather than argue I, I would say what, what I thought, but then I didn't dwell on it. I guess that's probably the way things have pretty well always worked in our marriage. "

3. Compromise of differences and disagreements

The topic of compromise includes dealing with conflicts, disagreement, and differences between couples. In their book *Lasting marriages*, Mackey and O'Brien (1995) quoted one of their respondent's remarks: "no marriage is without conflict...I think we have learned to live with and accept each other" (p.21). My respondents echoed this saying. A few Chinese wives, Mrs Chung, Mrs Lai and Mrs Wong, underscored in their narratives that they felt their marriages was satisfactory but not without quarrels. Mrs Chung used the metaphor of dogs and cats fighting to characterize couples' fights as a natural process. Disagreement was part and parcel of a couple's married life. No two persons are the same. As Mrs Carter said,

"I mean there's gonna be, there's gonna be slight differences no matter who you're married to [umhum] because you know, you're two different people. {pause}"

Couples' conflicts seldom had a neutral effect; either they led to deterioration in the relationship, or to adaptive changes (Mackey & O'Brien, 1995). The tricky part is how a couple in a close relationship will compromise and manage their conflicts and differences so that they do not hurt their relationship. Conflict management in marriage is a crucial factor in their marital satisfaction (Gottman, 1993a, 1994a, 1994b). The global theme for both cultural groups in the data was that being able to manage conflicts and differences was important for the couple's relationship.

The Euro Canadian couples emphasized that they seldom fought nor had many heated arguments, but they acknowledged they had disagreements. Mr Scott remarked,

" There will from time to time be disagreements [umhum], however minor [oh yes], however infrequent or insignificant, there will be disagreements."

The Chinese wives, who made no apology for forcing arguments with their husbands, said they fought but the frequency of fights had decreased in recent years, especially after they came to Canada. The Chinese and Euro Canadian men usually downplayed the intensity of fights. They emphasized that conflict was always over minute things, not big issues. The husbands used words that had a less serious connotation to describe their conflicts with their wives. For example, the Euro Canadian husbands used "a little sore point" while the wives used "problem," or "disagreement." The husbands in both cultural groups used "upset" instead of "angry;" and the Chinese husbands in particular always said that the couple's disagreements were "trivial." According to the local themes of their narratives, they did have arguments. Nonetheless, the couples from both cultural groups claimed that they could reach a general agreement over important matters. All the Euro Canadian couples claimed that they could talk over their disagreement and came to some sort of agreement. Reaching a general agreement took a longer time for the 'traditional' Chinese couples.

Gender compromise in the couples' marital relationships in the two cultural groups

In the following table, I present the key vocabulary used by the respondents[16] to

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[16] I adopted a similar form of examining key words identified in the analysed text as used by Adrienne Chambon and Donald Bellamy (1995) in their article "Ethnic identity, intergroup relations and welfare policy in the Canadian context: A comparative discourse analysis."

illustrate the narrative themes of gender compromise in the two cultural groups. It was presented in the 'member check' and couples agreed with the categories:

Euro Canadian	*Chinese*
Husbands gave way more to wives	Wives gave way more to husbands
The couple:	The couple:
adjust	adjust 適應
compromise	compromise 相就
accommodate	accommodate (wife more) 遷就
	tolerate (wife more) 容忍
	sacrifice (wife only) 犧牲

Note: The themes in the above table are ordered according to the degree a person has to give up his/her individuality when compromising in a marital relationship. The order is from giving up the least individuality, with 'adjust' (top), to the most, with 'sacrifice' (bottom).

All couples need to adjust to each other especially when they are first married. I referred to the New Webster Encyclopaedic Dictionary (1984) for the words displayed in the above table. The word adjustment means "to fit, to adapt, to settle" or "bring to a satisfactory state." Adjustment relates to an individual level of familiarizing oneself with something new. Mr Smith described the couple's first year of marriage as a time of learning to adjust to each other, whether it entailed personality, habits, or styles of communication. The word 'compromise' connotes a mutual concession. In a two-person relationship, each gives a degree in the settlement of differences. As Mr Carter described, *"sometimes one or the other gives in."* Marriage encompasses two unique strangers who come to know each other and decide to live together to create a shared life. Despite gender differences in a heterosexual relationship, two different persons require compromise, which must be reciprocal in order to achieve harmony.

In the Euro Canadian group, the couples mostly used the word 'compromise' to describe how they dealt with each other's differences. Mrs Scott's comment on the couple's

compromise as an *even ground* reflected how the Euro Canadian couples respected each other's individual boundaries to achieve an agreement:

Mrs Scott: I mean you have your disagreements, of course you do, everyone is different. But eh we always come to some sort of a a even ground, if you want to call it that.

M: What do you mean by even ground?

W: I mean it might take a little bit of persuading one way or another but we've always done that....I very likely am a little more forceful at times than he is. But hmm I think we both can compromise....

So you have to be careful in the fact that hmm if certain things are very important in his mind, you have to at least hit sort of a happy medium, because otherwise you're gonna to cause friction [hmmhmm]. So there again is a compromise, try and come to an agreement, you know, so that you both feel rather comfortable with it....

Well he'll basically let me have that the way it is. Like he learns to be come to a compromise...You have to both know where to draw the line and leave each other alone.

Mrs Scott's comment again reflected the individualistic orientation of the Euro Canadian couples, the fact that each spouse's comfort level with a compromise is most important to the couple's satisfaction. The most important principle rests in the last sentence, in the claim that each needed to know where to draw the line and when to leave the other party alone. Her narrative reflected that she was a little more forceful in decision making, as discussed before. In the case of the Browns, the following narrative illustrated the couple's style of compromising:

Mr Brown: We put it [the argument] to bed and that's where it stays. We don't, we don't dwell on it.

They came up with a solution even though the solution was not totally satisfactory to both parties. Sometimes they disregarded the matter for the time being and moved on.

Compromise was the global theme of the Smiths' story of their marital satisfaction.

They realized how much they benefited from their differences, and how their compromises brought about marital satisfaction. As this couple came from nearly opposite family backgrounds, they were very different from the other Euro Canadian couples. The wife came from a family with many rules where men made all the decisions, while the husband came from a family with minimal rules where women made decisions. The husband came from a Norwegian culture where he could not express anger in the family, while the wife came from an Irish culture with much expression of feelings. It took them time to learn what would be desirable for them as a couple, rather than living a life similar to that of their families of origin. Mr Smith said, *"it took me a long time to figure out that she didn't come from the same place that I did."* Their differences served as a source of learning and allowed them grow.

Mrs Smith: The differences are areas of growth rather than [umhum] areas of conflict.

Mr Smith: It was kind of a, if you like, it was a training ground uh for both of us because I expected her to be more responsible than anybody had ever expected her to be before, so she grew in her responsibility and she expected me to be more uh .. sensitive, more, more emotional, more uh, in touch with feelings than, than I was, and so I learned how to do that.

The third category shared by both cultural groups was accommodation. The dictionary definition is "to make room to suit a different purpose other than one already expected" in a long-term sense. It connotes a sense of yielding to the desires of others. A spouse needed to accommodate to the other spouse in a marital relationship, or in the case of the Chinese, to the extended family, to part of the familial environment that is not going to change. Although this strategy was adopted by both Euro Canadian and Chinese couples, it was most evident in the Chinese wives' narratives that they accommodated more to their

husbands' way of doing things.

The last two categories – tolerance and sacrifice – were evident only in the case of the Chinese wives, except for Mrs Fung. Tolerance, according to the New Webster dictionary, is the act of enduring, "a disposition to be patient and indulgent toward those whose opinions or practices differ from one's own." On the other hand, sacrifice is "to suffer to be lost for the sake of obtaining something else." Sacrifice has already been discussed under the section about the Chinese wives' sense of self; some of them sacrificed their leisure, career, and health for the sake of the family.

Both 'traditional' men, Mr Chung and Mr Lai, had a global theme of emphasizing the importance of tolerance and forgiveness in resolving differences between spouses. Mr Lai elaborated two aspects of tolerance – accommodation and acceptance. Mr Lai, the 'traditional' Chinese man, used the metaphor of Hong Kong's "one country two systems" to describe the couple's extreme differences. Mr Lai said sometimes things happened in the marriage that did not work according to his satisfaction, and he needed to accommodate the different views of his wife. He said, *"The most important thing I learned is that besides we love each other, we have to learn how to get along with each other."* Mr Lai said both spouses acknowledged their differences, needed to be understood, and give in to the other spouse. Mr Lai explained that his wife was like an opposition party who always acted as a reminder to him that she had a different view, and stimulated him to examine his own. Both 'traditional' Chinese men said that they did not feel they accommodated their wives purposefully, a contradiction present in their narratives. Neither could name one thing that they accommodated to. The following dialogue with Mr Lai reflected his tyrannical (Fine &

Turner, 1991) use of words like "control" when discussing accommodation:

M: As you mentioned about accommodation,

H: Yes

M: in your experience what have you done to accommodate your wife?

H: I don't find I accommodate her in any particular way.
As long as I can accept then I feel I've accommodated her.
It's just the way it is. I don't do anything in particular,
If do it purposefully, it would be more difficult to control.

M: I'm sorry?

H: That is it would be difficult to control.
In a lifetime, can't accommodate all day, all month and all year.
I find it just happen like that, in a natural way.

From Mrs Lai's perspective, her husband was a responsible, but "traditional," and quite chauvinistic individual. Mrs Lai acknowledged that coming from a 'traditional' Chinese family, she had no awareness of concepts like rights and discrimination, and therefore, she put up with a lot of things she did not like. Although her husband discussed things with her, most of the time she followed his ideas.

The local themes – the themes generated from the respondents' core narratives – in most Chinese couples' individual narratives, except for that of Mrs Fung, revealed that the wives tolerated their husbands more than vice versa. They endured their husbands' behaviours that were not acceptable to them, such as their husbands' temper for most of the marriage (Mrs Chung, Mrs Lai and Mrs Wong), and the husband's habit of banging the drawer at night (Mrs Lai) or rearranging the blanket while she was sleeping (Mrs Tang). As the Chinese wives grew older, some of them, such as Mrs Chung and Mrs Lai, tolerated their

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husbands' unreasonable behaviours less. Mrs Chung told me joyfully that after she developed high blood pressure, her husband no longer blew up at her. He worked out the alternative of going downstairs to the basement and contemplated the Chinese character 'patience' that he had hung up as his reminder when he wanted to blow up at his wife.

Couples' compromises in sex

In my data, in contrast to the empirical findings of most long-term marriage studies as reviewed in Chapter Two, none of the couples emphasized a sexual relationship as an important factor that affected their marital satisfaction. The sexual relationship was a sensitive area during the interviews and two Euro Canadian and one Chinese couple did not disclose information in the interviews about their sexual relationship. A few respondents, like Mrs Wong and Mrs Smith whom I interviewed individually for a second time, were asked about their sexual relationships. Interestingly, apart from the Lais, who discreetly said that they would not talk about sex in the interview, more Chinese couples (sometimes the wives) than Euro Canadian couples voluntarily disclosed their sexual relationships in the interviews.

A few couples in both cultural groups like the Taylors, the Smiths, the Wongs and the Tangs, disclosed that they had disagreements or incompatibilities in their sexual relationships. Only one Euro Canadian couple, the Browns, mentioned that their sex life was as good as any other aspect of their relationship. Either one or both spouses in the case of four out of the five couples in each respective cultural group answered positively to the DAS item number 29 about whether the couple felt they were too tired for sex.

Typically the Chinese wives accommodated more to their husbands' sexual needs. Mrs Wong talked about her earlier difficulty in their sexual relationship in her individual interview. Unfortunately, she found she was not able to talk with her husband, as she said:

"You want your husband to be happy.
But when we have very different needs,
like sometimes being so tired but the other party has such needs, what would you do?
On the one hand, you feel you are a wife, you should satisfy his needs.
I find this is a big struggle.
When I was young, I felt bothered and queried that it was necessary to accommodate his needs only."

She later added, and her husband confirmed in his individual narrative, that after the couple immigrated to Canada, their sexual relationship improved as she felt less tired. Some Chinese couples felt it was still taboo to talk about sex with their spouse. During a break in an interview session with the Chungs, Mrs Chung told me in a low voice that she was not very fond of sex but still had sexual activities because she did not want her husband to feel lonely. Both Mrs Chung and Mrs Wong perceived fulfilling their husbands' sexual needs as a wife's duty.

It was not only the Chinese couples who had difficulty discussing their sex life with each other. Mr Taylor also said that he did not want to let his wife know that he felt the couple's sex life was affected by the wife's night-shift work, because he did not want to burden his wife. The Browns, the Smiths, and the two Chinese couples who attained higher DAS scores, the Fungs and the Tangs, felt they could talk about sex openly with their spouses and adjusted their needs when necessary. The Smiths were able to talk about their sexual difficulties and through their openness, they overcame their impasse. The couple had a very positive and healthy sex life at the beginning of their marriage, until Mrs Smith

uncovered her traumatic experience of sexual abuse in her early childhood while she was in psychotherapy. There was a time that her husband did not dare ask her to have physical closeness because he knew that she was going through a very tough time. Both spouses felt guilt for their actions. The wife felt very guilty because she could not be there for her husband. However, when the couple could abandon the guilt and talk about what they were going through, they experienced a turning point in their relationship. The wife was then able to let her husband know when she did not want to be physically close. She noticed that,

"Interestingly enough, as we've been able to feel less hung up about not being there for each other and not wanting you know [yeah], it's starting to feel easier [umhum] to be physically together."

The Fungs and the Tangs could openly discuss their sexual relationship in the joint interview. Mrs Fung told me deliberately at the beginning of her individual interview that the couple's sexual relationship had been sublimated to a more spiritual companionship and they had not had sex for two to three years. Her husband agreed with his wife's comment in the joint interview.

Strategies adopted by couples in dealing with their disagreements and arguments/conflicts

Couples from both cultural groups emphasized that they never hated each other even though they had heated arguments. Both groups' couples adopted a common strategy of not aggravating each other during arguments in a way that would cause an emotional reaction from their spouses. One party would put a stop to the argument when it was too heated. They tried not to escalate their conflicts into worse scenarios. For example, Mrs Lai would say, *"okay, don't say anymore. Just let it be."* She believed it was not helpful when each held onto

his/her own beliefs. Instead of venting their heated emotion, the couples avoided the subject matter or avoided each other for a short while in order to calm down. Mr Brown remarked, *"sometimes you couldn't talk right away yet."* More Chinese and Euro Canadian men would stay in another room to do their own thing like reading and their wives would occupy themselves with some work until both parties cooled down. They underscored that the purpose of the cooling off period was to avoid saying things that were hurtful to the spouse and that they might feel sorry for later.

More Euro Canadian wives than their Chinese counterparts, except for Mrs Fung, voiced their views and dislikes without much reservation. The Euro Canadian wives like Mrs Scott, Mrs Taylor, and Mrs Carter usually instigated the couple's arguments. In most cases, their husbands went out for a walk or stayed in another room to avoid the arguments. In this respect, my Euro Canadian data was similar to that of Mackey and O'Brien (1995), who found that "most men were avoidant and most women confrontational" (p.66). However, there was cultural difference in my data. Most Chinese wives, except Mrs Fung, were reactors to their husbands' instigations. They tried to contain the couple's arguments and their husbands' temper. However, contrary to the importance attached to preserving harmony in Chinese family ideals, the Chinese women fought against their husbands when they found the family's or their children's interests were threatened. In the case of the two Chinese 'traditional' couples, the wives would fight back when they felt the time and place were safe for them. Mrs Wong said that it depended on whether she felt she was right or not. If she felt she was right, she would be insistent, especially about matters that concerned the children.

The wives who started the arguments were also the ones who initiated the talking

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after heated arguments, because, they said, they could not stand the silence. The Euro Canadians would apologize while the Chinese would not, as pointed out by Mr Chung when he contrasted Chinese culture and Euro Canadian culture:

"Chinese, unlike the Euro Canadians, don't say sorry.
For us Chinese, not continuing the arguments means making up.
Not talking to each other equals saying sorry.
After a few hours or the next day, one would say something to the other. Like my wife asks
me to eat when the meal is ready, that means talk again. This is what most Chinese do."

I found that couples from both cultures did not hide their issues, whether it was through the negotiation of most Euro Canadian couples or through the heated discussions of the Chinese, especially the wives. They talked about those issues and brought them out in the open:

Mrs Brown: Just talked it over until you found something that would work with you both.
It's all negotiating.

Mr Brown: We'd just say well, what do you think would suit us best, what do you like. We
always made sure each other got a chance to talk about what we thought we really wanted.

However, the couples did not dwell on their arguments for long. Most of the Euro Canadian couples had a rule of not continuing the argument into the next day. Mr Scott said.

"we don't go to bed in the evening angry [umhum], um, we don't leave work in the morning
without kissing each other goodbye."

The Smiths also had such a rule of *"we wouldn't go to sleep angry,"* so if they had a difference, they would deal with it before they went to sleep. They recalled a time early on in their marriage, when they stayed up until three or four o'clock in the morning to discuss their argument and try to solve the disagreement. It was over when they woke up in the morning. Another Euro Canadian wife, Mrs Brown, reflected upon the couple's strategies

for dealing with their disagreements:

" And I think whatever it is you're disagreeing on, you know, you should, there should be a time limit or something, you should only disagree, or you shouldn't hash that stuff over for days and days and days on end [umhum] .. I don't know how we managed to do it but we were smart enough to figure out that it's much easier to bring it out in the open and have your argument or discussion and make some kind of solution on how we were gonna try and do better [umhum] (?), in most cases it does work for awhile then we might have to change a little bit somewhere else along the line."

As discussed before, more Euro Canadian couples consciously made changes in their marital relationships when they found things were not working for them:

Mrs Brown: I mean you had to change it because what you were doing wasn't satisfactory then you had to make changes. So that's what we would decide, well this is what's bothering me and this is what has to be changed.

Another Euro Canadian wife, Mrs Smith, explained the motivation for change in our following dialogue:

M: What makes that change?

Mrs Smith: Probably a desire, a desire for something different [umhum]. Sort of almost can recognize that something's not working, that that kind of encounter doesn't work, it doesn't feel good, it sort of repeats all the time but you don't, nothing, nothing really changes [umhum]. And so probably a desire to do something different [umhum] would be my sense of it.

Acceptance as a contributing factor to long-term marital satisfaction

Like other long-term marriage research findings, acceptance was a common factor among the two cultural groups that contributed to the couples' long term marital satisfaction. I explored the meaning of acceptance from the couples' narratives. In particular, the wives in both cultural groups opined that they needed to accept their partners as who they were and could not expect to change them in a drastic way:

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Euro Canadian	Chinese
Mrs Taylor: I think there's a range of change, but I don't think, I think... that's where maybe a lot of marriages go bad because somebody wants to change the other person [umhum]. They're not accepting of what the other person is and who they are and what they're like [umhum]. Um, I mean I'm not talking about somebody that's brutal or something [umhum]. I'm just talking about your general make-up [umhum] and I think people have to realize that people can't be changed.	Mrs Wong: I used to apply my own standards for him. I realized after a long time that you have to accept the person as he is when you married him at the beginning. Don't expect him to change. There might be minor change. But never expect you can change that person after you got married. That would not happen. That means you have to accept his strengths and his weaknesses.

Note: Again, the Euro Canadian wife talked in the context of Canadian marriages where violence and abuse were prevalent.

Two Euro Canadian wives tended to be impatient with their husbands as these husbands tended to procrastinate. Mrs Scott learned to be patient with her husband. She tried pushing her husband at the beginning of the marriage, but learned that her husband backed off and did not do anything. She learned to convince him gradually and allowed him to do things at his own pace. Mrs Carter's husband always procrastinated about doing what she expected him to do, and was perpetually late for appointments. The couple, who held the belief that "men are from Mars and women are from Venus," accepted and accommodated each other's differences:

Mrs Carter: Well, it helps you to realize that men and women are different and you can expect that your husband isn't gonna think the same way you do [umhum], so it would help you be more tolerant [umhum].

She revealed that her husband's procrastination had already been demonstrated during their courtship, so she just had to accept who he was. Mrs Carter used some tricks which she had

never told her husband about to compensate for his lateness. Each time the couple had an appointment, Mrs Carter would tell her husband that it was fifteen minutes earlier than actually scheduled so she could be sure they arrived on time. While Mrs Carter was lamenting her husband's biggest weakness, she also reflected that acceptance was mutual:

"Well, I, you know, he's had to put up with a lot too you know [yeah, yeah], with me being the way I am."

Mr Carter talked about the meaning of acceptance from his side:

"I think you've got to have patience with each other and be forgiving with each other, you know, well, this time it was your mistake, oh, okay. I make some mistakes too and I do not want to be nagged about it all the time either you know [umhum] so we have to recognize that [umhum] we make mistakes [umhum, umhum]."

The following narrative revealed his accommodation to the wife's occasional temper:

"If I feel disgusted about something about our relationship well, I know that I'm going to have to get over it because it's not very pleasant to live in a grumpy mood all the time, so one has to get over it [right, so]. There are times when I say well I feel like I could pout for awhile but uh, that's only making myself and everybody else miserable too, so, the sooner I can get myself out of that frame of mind the better."

Mutual acceptance was manifested by the Euro Canadian couples and their narratives reflected their mutual acceptance. By contrast, acceptance was conditional for most Chinese men, especially the 'traditional' men, although their wives showed more acceptance of their husbands. Mr Lai laid down certain conditions for accepting his wife's way of thinking:

"If it's not against principle, I don't' need to insist."

"I'll support her way if I can accommodate."

This also explained why Mrs Chung, Mrs Lai and Mrs Wong had relatively lower DAS scores than the other two Chinese wives whose husbands showed more acceptance.

Recapitulating the factors in the areas of decision making and compromise which contribute to long-term marital satisfaction

In comparison to the Chinese husbands, the Euro Canadian husbands were more willing to face the couple's issues and deal with them openly with good will. The couples could settle their differences or arguments in a less conflictual manner, as most Euro Canadians did. Since fewer Chinese men possessed such qualities, like the two 'traditional' couples, the wife had to bring the couple's issues up, which resulted in more conflicts and quarrels. These Chinese wives learned to let go in disagreements.

Most Euro Canadian couples' efforts to change led to their marital satisfaction. As the Carters had less change in their rigid gender roles, they had relatively lower satisfaction than the other Euro Canadian couples. This also applied to the Chinese couples. Since the egalitarian husband Mr Fung was willing to change, the couple ended up having a very satisfying relationship. The other three husbands, who believed in their privileged male status in society, were less able to change, and their wives had lower satisfaction, except for Mrs Chung. Mrs Chung had higher satisfaction because she had her 'traditional' expectations fulfilled in her marriage. The other highly satisfied couple, the Tangs, was different. Since the husband gave all the decision-making power to the wife, their relationship worked out very well. The same applied to the Euro Canadian wives. When these wives had more decision-making power in family matters, they had a higher level of satisfaction than their husbands.

4. Communication and mutual understanding

In examining the themes of the couples' communication and understanding, I conceptualized a schema of relational processes which contributed to the long-term couples' marital satisfaction (refer to figure 9). The schema is comprised of a hierarchy of concepts – getting along, communication, mutual understanding, and gender mutuality – or narrative themes which are overlapping processes. They are arranged in a progressive order, with the most satisfactory factor in long-term marriages at the apex. The ability to get along was
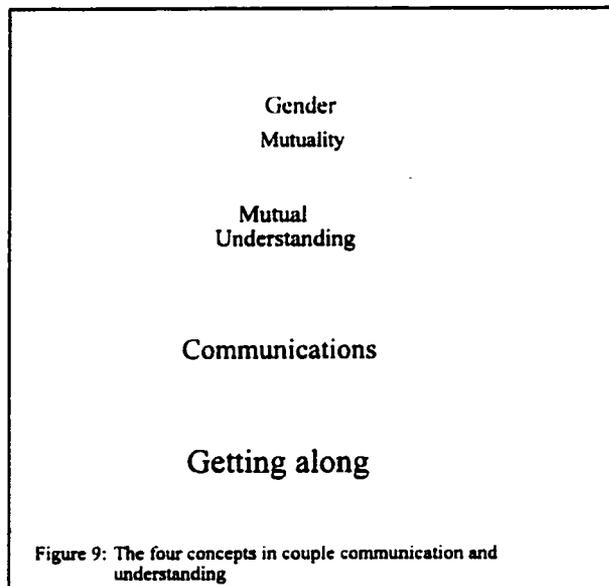
Gender
Mutuality

Mutual
Understanding

Communications

Getting along

Figure 9: The four concepts in couple communication and understanding

the basic factor that contributed to long-term marital satisfaction. The concept of "getting along" signified the lowest level that all couples in my study could achieve in meeting their marital satisfaction. "Getting along" means the couples could work together well to make daily and important decisions for the family. "Gender mutuality" represented the highest level of marital satisfaction the couple could accomplish. Only half of the couples in my study had attained this level of "gender mutuality" in marriage.

The second level, "communications," reflects the fact that couples have a higher level of marital satisfaction when they communicate well. I adopted Nichol's definition of communication in marital therapy as "the ability to communicate verbally and nonverbally, and to share meanings" (p.20). However, a couple who communicated well might not have

good "mutual understanding," which brings about further marital satisfaction and constitutes the third level. Even when couples achieve good mutual understanding, their understanding might not be reciprocal in the sense that they understood the other spouse's gender characteristics, or had achieved "gender mutuality."

According to Surrey (1991) and Miller (1976, 1994), mutuality is defined as a growth-enhancing human relationship fulfilled by mutual engagement, mutual empathy, mutual authenticity, and mutual empowerment. In a couple's relationship, mutuality refers to the reciprocity in the emotional connectedness of the couple and their ability to attend to each other's emotional needs. In my conceptualization of a relational schema in figure 9, I define 'gender mutuality' as the couple's mutual engagement in communication which exhibits empathy with and understanding of each other's gender roles, characteristics and needs. In the following, I quote the Smiths' dialogue to illustrate the meaning and effect of empathy in my above definition of gender mutuality. The context of the dialogue was the couple's evaluation of the change in the husband's response at times when the wife felt upset:

Mrs Smith: Rather than trying to tell me why [umhum] I shouldn't worry [umhum],

Mr Smith: that's what I would normally do.

Mrs Smith: he would just say uh, you know, I'm sorry you're worried. Or um, you know, not try and tell me I shouldn't feel that way.

M: So how do you find when {husband} didn't try to fix your feeling?

Mrs Smith: I felt listened to [umhum].
I felt like he heard me [umhum, umhum].
So I felt connected to him [umhum], you know.

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In my study, I found the spouses needed to understand each other's gender roles and characteristics, in addition to building mutual understanding, in order to achieve gender mutuality. One Chinese couple, the Tangs, was an illustrating case. The couple's DAS scores reflected their high level of marital adjustment and satisfaction. Both spouses emphasized proudly in both individual and joint interviews that their open-channelled communication was their major source of marital satisfaction. The husband used the metaphor of water running without a blockage to describe the couple's communication. The couple could talk about anything they felt they needed to discuss. They claimed they had no hidden agenda and were true to each other. They could discuss and negotiate large issues. They were considerate to and understanding of each other. They talked about any anticipated problems either party could foresee. They took time to discuss the anticipated issues and planned ahead in order to achieve a consensus in major decisions. In the narrative, the husband said that the couple needed to compromise only on small things. However, these small things were very gender-laden. Because the husband did not know how to cook, he failed to understand how long it took his wife to prepare for a meal. He could not understand why his wife was so messy when she came home after work while the wife explained how fast she had to prepare the meal in order for her husband to keep his evening appointment. The wife commented that her husband expected her to perform magic, to have his meal ready in a short period. The wife, who had a lower DAS score than her husband, felt misunderstood in these gender roles.

Unlike the Tangs, another Chinese couple, the Fungs, understood each other's gender roles and communicated empathically to respond to each other's need and reinforce mutual empowerment. In the Euro Canadian group, the Smiths, the Browns, the Scotts and the

Taylors also exhibited the above-mentioned characteristics of gender mutuality. According to these couples' narratives, they had a high level of marital satisfaction. The Fungs' and the Browns' gender mutuality will be examined in the coming sections.

Mutuality and intimacy

It is important to address intimacy in the discussion of gender mutuality. Marriage is a place for emotional intimacy (Kersten & Kersten, 1991). Combining the definitions of marital intimacy of Wynne and Wynne (1986) and Waring (1988), I define marital intimacy as *a subjective feeling of emotional closeness which evolves from a multifaceted dyadic process of mutual self-disclosure which is responded to with communicated empathy in a marital relationship.* Intimacy implies contact with our innermost self (Levine, 1991) and therefore it is a "subjective side of relatedness." (Wynne, 1984).

An intimate marital relationship is considered a mutual sharing process which is characterized by self-disclosure and in *self psychology's* term, empathic responsiveness (Kohut, 1977, 1984; Basch, 1983; Bacal, 1985; Wolf, 1988; Lee and Martin, 1991). Self-disclosure is a process of making oneself known to other persons by verbally revealing personal information. Self-disclosure is facilitated when the material disclosed is perceived as appropriate in the context of the relationship, the listener perceived as nurturant and supportive, and the process reciprocal (Waring, 1988). A couple with marital intimacy shares their inner experiences and empathizes with each other's strengths and vulnerabilities, weaknesses and competencies (Scarf, 1987; Solomon, 1988, 1991).

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Wynne (1984) said, "when there is reciprocal respect between persons who have well-defined roles, a considerable degree of genuine mutuality can develop, even without intimacy." My belief is that intimacy and mutuality are strongly related. Gender mutuality, manifested through a high level of intimacy, demonstrates a close emotional bondedness between the marital dyad in a marital relationship. However the achievement of intimacy is not a sufficient condition for achieving mutuality. As illustrated by the same case of the Tangs in the above section, empathic responsiveness to each spouse's needs as a man or a woman is important in achieving gender mutuality. The empowering effect of gender mutuality was reflected in an affirming sense of self, as demonstrated by Mrs Fung's positive sense of self in the respective section in Chapter Seven.

How did couples in my findings attain the four levels of communication?

Couples from the two cultural groups emphasized that getting along well was a crucial element in their long-term marriages and they accomplished that. All couples in both cultural groups also claimed that they communicated well when making decisions and that they understood each other well. All of them knew when the spouse was irritated or unhappy. For example, Mr Taylor said,

"I know when she's uptight, she barks at me a little more than {he laughed}."

As discussed in the last section, the Chinese wives, like Mrs Chung, Mrs Lai and Mrs Wong, used different degrees of accommodation to achieve satisfactory communication. The other Chinese couples, the Fungs and the Tangs, who had the highest DAS scores, said that they cooperated well, and had good communication and mutual understanding, but only the Fungs

achieved gender mutuality.

The individual interviews with those couples who had high gender mutuality concurred with their joint narratives, except that the husbands in both groups underplayed the intensity of the couple's conflicts. Other couples like the Chungs, the Lais, the Wongs and the Tangs, and the Euro Canadian couple, the Carters, had less concurrence between their individual and joint narratives. There was a difference between the two cultural groups for those who attained a lower level of gender mutuality. Mrs Carter was able to challenge her husband in their joint interview, while the Chinese wives adjusted their presentations according to their husbands' tone of voice in the joint interview.

The patterns of couple communication among the Euro Canadian couples

If I apply the elements of self-disclosure and empathic responsiveness to look at the couples' intimacy in my data, the Euro Canadian couples had a high level of intimacy which included emotional bondedness and self-disclosure with each other. None of the Euro Canadian couples put down their spouses. They were there to boost each other's self esteem, and could share their frustrations and feelings. They appreciated their spouses' limitations and recognized that they had their own as well. For example, Mr Taylor was a very quiet and shy man. Although not many people see these qualities as positive, especially in a man, Mrs Taylor appreciated her husband's being a good listener. She remarked,

"I think there's probably some times that I'd like you to say something and you don't but I understand you can't either. So, there's probably times he'd like me to shut up."

However, gender mutuality was not evident in the most traditional Euro Canadian couple, the Carters.

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The story of the Carters

The Carters, who were faithful to their Christian belief that marriage is forever, underscored, *"We didn't leave the back door unlocked."* They tried to work through their problems and worked on their marriage. They believed that if they did not work on their marriage, they would fall apart and that it would not be good for them if they had to stay together for the rest of their lives. They attended Marriage Encounter, a marriage enrichment workshop run by a Protestant church, and learned how to communicate with each other. The couple confided in each other and did not keep secrets from one another. They would give and take from each other and were able to discuss decisions. However, contrasted with the other Euro Canadian couples, they had more gender misunderstandings which led to frustration at times.

A strong 'themal coherence' for the couple's narratives was that both believed men and women were different. Alluding to the phrase *"men are from Mars and women are from Venus,"* the husband admitted, *"we don't speak the same language sometimes."* He elaborated,

"How can, I don't {pause} I think I was clear in saying something and it got misunderstood you know... And it probably is a difference in a point of view of how a man thinks versus how a woman thinks."

The wife also admitted that sometimes she did not understand her husband either. She thought hard about her marriage because she was perplexed by some of her husband's behaviours.

Based upon the premise that men and women are different, the Carters divided their

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responsibilities according to gender characteristics. Since the couple accepted that men and women are biologically different, they accepted and tried to become reconciled to their differences. However, their rigid division of labour led to criticism of the other party when he/she was perceived as not fulfilling his/her role. Since they had rigidly defined gender roles, they could not understand each other well. The couple, in particular the husband, regarded the other party's comments about their unfulfilled duties as a personal insult.

The couple cited an example. One year, when the lane to their house had a lot of potholes which made winter driving very difficult. Mrs Carter and the children complained about them all winter. Mr Carter was upset and reacted emotionally as fixing the gravel road was his responsibility. He felt blamed and pressured since he could not do anything until the next spring. Likewise, the couple had very clearly defined expectation that child care was the wife's job. Although Mr Carter claimed that 'they' fostered children, he did not involve himself in the direct care of the foster children, and only accompanied his wife to workshops and meetings. The wife stated that her mood was mostly affected by the number of foster children she had at a particular time, and the difficulty in caring for the children. Some of the "rainy days" that the husband encountered were probably due to wife's cranky mood when she was overloaded with child care.

Gender mutuality of the Euro Canadian couples

It is relatively easier to understand the achievement of gender mutuality in an egalitarian relationship like the Smiths', because of their emphasis on equal partnership and their crossing of the traditional gender role practices. Other Euro Canadian couples, like the

Browns, the Scotts, and the Taylors, though more traditional in their gender roles than the

Smiths, demonstrated a high level of gender mutuality in their marriages. In the following,

I use the Browns' experience to illustrate their evolution of gender mutuality.

The story of the Browns

The story of the Browns illuminated how the couple's gender mutuality evolved, as

highlighted by the husband:

*"I think that that makes for a good marriage just because you have to share [yeah]. Because
mar-, well actually marriage is sharing [umhum], sharing your resources, actually, you're
sharing your bodies, your minds, everything."*

The husband emphasized that marriage was sharing, which included their money and

resources, their bodies, their minds, and even housework. Congruent with their ideology, the

couple shared their money and resources. At the beginning of their marriage when the

husband did not earn much, the wife worked and contributed all her income to buying their

first house. Over the years, the husband earned more, and at the time of the interview, the

wife had retired. Mr Brown contributed all his money to a shared pool and the wife looked

after the books and took care of their money. Although the husband was the major

breadwinner, he did not regard his earning role as providing him with special privileges, as

did some of the Chinese men. He appreciated his wife's contribution to the family, no matter

whether she contributed her own money or her effort in taking care of the family. The

husband respected and supported the wife's independence and her career. Even though Mrs

Brown worked part-time throughout their marriage, she was promoted from a clerk to an

office manager. Mr Brown supported his wife in achieving her own goals and was not

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bothered by her career success.

The couple reciprocated in their sharing and giving. They shared their thoughts and activities and they had the same ideas and ways of thinking about things. They enjoyed a wide range of shared activities, including shopping. The couple nurtured the activities they both liked, so they could enjoy their leisure together and were willing to explore alternatives. For example, the husband gave up downhill skiing and the wife patiently learned to play golf so they could enjoy the same activities together. They developed exclusive couple time for walking and getting away. When the kids were younger, their exclusive family time was in the cottage that the spouses built together. Although the actual participation of the husband in housework was low, he was ready to help with household chores whenever he could, especially in their cottage and summer house, without the wife needing to ask. The husband was flexible in accommodating the wife's needs. Many times, the wife got her way in the marriage.

The couple communicated and had a good mutual understanding of one another. The husband underscored,

"Our sex life is just as good if not better than everything else in marriage [umhum], only because we have respect for each other and our feelings."

He remarked that their genuine affection was expressed through their emotions. They shared their fears, worries, and even day dreams. They were always there to boost each other's self-esteem and reinforce each other's confidence. The wife remarked,

"We got along well and so um {pause} we were always there and he was always, if I was insecure about anything, he was always there to reinforce [umhum] um, he never ever made me feel, well, have low self-esteem or anything, I mean he was always there to boost, and I suspect I helped him in that way too."

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The couple felt very much along the same lines.

Mr Brown: I think we've always done enough talking and discussing things that we've always worked together on everything, you know {pause} it almost gets that you can read each other's minds. {laugh}"

Mrs Brown: {laughing} After so many years, you just know what the other one's gonna say.

The evolution of the couple's gender mutuality started with the wife's protest early on in their marriage. In the couple's beginning years of marriage, one of their greatest disagreements was over the husband's long working hours. Mrs Brown recalled, *"he spent so much time working and I would get upset because he wasn't there when I needed him."* In the early part of the marriage, Mrs Brown needed to adjust to her husband's long hours of work. She remembered that it was hard for her to make all the decisions when she needed her husband's input, especially when the kids were young.

She recounted in her story in the joint interview that early on in the marriage, she wrote her husband a letter and warned him,

"If he's going to hmm spend all his time working then I was going to divorce him. [her tone sounds firm in saying that] But I really wouldn't have. I just felt that I really needed to stress how important it was to me that he do that, that he be there. Then he tried really hard and I think he was more aware after that that I needed some of his time too and he couldn't spend it all working."

The husband, who had already forgotten that incident, realized that it was a wake up call, so he tried to work less. He tried to call home when he was late. The husband's evaluation was,

"It was probably a good thing because I was much more aware of her feelings and her thoughts after that."

On the other hand, the wife learned to adapt to her husband's work demands and became

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reconciled to her frustration:

"Either you were unhappy the way it was or you changed....
There's no sense getting upset about it because you can't change it, he was making a good
living and so you just adapt and um he helped me with the kids when, whenever he could....
So, I either had to change my plans or, or be unhappy [yeah]. So, you just learn to adapt."

The breakthrough in the couple's gender understanding was when the husband

learned to tune into the wife's feelings. The couple became more considerate of each other's

feelings, likes and dislikes, as elaborated by the wife:

"I guess the longer you're married, the more aware you are of each other's feelings. I think,
when you're first married, I think you're used to being free, being independent and all of a
sudden you need to work as a pair. And so I think um, the longer you're married, the more
you work together [umhum].. And, and I think you get tuned into each others, well, your
feelings and moods and everything, I think, I think, the longer you're married, the moods and
things are the same."

The last part of Mrs Brown's narrative was echoed by the other Euro Canadian couples who

had attained gender mutuality. These couples grew more alike as they experienced more

together over the years of marriage.

The patterns of couple communication among the Chinese couples

For the Chinese group, the more egalitarian the couple's gender relationship, the

higher the level of their mutuality toward each other. Unlike the Euro Canadian couples who

were able to share worries, feelings and thoughts with their spouses, only the Fungs and the

Tangs, who had better communication skills, could enjoy this quality of marital intimacy,

which probably explained their higher level of marital satisfaction. Like their Euro Canadian

counterparts, these two Chinese couples could vent their frustrations and supported each

other.

Both husbands and wives in the Chinese group had an expectation that their spouses understand and respond to their needs. For example, Mrs Lai said *"When he [husband] reads my needs, I feel very happy."* She was so happy when her husband massaged her as he knew her shoulder hurt. Unfortunately, more Chinese wives were disappointed in the area of understanding and mutuality. The Chinese wives were always there for their husbands, especially when they went through difficulties, but it was not reciprocal for Mrs Chung, Mrs Lai and Mrs Wong, whose husbands were self-centred in the marital relationship. Mrs Lai asserted that she knew when her husband was unhappy even if he did not say so, but not vice versa. The following dialogue reflected such a picture:

M: When your wife is unhappy, do you know she's not happy?

Mr Lai: Hmm I know, but sometimes when I attempt to know what she's unhappy with, I don't hit the target all the time.

The three above-mentioned Chinese wives said that they could not communicate with their husbands in certain areas because their husbands saw those matters as minute "women's things." This group of husbands felt bothered by the relationship matters, like those with in-laws and extended family members, that troubled their wives. They neglected their wives' feelings. For example, Mr Lai remained silent when his wife sought comfort from him when she experienced pressure from the husband's extended family. Mrs Lai described her frustration in the individual interview:

"He has filial piety. There's nothing wrong with that traditional attitude.
It's right for everyone to have filial piety.
But then he doesn't really understand my feelings. That's how I got unhappy."

Another Chinese wife, Mrs Wong, expected that she could share her feelings with her

husband, as she believed husband and wife should share their feelings and worries. However

Mr Wong preferred to solve his problems on his own, and did not see that his wife had a

place in helping him to solve his problems because he believed that she did not understand.

His wife's response reflected the voice of Mrs Lai as well:

Mrs Wong: But when I find he has such a response, I restrain from saying anything, I don't
ask. {she sounded impatient and frustrated}
So when I have my own problem, I won't easily tell him.
Because he won't see my problem as a problem.
Maybe he thinks those are only women's trivial matters, it's not an actual problem.

Mrs Wong shifted her narrative to a more gendered way starting in the joint interview. She

polarized men and women into "they" and "us," and identified herself with "women":

"I don't know whether men and women feel very differently.
That is women could take emotional things too seriously.
Obviously he won't consider those things as a matter.
So when you tell him and find no help from him,
then I won't tell him any more.

When women talk to women, it's more intimate.
I find it more helpful than talking to my own husband.
Because they won't be able to see our needs."

While the Euro Canadian wives felt satisfied with their husbands who were both

wife-centred and relationship-centred, Mrs Lai described Chinese men's hearts as not with

their wives, although the family was important to them:

"Men definitely see their career as most important, then comes the family.
But women don't feel that way.
A wife would hope the husband was totally dedicated, or at least 90%, to herself.
But men won't. I think they only give minor attention to you.
This is only my view.
I can't generalize to all husbands.
But most of them see our concerns as being so trivial. They would say you see minor things
as being so big. {she laughed}
But to a woman, she would think otherwise. Those concerns are not trivial, but actually big

ones. "

I asked a mutuality question of this couple during the joint interview:

M: What would you do if you interchanged your roles today? That is, what if the husband became wife and wife became husband?

Mr Lai: I never thought about that. I don't know so many of her things. I can't do her jobs, like taking care of the children, looking after the kids, do so much housework. I can't do those detailed things.

Mrs Lai: I haven't thought about it too, and I'm not sure I could do his job. But I would not put all my effort to my career. I would pay more attention to those detailed or trivial things, and would think in terms of the person in her/his situation.

The above conversation revealed the unfulfilled expectations of the wife and the insensitivity of the Chinese husbands, in general, most of whom were more self-centred in their marriages.

Compared to the Chinese husbands, except for Mr Fung, the Euro Canadian husbands were more understanding and considerate of their wives even though both groups of husbands were seldom involved in meal preparation. Mr Taylor, who said *"I don't like to cook, I don't like to barbecue or anything. Anything else I'll do,"* would never initiate a dinner party because he found it was not fair for his wife who was the one who cooked:

Mr Taylor: If there was ever, we wanted to have people in for, for a meal or something like that, she would initiate it, but then she should because she has to do all the cooking. It wouldn't be quite fair if I went and invited a bunch of people in and I don't cook.

On the other hand, Mr Tang, who led a public life, often held big dinner parties at home when the couple lived in Hong Kong. They had a maid, so he did not help his wife. When the couple moved to Canada, his wife had to shoulder all the responsibilities in preparing for such parties and she felt overburdened by this. Fortunately the couple communicated about

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the issue and because of his wife's protests, the husband did not initiate elaborate parties.

Gender mutuality of the Fungs

The Chinese egalitarian couple, the Fungs, who went through many struggles during their early years in Canada, demonstrated a high level of gender mutuality. Their global theme of what made their marriage work was *"try to search for consensus and keep away from difference."* They asserted that they understood each other's personality and realized that they needed to accept that they could not be of the same view. They talked through things in order to achieve a mutual understanding. The couple claimed that they were candid when discussing issues. They learned to let go of minor issues but were clear on matters that were important to both parties. Although they had different personalities, this couple found they were very compatible in their activity level or in terms of sex. They could be quiet and read books together at one time and be active in playing together at other times. The husband learned to enjoy working in the kitchen and the wife learned to sing Chinese opera with her husband. The wife said that she was not fond of sex in the later years, but the couple could talk through this and the husband did not have any resentment toward his wife.

Both spouses concurred that the husband made more accommodations in the marriage. Mr Fung would comply if his wife insisted on certain things even though he thought he was right. For example, Mrs Fung threw away the husband's nails without telling him. Mr Fung did not blame his wife even though he knew he had to buy nails again. The wife acknowledged that she was the one who always caused arguments with her husband as she was more vocal, while her husband was more calm. However, the wife recalled that her

husband flew into a great temper after he was very frustrated about being laid off several times in Canada and felt he was not useful. Since both spouses had to struggle to adjust to their new jobs, they quarrelled quite easily during that time. On one occasion, the husband burst into a huge temper tantrum and asked Mrs Fung to die. Although she was usually the one who had a temper, she recalled that she had the ability to react calmly in that critical moment. She focused on the positive aspects and neglected the negative aspect of his message by saying,

"You don't really want me to die, do you? I know you are not that type of person. I know you don't really mean it. I know you care for me. Only you are very angry that you said so...."

The couple was mutual in understanding each other's need. Mr Fung empathized with his wife when she felt she was not treated fairly by her extended family. The husband did not mind his wife's temper and appreciated that she had a good heart. During the husband's difficult period of adjustment to a new environment at age 58. Mrs Fung read more to understand why her husband was so moody. She discovered from magazines that men could experience menopause as well. She realized that she seldom thought in terms of her husband's needs before they came to Canada. She then learned to understand her husband's mood changes and accommodate to them. The wife underscored that it is important to *"forgive as she needed to be forgiven too."* She felt it was fair to tolerate him when his mood was not stable as he was going through a hard time in his life. After that period of struggling together, the couple's relationship was solid and stable. The couple commented that they had fewer arguments as they grew older and their thinking was more united. The husband remarked, *"If we can't agree, just let it go. Go for those that agree."* The older the couple

became, they found more care, respect and support for each other.

Section IX: Summary of discussions: Compatibility factors contributing to long-term marital satisfaction

In this last section of findings and discussion, I conceptualize gender and cultural factors as compatibility factors that contribute to marital satisfaction in long-term marriages. I further compare the gender factors that I discovered in my data with the existing literature on gender and long-term marital satisfaction.

Compatibility in gender relationships that contributes to long-term marital satisfaction

In this section, I discuss "compatibility in gender relationships" that I laid down in figure 3. I reconceptualize and recapitulate the gender factors that I found in the above findings and discussion sections (Chapter Six to Chapter Eight). They are: (1) fairness in gender division of labour, (2) a reconstruction of gender relationships in the marriage according to the needs for change, (3) effectual methods of conflict resolution and gender compromise, and (4) gender mutuality. I also discuss the cultural factors that were identified in the couples' narratives that contributed to their satisfactory long-term marriages. These factors include companionship, courtship, perceptual congruence, commitment, religious faith and other salient factors. The above-mentioned factors, illustrated with figures 3 and 8, were reported to the couples during my 'member check,' who agreed with them.

Gender factors

I discuss the gender factors in the light of a dominant research finding that married

men, in general, are happier and healthier, physically and emotionally, than their wives. Goldner (1985) commented in her feminist critique on family process that what is at stake in a marital relationship is not who does the laundry, but who defines the marital relationship and how its rules are made. My data on the ten couples in the two cultural groups agreed with Goldner's postulation that the most important factors contributing to the couple's marital satisfaction were not only how much housework men performed, but the degree to which the couple's relationship was co-created, whether both wife and husband had equal say, or whether women had more say in the relationship. In other words, if women had access to financial resources, and relatively more power in the couple's decision making and setting of rules in the family, they had a higher level of marital satisfaction. Women who possessed such power in my study had DAS scores higher than or comparable to their husbands'. Compromise on disagreements and differences in the couples' relationships, another salient factor, was more important than the household division of labour. Gender mutuality, the most important communication factor contributing to marital satisfaction, is cross-cultural in the two groups that I studied. Despite the diversity of the two cultural groups – with distinct beliefs about marriage, expectations of marital satisfaction, gender role expectations, and ways of gender compromise – gender mutuality, the capacity of the couples to communicate their gender understanding and the extent of their mutual empathic responses, is demonstrated in both groups through the experiences of the Browns, the Smiths, the Taylors, the Scotts, and the Fungs.

Empirical findings on egalitarian marital relationships support the view that a more egalitarian relationship benefits both husbands and wives (Hochschild, 1989; Peterson, 1990; Keith, Schafer, & Wacker, 1993; Blaisure & Allen, 1995). The couples in these studies who considered their relationships equitable, reported the highest degree of marital satisfaction.

The wives in an egalitarian relationship feel more empowered and have higher self-esteem than wives in a non-egalitarian relationship (Blaisure & Allen, 1995). This finding is especially relevant for one Chinese wife, Mrs Fung, who was in an egalitarian relationship. In my data, an egalitarian relationship did exhibit stronger qualities of marital satisfaction, such as in the area of gender mutuality. However, the achievement of marital satisfaction was not exclusive to egalitarian couples. The Euro Canadian couples who had flexible gender ideology and role performance, and a Chinese couple where the wife had the most influence over rule setting and decision making in the family, also accomplished a high level of marital satisfaction.

Couples from both cultural groups had expectations of what their marriages should be like and how the related gender roles should be performed. Having had their expectations fulfilled was a crucial factor in the respondents' marital satisfaction. The Chinese group, who had more ascribed gender roles, gained their satisfaction from their gender role fulfillment, which was closely tied to their children's success and the family togetherness they accomplished. Although they also possessed many intrinsic characteristics in the dyadic relationship, which was the prime source of marital satisfaction for the Euro Canadian group, these intrinsic factors were not important enough to be discussed by the Chinese couples.

The intrinsic factors reported in the literature on egalitarian couples were applicable to the non-egalitarian couples in my data as well, regardless of whether they were from the Euro Canadian or Chinese group. The empirical findings revealed a close, respectful and trustful relationship between partners (Schwartz, 1994; Rabin, 1994; Blaisure & Allen, 1995). However, the following findings were less applicable to the traditional couples, especially those in the Chinese group. The empirical findings were a matter of effective communication skills, high awareness and acceptance of the spouses' differences, and

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accommodation of these differences with ease and constant dialogue (Pollock, Die, & Marriot, 1990).

Research findings suggest that marriages will be happier when husbands share and participate in housework (Hochschild, 1989; Young, 1995). Gottman (1991, 1994a) also finds that men who do housework are emotionally healthier than those who do not. The data from the Euro Canadian group in my study was more in agreement with these empirical results than was the data from the Chinese group. The Euro Canadian husbands who participated in housework reported higher levels of satisfaction and happiness than Mr Carter, who did not participate in housework, as reflected in their DAS scores and personal narratives. The Euro Canadian couples who divided their household responsibilities along a nontraditional gender line tended to report higher morale and marital satisfaction (Gilford, 1986). It was also evident in the Fungs' egalitarian relationship that when the husband was willing to share housework, the partners were more sensitive to each other's needs and were more respectful of one another.

The literature agrees that equitable marriages are more highly valued and perceived as more stable and happy by both spouses, than those marriages that are perceived as unfair by both (Hochschild, 1989; Peterson, 1990; Keith, Schafer, & Wacker, 1993). However, equity and fairness are two critical concepts that are open to debate (Hiller & Philliber, 1986; Schwartz, 1994). What kind of a relationship is considered equitable and fair? There has been much confusion over the concepts of equity, fairness, equality, and egalitarianism, as different authors assign different meanings to these terms (Meintel et al., 1984; Hochschild, 1989; Pollock, Die, & Marriot, 1990; Keith, Schafer, & Wacker, 1993; Rabin, 1994; Schwartz, 1994; Blaisure & Allen, 1995). According to Schwartz's (1994) definition, equity is described as a feeling about the proportion of a person's give and take. The debate over

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whether the concepts of equity and fairness entail a perception of equity or an actual sharing of tasks continues. Some authors believe that an equal sharing of household labour is crucial in determining fairness (Huber & Spitze 1978[17] cited in Hochschild, 1989; Hochschild, 1989; Schwartz, 1994; Blaisure & Allen, 1995) as well as power (Meintel et al., 1984). On the other hand, another group of authors (Keith, Schafer, & Wacker, 1993; Rabin, 1994; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995; John, Shelton, & Luschen, 1995) consider that the perception of fairness is more important than the mere equal sharing of household tasks. My data agreed with the latter view, and with Van Yperen and Buunk's (1990) postulation that an equitable relationship has a significant impact on marital satisfaction, but not vice versa. Whether husbands engage in household tasks reflects a couple's gender role expectations. The perception of fairness varies according to different cultures (John, Shelton, & Luschen, 1995) and individual perceptions, based on one's gender schema.

In the following, I discuss the gender compatibility factors that contributed to my respondents' marital satisfaction in their order of importance, the last being the most important factor.

(1) Fairness in gender division of labour

The perception of fairness was a prerequisite for the Euro Canadian couples, except for the Carters. Among the Chinese couples, the Fungs and the Tangs, who had a high level of marital satisfaction, underscored fairness especially in the wives' narratives. The concept

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[17]Huber and Spitz (1978) have defined household tasks as consisting of five tasks: meal preparation, food shopping, child care, daily housework, and meal cleanup. Their finding shows that for each of the five daily household tasks which the husband performs at least half the time, the wife is about 3% less likely to have thoughts of divorce (Cited in Hochschild, 1989)

of fairness was most evident in both cultural groups' household division of labour, and in the case of the Euro Canadian couples, in their individual activities. All wives in both cultural groups, except for Mrs Carter, found their marital satisfaction was enhanced when their husbands participated in housework since most wives held this expectation of their husbands. However, the amount of housework the husbands needed to perform varied culturally and according to individual expectations. One Euro Canadian couple, the Scotts, felt fine with their division of labour although their division of labour was more traditional according to the Western literature. The following narrative reflected the husband's perception of fairness:

Mr Scott: She talks about hmm me not taking taking hold hmm when it comes to meal time, preparation of food [hmmhmm]. Conversely, she doesn't take hold when it comes to hmm things like painting [hmmhmm] for example. And I think I'm safe in saying that I probably intimidate her [hmmhmm] in that regard.

Two Euro Canadian women stressed that the couple's gender division of labour, in particular their division of household tasks, was one of the critical factors that affected their marital satisfaction. However, the low level of husbands' participation in housework suggested that their participation was a sufficient condition for marital satisfaction, and as has been discussed, the amount of the husbands' involvement varied according to cultural expectations. The Euro Canadian husbands were more active in child care. Although they did not perform many household chores, in general they did more than the Chinese husbands. The findings of the 1995 General Social Survey (GSS) on family and social support (Frederick & Hamel, 1998) provided some insight into the lower significance of this factor in marital satisfaction in Canada. In the GSS, only 17% of adults, 19% of men versus 14% of women, considered that an unsatisfactory division of household tasks justified divorce.

Despite the fact that women still do the majority of housework, fewer women than men believed that this type of conflict should justify a divorce.

Based on my findings, it was not the amount of sharing in household tasks per se that contributed to the couple's marital satisfaction. Many of the wives from both cultural groups felt satisfied with their husbands' intention to help and their actual help when they were around. The match between the spouse's perception and expectation of gender role performance in comparison with their reference groups' standard and their cultural norm was more relevant in contributing to the couples' satisfaction. Furthermore, a more important factor was the couples' capacity to change in their gender roles and adjust according to the couples' needs when required. In the Euro Canadian's case, it was critical when the wife re-entered the labour force after their children were at school; while in the Chinese's case, it was when the couples immigrated to Canada. Although most husbands, especially the Chinese husbands, were not able to articulate change in their narration of their marital experience, the Chinese couples did evolve changes in their gender roles according to their environmental needs.

(2) A reconstruction of gender relationships in marriage according to the needs for change

The vicissitude of change in a couple's relationship is highly valued in marital therapy literature. Gurman and Kniskern (1991) discovered that the factors identified in the literature which determine long-term marital success comprised the couple's adaptability, flexibility and capacity for change. The authors concluded that, "spouses must be capable of evolving together and coping with the multitude of challenges and external forces that life imposes on them." (Gurman & Kniskern, 1991, p. 101). Wynne's (1984) definition of mutuality adds a dimension of change and renewal in a long-term close relationship.

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Mutuality, according to Wynne, refers to "the process of long-term relational renewal and reengagement" and "involves renegotiation and sometimes transformation to new patterns of relating" (Wynne 1984, p.308).

The process of change in my respondents' experience

The change process in gender relationships was not necessarily a conscious change for some couples in my data. Both wives and husbands who found their marriages satisfactory were not aware of this change and had not reflected upon their marriages. Some of the Chinese couples were too preoccupied in fulfilling their responsibilities to the family to have time to ask about and reflect upon their husband-wife relationship. Most of the time, couples just focused their energy on their day-to-day living activities that centered on career, children, daily routines, recreation, relatives, friends, and community. It was not until one or both spouses experienced difficulties or problems in the marriage that they questioned, "wait a minute, what's happening in our marriage?"

According to my findings, the Euro Canadian couples were more reflexive and articulate about their marriages and the societal impact on changes in their gender relationships. This was especially true for the Euro Canadian husbands, when compared to their Chinese counterparts. The Euro Canadian couples' evaluation of and reflection on their marriages were conducted through the following channels, which is an elaboration of figure 8 under Section VI:

1. When the spouses interacted with friends or colleagues, they compared their own marital relationship with other couples' interactions. Mr Tang and Mr Smith were positive that they constantly reflected upon their marriages because their jobs were related to marital counseling. The things that couples said in the counseling process

led them to think about their own marriages.

2. One Euro Canadian couple, the Carters, searched for reasons for their partner exhibiting certain behaviours that they could not comprehend through reading books and listening to radio programs about male-female relationships.

3. The Euro Canadian couples reflected through societal discourses, such as the media or social interactions, which stimulated the couples to compare their own marriages with what they heard. Couples like the Scotts discussed this new information during their chatting time.

In Mace's (1982) articulation about a change process in marital relationships, he cautioned that in spite of the fact that many people have knowledge of and insight about their relationships, they never act upon this information. The Euro Canadian respondents demonstrated a strength by translating the knowledge and insight gained from their experiential world into experimental actions, such as Mrs Scott asking her husband to help in the kitchen. With time and success, this fostered change. The changes realized by most Euro Canadian couples, such as the Browns' evolution by tuning into each other's feelings, the Scotts' and the Taylors' gender role renegotiation, and the Smiths' transforming their marriage into an egalitarian relationship all contributed to the couples' marital satisfaction.

The above processes were less apparent among the Chinese couples because the men were less reflexive about their marriages. Most of the Chinese men, except Mr Fung, were bemused by the male privileged status that they perceived to be conferred by Chinese societal values. The Chinese women, however, were more reflexive about their marriages than their husbands. Through contact with media such as books and magazines, and their keen observations, the Chinese women evaluated and reflected upon their marriages, in a

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similar process to that described above. Most of these wives instigated some changes in the couple's gender role relationships after the couple immigrated to Canada. As the couples grew older and both spouses relied more upon each other's support in a new environment, they were, to various extents, able to renegotiate a change in their gender roles. The reconstruction process of gender roles was more diverse among the Chinese couples. The evolution of the gender relationship of the Wongs was in the opposite direction along the traditional-egalitarian dimension to that of the Fungs. The Fungs experienced a major overhaul in their gender relationship early in their marriage when the wife did not find security in the marriage. Their gender relationship evolved to a satisfactory egalitarian marriage and was consolidated through their struggle in the early years after their immigration to Canada. Most of the Chinese wives accommodated the changes that could lead to their marital satisfaction in their cultural context.

(3) Effectual conflict resolution

While 40% of Canadians aged 15 or older agreed that constant disagreement over family finances is justification for divorce (Frederick & Hamel, 1998), the respondents in my study experienced no problems over finances. In both cultural groups, the couple respondents used similar strategies to avoid escalating their conflicts. The most satisfied couples, which included the Fungs and the Tangs in the Chinese group, and the Browns, the Scotts, the Taylors, and the Smiths in the Euro Canadian group, claimed that they had not had fights in the last few years. The couples in both groups asserted that they were able to agree on major issues, such as finances and major purchases. The Euro Canadians agreed on travel plans, and the Chinese on their children's education and immigration.

Couples in both groups viewed disagreement and conflict as inevitable. Conflict

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management was a global theme for marital satisfaction, especially for couples who had a comparatively lower level of satisfaction, like the Chungs. the Lais, the Wongs, and the Carters. Unlike the empirical literature which portrays long-term couples as having the ability to handle their differences smoothly (Brillinger, 1983; Lauer & Lauer, 1986b; Kaslow & Hammerschmidt, 1992), the process which some couples in my study used to resolve their differences was not smooth and straightforward. Some couples experienced struggles and even risked losing the relationship in order to gain a more desirable relationship. The Chinese wives, especially the two homemakers, fought within the power boundaries of their relationships to make the best decisions for their children and family. The two egalitarian couples in both cultural groups experienced conflicts and tough times such as separation, in order to struggle for a marriage that was satisfying to both partners. Both egalitarian wives, Mrs Fung and Mrs Smith, physically distanced themselves from their marital relationships in order to reexamine the relationships and reflect upon what they wanted in their marriages. The Smiths' struggle was so recent that their satisfaction was only reflected in their narratives, and was not detected by the DAS.

The couples adopted different strategies to accommodate their differences. whether these differences were a matter of gender or personality. The most common strategies for men and women in both groups included adjustment and compromise. The Euro Canadian couples were reciprocal in accommodating and accepting each other's characteristics that were perceived as difficult to change. In the Chinese group, more wives accommodated their husbands' needs and personalities. In the case of couples who had a parallel division of gender roles, the wife was tolerant and even sacrificed her own interests for the family during the course of marriage. However, as the couples aged, and grew more reliant upon each other's care and support, the wives, especially the homemakers, became less tolerant of their

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husbands' unreasonable behaviours and were more ready to fight back. On the other hand, husbands like Mr Chung and Mr Wong were able to learn from their past mistakes and gained more control over their tempers.

A critical factor that I discovered from my findings was how much power the wife perceived she shared in the marriage. As I have discussed in the section on *decision making and negotiation* in Section VIII, wives were happier when they found that they enjoyed a similar amount of power as their husbands, or slightly more power than their husbands in terms of decision making on finances, projects undertaken by the couple, and daily matters. Three Euro Canadian wives, Mrs Brown, Mrs Taylor and Mrs Smith, and two Chinese wives, Mrs Fung and Mrs Tang, had more decision-making power, and were happy and satisfied with their marriages when they were compared to those of other couples. Mutuality, or the amount of understanding of the opposite sex in the marital relationship, was also related to their satisfaction.

(4) Gender mutuality

Empirical research, clinical observation and theoretical literature suggest that men, who are usually higher in status, tend to look outside the relationship to the world of work for rewards. On the other hand, women traditionally look to their husbands for status, power and intimacy (Gilford, 1986; Nichols, 1988; Kaslow, Hansson, & Lundblad, 1994). The wives in my data were happier and more satisfied when their husbands were less work-oriented and more wife-centred. The husbands in the highly satisfied Euro Canadian couples, and in one highly satisfied Chinese couple, the Fungs, focused on their marital relationships and wives. The more the couple shared a balance of power in the relationship, the more they shared intimacy and reported marital satisfaction. All the Euro Canadian wives had a higher

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DAS score than their husbands, but the scores were mixed in the Chinese group. The two wives who had the lowest DAS scores, Mrs Lai and Mrs Wong, had husbands that were the most work-oriented, self-centred and status conscious in the marital relationship.

The Euro Canadian men worked harder than the Chinese men in cultivating their marital relationships, and the Chinese women worked the hardest to achieve their family's well-being and marital satisfaction. The Euro Canadian men let go of their privileged positions in order to satisfy their wives, which might explain why they had comparatively lower DAS scores than their wives. The Euro Canadian men needed to allow their wives to assert themselves, and to have more decision-making power in the relationship. The Euro Canadian men promptly assisted with housework when their wives were in need, initiated household chores, and were understanding of their wives and of their decisions. The Euro Canadian men definitely valued the couple's relationship over their own individuality. They tended to give in to their wives, rather than force an argument. Mr Scott and Mr Smith, were aware of the long-term imbalance between the spouses in terms of asserting one's individuality in the relationship. I quote Mr Scott's description of their power imbalance:

Mr Scott: See there was a time that you would back down rather than continue in argument, today is the other way around. [wife: that's right] You will take a stand [wife: yeah] and that's the way it is and if either I back down or you just laugh and walk away [wife: that's correct] [hmmhmm] basically.

M: So did you find a change?

Mr Scott: Oh yeah. Like I gone the other way. [wife laughed] I regress. But bear in mind that she's down here and I'm up here. And I've come down and she's come up. [Mr Scott used his two hands to show the one up, the one down, and the change that he was describing] And and probably in that sense we have reached a fairly level state in terms of our relationship of [wife: yes, I would say so] hmm may be may be it's a little more like this now [wife laughed; M: So {wife} is up] only, yeah only in that as I say she will now and that's probably the one characteristic that I struggle with more than anything else in our relationship today, that she will take a stand on

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something and if don't agree with it, she'll just laugh it off. [hmmhmm] And that annoys me [M: right]. But rather than force the issue, I will back off.

The findings of my study supported the "self-in-relation" perspective (Surrey, 1991) which characterized both Euro Canadian husbands and wives, as opposed to Western literature's emphasis on separateness in men's sense of self. In a comparative sense, I found that the Chinese wives' sense of self, in their collectivistic cultural context, was more self-in-relation than that of their Euro Canadian women counterparts who were raised in an individualistic society. Chinese women's identity is embedded within the family as a collective. On the contrary, a Chinese husband's sense of self was more centered around his own identity than that of a Euro Canadian husband, whose sense of self was in relation to his wife or the couple's relationship.

Cultural factors

I conceptualize the following cultural factors from the couples' narratives, which include companionship, courtship, perceptual congruence, religious faith, commitment, extended family and use of humour.

(1) Companionship

Walsh (1989) articulates that adults today need three marriages – one based on romance and passion in youth, one based on shared responsibility in the child-rearing stage, and one based on companionship and mutual care in later life (in Karpel, 1994). The literature review on long-term marriages in Chapter Two also identified companionship as a crucial factor that contributes to marital satisfaction in long-term marriages. The couples in both cultural groups enjoyed their companionship during their empty-nest stage at the time of the interview. Companionship and mutual care and support were evident among couples

in both cultural groups, although more so for the Chinese following their immigration to Canada. Couples in both groups agreed that spending time together was essential for their marital satisfaction and they enjoyed each other's company.

The difference between the Chinese and Euro Canadian couples' views on companionship was based on their cultural perception of togetherness. The Euro Canadian couples emphasized a couple-alone kind of togetherness. As already discussed in section II on *understanding the meaning of marriage in the two cultural groups*, individuation and separateness were important for the satisfaction of the Euro Canadian couples. On the other hand, the Chinese couples emphasized family togetherness. Only after the Chinese couples immigrated to Canada did they have more couple-alone activities, like enjoying lunch together in a restaurant and attending concerts together. The fact that Chinese couples had an older average age than their Euro Canadian counterparts might also account for this difference. Since a few couples had retired and their children had left home, they had more time together.

When the couples, especially those with Chinese 'traditional' husbands, were asked during the interview about the kinds of things they did as a couple, the answer was centered around tasks. For example, Mr Chung recalled that the couple shovelled snow together; whereas one Euro Canadian couple, the Carters, recalled that they would ride their bicycles for miles, and escape to a hotel in Toronto. Again, the difference reflected the Chinese couples' focus on fulfilling responsibilities in the marriage, while the Euro Canadian couples focused on the quality of their dyadic relationship.

(2) Courtship years of couples

During the data analysis, I discovered there was a marked difference between the

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courtship years of respondents in the two cultural groups. The Chinese couples had a more lengthy courtship than the Euro Canadian couples. Four Chinese couples had courtships of over seven years. Two of them, the Wongs and the Tangs, had a long courtship of ten years. The length of courtships in the Euro Canadian group were mostly between three to five years. The shortest one was eleven months. This explains the older age of the Chinese respondents even though their length of marriage was similar to the Euro Canadians. During the 'member check' when I reported this difference in courtship periods between the two groups, a Euro Canadian husband remarked that the Euro Canadian group might had started their courtships at a similar age as the Chinese, but they probably had more courtship partners than their Chinese counterparts.

Another phenomenon I discovered was that the Chinese respondents had their children right after the couple got married. In the Euro Canadian group, only one couple was like the Chinese group in this respect, while the others had their first child around three years after the couples got married. Couples from both groups stressed in their narratives that the couple's understanding of each other was an important factor in their long-term marital satisfaction. The Chinese group emphasized that the period of their courtship was an essential period for their understanding; while the Euro Canadian group, except for the Carters, emphasized the years before their children were born. Another difference between the two groups was that four out of the five Euro Canadian couples had participated in some form of marital enrichment or counselling activities. They mentioned that these activities enhanced their communication with and understanding of each other.

(3) Perceptual congruence

Perceptual congruence is another important factor which contribute to marital satisfaction, as identified by studies on long-term marriages. My findings from couples in the two cultural groups confirmed this factor. Sharing the same set of values and life goals was an essential binding factor. Irrespective of the couples' satisfaction and adjustment as reflected by their DAS scores, they had high perceptual congruence over the areas of finance, recreation, religious matters and other items in the DAS. One Chinese couple, the Lais, who had the lowest DAS scores of the respondents, were amazingly similar in most of their ratings on the first seventeen items of the DAS. As Mr Lai underscored, the couple knew each other well and they agreed to disagree.

In general, the Euro Canadian couples concurred more in their individual and joint narratives than did the Chinese couples. Three Euro Canadian couples, the Browns, the Scotts and the Taylors, mentioned that the couple's common backgrounds – such as religion, common morals, education, growing up in a small town and interacting with the same circle of friends – were important factors for their perceptual congruence, and hence contributed to their marital satisfaction. There was congruence between the individual and joint narratives of the satisfied Chinese couples, like the Fungs and the Tangs, but less for those who had a lower level of marital satisfaction. No matter how different the Chinese couples were regarding their views, like the extreme case of the Wongs, the couples agreed in their narratives regarding their expectations about their children.

I found the areas in which the spouses showed coherence in their individual and joint narratives were the areas they felt satisfying. A satisfying marriage might be a marriage in

which the spouses have a coherent and satisfying story to tell about it. As suggested by my findings discussed in the above sections, couples from the two different cultural groups told their coherent and satisfying stories in a different way. Perceptual congruence was discovered not only between individual couples, but among couples who belonged to the same cultural group. The couples in the same cultural group shared similar mutual expectations and elements of satisfaction.

(4) Religious faith

The 1995 GSS (Frederick & Hamel, 1998) examined the relationship between Canadians' religious affiliation and marital stability. Research demonstrates that attendance at religious services is associated with positive social behaviours (Clark, 1998). Using religious attendance as a measuring tool, the GSS finds that weekly religious attenders rated the importance of lasting relationships and marriage more highly than non-attenders (Clark, 1998), though the differences was not statistically significant.

Among my respondents, all the Euro Canadian couples were Protestants. Three husbands were involved formally or informally in their churches' ministry. Three of the five couples in the Chinese group were Protestants. My study elucidated the difference between the two groups in the impact of religious faith on marriage. It was interesting to discover that the couples in the two cultural contexts interpreted Christian doctrine about gender relationships in very different ways. With the exception of the Carters, who viewed their religious faith as their guiding principle for their gender role construction, the Euro Canadian couples did not treat religion as a prime factor in their gender relationship. Including the

Carters, none of the Euro Canadian couples identified religion as their major source of marital satisfaction. Rather, some of them treated religion as the couple's common background. The religious beliefs of couples like the Lais and the Smiths bore no relationship to their construction of gender in their marriages. Among all my respondents who had a religious background, only two Chinese couples, the Wongs and the Tangs, emphasized that their religious faith had a great impact on their marriages by giving them a shared life goal. Moreover, their God served as a power to whom the couple could hand over their relationship difficulties, so they could pray for wisdom to solve their problems.

Mr Carter, who was a part-time pastor of a 'conservative' Protestant church, commented that religious faith is coloured by culture. Mr Carter's narrative emphasized that culture and religion may be intertwined:

"I think, I think our religion, our faith probably has a dominant effect, now maybe it is culture too, I don't know for sure, what do you think? They're probably intertwined somewhat."

Mr Carter said that the bible is cross-cultural, but he further commented,

"We may read it through different tinted glasses, that's what I mean by culture intertwined....we put a little different flavour on it."

Based on my findings, I agreed with Mr Carter that religious faith is very coloured by culture. Couples interpreted their religious faith according to their cultural experiences. Religious faith did not prescribe how the couples constructed their gender relationship, rather the couples used religion to justify their choices in gender ideology and practice. When I compared Mr Carter with Mr Wong, who was very involved in missionary work and underscored his religious faith in the interviews, I found that the cultural factor played a more important part in prescribing the couples' gender ideology and role performance. Mr

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Wong was more pragmatic in the application of his Protestant faith to his marital relationship. He interpreted his religion more as a code of ethics that governed his personal conduct, than did Mr Carter. Mr Wong saw religion as a restraining force for his own behaviour in marriage, which helped him to abide by the marriage and to be faithful to his wife even though he was tempted when he was a business man in Hong Kong. From his story, we also learned that his religion helped him to overcome his inferiority concerning his wife's family background and career success.

The two wives of the above-mentioned couples, Mrs Carter and Mrs Wong, also interpreted their religious faith in a very different way when applying it to their marriages. Mrs Carter, though dedicated to her role as a stay-at-home mother and wife, saw that she had the freedom to exercise her own talents and develop her own vision with volunteer work. Mrs Carter justified her endeavour with her biblical allusions:

"Well, I think I was taught that from my home, and also from the bible [umhum]. It mentions that a woman should be a keeper at home. But it also talks about, in proverbs it talks about a lady that has, it's the woman that, the um, the impossible woman of proverbs, she had her own business and she had servants and things too so you know [umhum], it's not that you just have to [umhum] um, be a drudge at home."

By contrast, Mrs Wong was a successful career woman who had never stayed home to raise her children until she immigrated and retired early. Like the wings of the angels she depicted in her narrative, she emphasized hiding her talents so as not to surpass her husband. Religion became a strong binding force for the Wongs after they immigrated to Canada, since it was the main life goal that the couple could share besides raising their children.

(5) Commitment

Words are culturally bound (Beebe et al., 1997). 'Commitment' carries different

meanings in the Chinese and Euro Canadian context of marriage. 'Commitment,' in the context of marriage, could only be found in 'traditional' Chinese language in the context of a girl from an upper class marrying a lower class husband, such as a princess marrying a commoner. In modern Chinese languages, no one uses 'commitment' to describe one's dedication to marriage. Instead, the term 'commitment' was adopted by Western missionaries in preaching Christianity in Hong Kong or China to mean one's dedication to Christianity. During the 'member check' the above-mentioned usage of the term 'commitment' was confirmed by the Chinese couples. They suggested that Chinese use the term 'fulfillment of responsibility or duties' instead of 'commitment.' This confirmed my earlier discussion of one of the global themes of Chinese marriages being fulfillment of responsibility (refer to Section III).

Commitment, which was discussed in Chapter Two, has been depicted by Western literature and empirical studies as a crucial factor in long-term marriages. I was not surprised to find that commitment was not mentioned at all in the Chinese couples' narrative account of their long-term marriages. The Chinese couples had taken for granted that their marriages would last, so their narratives were in great contrast to those of the Euro Canadian couples who needed to discuss commitment in marriage in a noncommital culture. In Chapter Two, I noted that in the literature the term 'commitment' conveyed endurance, tolerance and perseverance. These words, which prescribe the pragmatics of commitment, were emphasized by the Chinese couples.

I found that the discussion of commitment by the Euro Canadian egalitarian couple, the Smiths, was very different from that of the traditional couple, the Carters. The Carters emphasized their commitment to their marriage as a lifelong partnership; while the Smiths, who had gone through a "forest fire" to achieve their renewed marriage, emphasized freedom

of choice in their new commitment to marriage. At the very beginning of the interviews, both of the Carters stressed that they had worked hard for their marriage in order to achieve their life-long commitment. The husband underscored, *"we've committed ourselves to marriage;"* while the wife emphasized, *"Love is a decision, not just a feeling. Feelings come and go, but if you have decided to love you act on it and accept the feeling if it comes."* Both spouses worked hard and thought hard about their marriage in order to make it work. They enhanced their marital relationship through listening to the radio, reading books on marital relationships, and attending marriage enhancement workshops.

A contrasting view emerged in the following dialogue between myself and one egalitarian husband, Mr Smith, regarding commitment:

M: How do you see commitment, or what does it mean for you?

Mr Smith: {pause} I think it means that we, we want to be a couple [umhum]...

M: Do you find your commitment different from that of the first half of your marriage?

Mr Smith: Yeah, I think the difference is there's choice now, we could not be married [umhum], whereas before I don't think that was a choice [umhum]. We had, it was almost like we were being married as much for everybody else as we were for ourselves [umhum, umhum]. We had made this public commitment and all our families and friends and our own children all expected it of us [umhum]. So, although we were committed [umhum] to our relationship, I think it wasn't a choice [umhum], it was more an obligation [umhum], it was an obligation we freely accepted, but it was [umhum] still, that's how I would describe it.

In the joint interview, the wife echoed her husband's above narration and further commented about the couple's "re-commitment to be in the marriage" as:

"It just sort of felt at a totally different level. It was like rock, it was very solid [umhum], it was a knowledge that yes [umhum], this is it [umhum]."

The difference in the commitment or recommitment in the couple's renewed relationship was elaborated in Mr Smith's narration during his individual interview:

M: So how do you see the difference in the relationship now, compared to the beginning?

Mr Smith: I guess the biggest difference I would say is that uh, we uh .. we don't have to be married [umhum], so the fact that we're still married is because we want to be and uh, so it's no longer a habit, it's now a choice and um, there's a lot of freedom in that sense that I could live without her and she could live without me. That doesn't mean we want to [umhum], that doesn't mean that if she wasn't in my life I would, you know, I would be very sad, there would be a lot of grief about that [umhum]. But it's, I don't need her in order to be a whole person [mm], and she doesn't need me in order to be a whole person. So we come as two individuals and we share a life, share, she shares her life and I share my life and together we share an identity as a couple [yeah]. But the couple doesn't possess each of us [yeah]. So I think that's the biggest difference [yeah]. Um, so she can do whatever she wants to do now and I don't feel it reflects on me [umhum]. I feel proud of her because I love her [umhum], but I don't feel proud of her because it makes me look good [umhum].

(6) <u>The effect of extended family in Chinese couples' marital satisfaction</u>

The Euro Canadian couples described their extended family members as supportive and helpful with things like babysitting the children while the couple got away. In a collectivistic society like the Chinese, extended families, especially in-laws, posed a great concern for the couple's marital satisfaction. This was especially relevant for the wives. To the Chinese, the extended family includes parents, in-laws, and siblings and their families. Mrs Wong remarked that *"in Chinese tradition, when you grow old you follow the sons."* Two of the five Chinese wives, Mrs Wong and Mrs Fung, took care of their in-laws for a period of time before they died. In the Chinese wives' narratives, their extended families greatly interfered in the couple's nuclear family.

The Chinese wives, like Mrs Wong and Mrs Chung, believed that *"mother-in-law and daughter-in-law definitely don't get along."* In the above sections, I have mentioned that Mrs Lai was greatly troubled by the in-law relationship. She felt unhappy when her husband refused to take sides in in-law disputes. The other Chinese wives walked a fine line in

handling the in-law relationships, by trying to avoid conflicts, especially with the husband's extended family. The Chinese wives, such as Mrs Fung and occasionally Mrs Chung, would feel supported when they had their husbands' empathic response when the wives dealt with the delicate relationship with the extended families. The most fortunate wife, Mrs Tang, had the least interference from the extended families and received great support from her siblings' families. Mrs Tang emphasized that one of her sources of marital satisfaction was the lack of interference from her in-laws who died early on in the couple's marriage.

(7) <u>The use of humour in long-term couples' relationships</u>

It was pointed out by a 'traditional' Chinese husband earlier in the findings discussion that Chinese couples used less humour than their Euro Canadian counterparts. During the interviews. I found one Euro Canadian husband, Mr Brown, the most humourous. His sense of humour always made his wife laugh. The following dialogue in the joint interview reflected Mr Brown's sense of humour:

M: Do you see any difference after the children were born, in your relationship?

Mrs Brown: I can't say I did. {husband} did.

Mr Brown: Yeah, ah. It is a natural thing that it does happen because as a father and a husband instead of being.. one person instead of being a number one person, then you are down to number four because there's two boys, and the cat and then me.

I found the humour used in marriage was different in the two cultural groups, but jokes and laughter, in their particular cultural ways, were important for couples in both groups. I found there were more laughter and humour in the interviews with couples, no matter the cultural group, who had a high level of satisfaction and high gender mutuality. On

the other hand, the atmosphere was serious and sometimes tense in the joint interviews with the less satisfied couples.

The Chinese egalitarian wife, Mrs Fung, underscored that it was important for the couple to look at the positive side and not focus on the past. She understood that her husband hated to bring up past wrongdoings, and it was hurtful to the relationship. During the joint interview, Mrs Fung laughed very hard when her husband told a story about her perception of the husband's 'wrongdoing' when he lost money in an investment. She laughed in a sincere way. She admitted that she sometimes mentioned those harmless wrongdoings as a joke just to make fun of her husband as she was the naughty one. She liked to tickle her husband and they laughed together. Mrs Fung commented that this added liveliness to their marital relationship. The Tangs, who were highly satisfied with their marriage, also used a lot of humour in their marriage. The wife enjoyed it most when her husband told her jokes that he had read in the newspaper. She did not even care if her husband woke her up early in the morning just to tell her a joke that he had read.

The ability to laugh away conflict in a humourous but respectful way added life to the couple's relationship. According to Barbach and Geisinger (1994), humour is an excellent social lubricant and a way to reduce defensiveness. Empirical findings on long-term marriages also found that a sense of humour was an important factor for marital satisfaction (Schlesinger, 1983; Lauer & Lauer, 1986; Lauer, Lauer, & Kerr, 1990).

A final conceptual model of the construction of gender and culture in satisfactory long-term marriages

On the basis of my conceptualization of findings in Chapter Six to Chapter Eight, I reformulate a conceptual model to illuminate the process of the construction of gender and

culture in satisfactory long-term marriages (figure 10). Figure 10 is a synthesis of: (1) figure 3 – the original conceptual framework of the construction of gender relationships in satisfactory long-term marriages; (2) figure 8 – the process of construction of gender relationship in satisfactory long-term marriages; and (3) the cultural factors summarized in this chapter. Since my model do not attempt to explain a causal relationship between factors, I use lines instead of arrows to indicate the interconnectedness between the identified factors. Under my social construction theoretical framework, the interaction between the factors can be mutually constituted, although the force of a downward directional flow is stronger than the upward flow. The bold factors represent the significant/new knowledge that I add to the existing knowledge on long-term marriage studies.

I reconceptualize the components of a gender relationship into three conceptual gender themes: (1) gender division of labour, (2) gender compromise (which included decision making and power negotiation, and reconciliation of differences and conflicts), and (3) gender mutuality. These three conceptual gender themes, together with the related *sense of self* form the constructs (conceptual components) of a gender relationship in marriage in my final conceptual model. I need to make a special note about the relationship between *sense of self* and the three compatibility factors, namely *gender division of labour, gender compromise* and *gender mutuality*. The arrow linking *sense of self* to the three above-mentioned gender factors needs to be both ways since *sense of self* is both an antecedent and consequence of a couple's construction of gender relationship. I also need to underscore that power relationship is an important element in understanding gender relationship. Power is the core concept of a feminist analysis of gender relationship (Goldner, 1985). From my data, I found the sharing of power is an important factor in contributing to the couples' long-term marital satisfaction. However, I subsume power relationship under *gender compromise*

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and *gender mutuality* in my final model since the compromise of power relationship as reported by my respondents is more important than the demonstration of power itself in the relationship. Since my study is a gender study rather than a feminist study, I respect the narratives of respondents from both cultural groups under study to put an emphasis on compromise and mutuality over power per se.

Gender schema of each spouse brought into the marriage

Dominant cultural ideologies passed on by family of origin, mass media, peers, and education

Cultural expectations

An active construction and reconstruction process in achieving marital satisfaction

Societal change manifested in social discourses through mass media and peers

Sense of Self

Compatibility in gender relationships

Couples' accommodation of changes

Cultural factors

Gender division of labour

Gender compromise

Gender mutuality

Marital satisfaction

Figure 10: A final conceptual model of the construction of gender and culture in satisfactory long-term marriages

Conclusions: Rethinking the meaning of marital satisfaction

Rethinking about marital satisfaction, I found that marriage is a balance between the positive experiences and the negative, a view that has been held by many authors throughout the last few decades. The position that couples balance rewards and costs of their marriages has been put forward in the early "marital *quid pro quo*"[18] view advocated by Don Jackson in the Mental Research Institute in the 1950s (in Becvar & Becvar, 1996), and in marital therapy literature (Nichols, 1988; Gurman & Kniskern, 1991), and further confirmed by the empirical findings of Gottman and his colleagues (Gottman, 1991, 1993a, 1993b, 1994a; Gottman & Krokoff, 1989; Gottman & Levenson, 1992). This balancing of positive and negative experiences can be seen in Mr Carter's narratives. Mr Carter, who had the lowest DAS scores among all husbands, described his unhappy days in the marriage as "rainy days," but he underscored that he had more sunny days. He said,

"We have had a peaceful life together and I would not trade it for anything. There have been the normal ups and downs and sickness and car accidents etc."

In the cross-cultural comparison in this study, marital satisfaction, at least for the Chinese wives, might not necessarily imply happiness. Of all the wives in the study, Mrs Lai gained the least in gender role negotiation, scored the lowest on the DAS, had a lower sense of self, and felt less happy. However, she was satisfied with her marital relationship as she had fulfilled what she wanted in the family. The definition of marital satisfaction is subjective, and temporal and changes according to context.

In marital therapy literature, commitment, caring, communication, and conflict/compromise are core issues that married couples need to deal with (Nichols, 1988).

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[18]The marital *quid pro quo* means marital partners establish "this-for-that bargains by means of which they unconsciously collaborate to resolve differences and create a workable relationship" (Becvar & Becvar, 1996, p.208).

In my study, the couples' relationships were characterized by affection, friendship, pleasure, sharing and feeling comfortable with each other, trust, honesty, security, connectedness and caring, interdependence, understanding, the shared making and memory of their own history, and other qualities discovered by most empirical findings as discussed in Chapter Two. These couples were able to compromise and handle disagreements and conflicts. The couples who achieved gender mutuality enjoyed the additional qualities of mutual growth, a depth of emotional and physical intimacy and connectedness, and reciprocity in respect and appreciation. The above-mentioned qualities were accompanied by enjoyment of individuality in the marriage for the Euro Canadian couples. The Chinese couples enjoyed celebrating their joint efforts in raising a successful family. All the Chinese couples worked to achieve or consolidate a higher level of satisfaction in their new environment in Canada.

Married in the 1960s, these couples experienced changes in societal and cultural values with regard to women's status in society and the family. According to my findings, the Euro Canadian couples needed a more unconventional gender role orientation in order to achieve a higher level of marital adjustment and satisfaction than did the Chinese. The Euro Canadian couples' gender relationships, except for the Carters, had undergone a gradual evolution since the wife reentered the work force after raising their kids. Most of the Chinese couples experienced their greatest changes in gender relationships after they immigrated to Canada, as they were acculturating to the host country's values. However, the Chinese couples still upheld many 'traditional' values about husband-wife relationships; the most extreme case was that of Mrs Wong who regressed to the role of a 'traditional' wife in order to achieve her marital satisfaction. With a strong sense of sharing in marriage, the Chinese wives risked their relationships to instigate changes for the betterment of the family and their own marital satisfaction.

Today's gender relationships in marriage need to be negotiated. The respondents who experienced socio-cultural changes in their respective cultures indicated that they negotiated their relationships in order to achieve marital satisfaction. The modes in their relationships were negotiated directly through discussion or indirectly through subtle manipulation, which mostly occurred with the Chinese wives. My findings showed that perceived fairness in the gender division of labour, efforts to accommodate changes and go through difficulties, reconciliation of differences and disagreements, gender mutuality, and other gender compatibility factors were essential to long-term marital satisfaction. The more renegotiation of gender relationships the couples experienced in either cultural group, the more satisfied and happy the couples were. The wives of the couples who could renegotiate their gender relationships for their empowerment were more satisfied and happier, which contributed to their positive sense of self. The following narration of Mrs Brown represents the voices of this group of wives, regardless of cultural group:

M: Right. So what's your own goal and what's your own dream in your marriage?

Mrs Brown: {pause} Well, just to probably be married for another twenty years [umhum].
I mean, it would be nice to, I don't have anything that I would change, other than the
fact that we could spend more time together, but then we do, we are now.

The history the couples had shared over the years was an essential factor in their marital satisfaction, whether they were traditional or egalitarian in their gender relationships, or had different backgrounds. Mr Carter remarked,

"the longer you live together, the more things you have experienced together so that you're more of a unit ever than you were before. "

The couples' experiences agree with the finding of Buehlman, Gottman, & Katz (1992) and Wallerstein & Blakeslee (1995) that couples' shared construction and memory of their own

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history provide the foundation of long-term marriages.

Chapter Nine

Conclusion: Theoretical reflection and implications of the study

In this concluding chapter, I present my concluding remarks about the three conceptual themes of gender relationships among the two cultural groups under study: (1) gender division of labour, (2) gender compromise, and (3) gender mutuality. Secondly, I revisit the concept of gender and culture in long-term marriages. Then, I discuss the contributions of my study and implications for future studies in marriages and clinical social work practice, particularly in the field of marriage and family therapy in Canada.

Gender relationships among the two cultural groups

1. *Gender division of labour*

In this theoretical abstraction, gender division of labour not only referred to the household division of labour, but to the cultural construction of division of gender (or sex) roles among males and females in a marital relationship, as well. The concept of sex role can be traced back to the conceptualization of "instrumental" and "expressive" roles for males and females respectively as identified by Talcott Parson (1942). As Segal (1990) pointed out, the assumption behind sex roles is that individuals conform to what is expected of them as males or females by society, through positive and negative reinforcement. As conceptualized in my theoretical model (figure 10), a married heterosexual couple coconstructed their male and female roles in the marriage according to socio-cultural expectations. The value they internalized varied according to their family of origin, education, media portrayals, and peer influence. The two partners brought their gender role perceptions and practices into the marriage so naturally that neither had thought about them. Minuchin and Nichols (1993)

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point out that, "hard as it was for either of them to change, it was twice as hard in the relationship – where mutual habits were reinforced by mutual expectations" (p.83). Evidenced by my respondents' experiences, the married couples likely practised their gender role relationships according to what they learned and were familiar with at the beginning of their marriages. The couples experienced change and reconstruction of their gender role relationships in response to circumstantial factors, such as sickness of the spouse or children, and feelings of insecurity regarding the family's financial situation. The most critical incidents for the Euro Canadian couples which initiated change in their gender relationships occurred when the wife returned to the workforce; while for most Chinese couples, immigration to Canada was the most critical incident that led to change in their gender relationships. The amount of change depended on the couples' flexibility and/or reflexivity in incorporating the changes in their marriages, which in turn affected their marital satisfaction.

I adopted two conceptual dimensions: (1) individualism and collectivism to examine the concept of culture, and (2) traditional and egalitarian as another dimension to conceptualize gender relationships in my analysis of long-term satisfactory marital relationships. The two cultural groups under study, Chinese and Euro Canadians, have distinct historical contexts of gender evolution. This difference leads to varied expectations of marriage and varied perceptions of the factors which constitute a satisfactory marriage. According to the definitions in Western literature, I found both traditional and egalitarian marriages in both the individualistic and collectivistic cultures of the Euro Canadian group and the Chinese group, respectively. Couples in both cultures had some degree of flexibility in making choices from a variety of gender behavioural practices in marriage within their socio-cultural context. A diversity of gender role patterns was discovered among the couples

in each cultural group. Along the traditional-egalitarian dimension, in both cultural groups there were traditional, egalitarian, and flexible arrangements of gender roles as defined by Western literature. Each cultural group had one egalitarian couple. More Euro Canadian couples (four out of five) displayed characteristics of flexible gender role relationships, while more Chinese couples (four out of five) were traditional but became more flexible after the couples immigrated to Canada.

The real transformation of gender relationships in marriage occurs through the couples' behaviours in their relationship. A goal of the second wave of the women's movement was to "seek an increase in men's participation in the household" (Lupri, 1991, p.244). Segal (1990) further articulates that building a stronger connection between the couple entails breaking down the barriers between the 'public' and 'private' world of the home. According to Canadian statistics, over two-thirds of married women have taken up the 'public' role, and are contributing income to the family. The question remains, to what extent have men assumed some part of the traditional 'private' role in the home such as participating in child care and housework? According to my findings, the Euro Canadian men, in comparison to their Chinese counterparts, were more active in assuming child-care roles even though their wives were the primary caregivers. Most of the empirical findings suggest that the process of men assuming women's jobs in household division of labour has been slow. The household division of labour among Chinese couples, while in Hong Kong, was camouflaged by the common practice of hiring maids to manage the child-care tasks and household chores, while the wives worked.

Lupri (1991) described men's slow rate of participation in household duties as "psychological lag" (p.243), signifying that the rate of change in men's family roles is slower than the rapid change in women's roles outside the home. Segal, in her book *Slow Motion*

(1990), wrote with optimism that "men can and do change" (p.x iii). My findings support Segal's optimism; many Euro Canadian men, and a few Chinese men, especially after their immigration, were able to change and assumed more household activities especially in the later course of their marriages. Ramu (1993) underscores that peer pressure is the major reason why men have not changed. However in my findings, a few Euro Canadian men like Mr Brown, Mr Scott, and Mr Taylor, were exemplary among their peer group, in that they initiated changes, which was contrary to the gender routines at that time. For example, Mr Taylor quit hockey to look after the children with his wife, despite his peers laughing at him and calling him 'hen-pecked,' and Mr Scott learned to take up some of his wife's roles, such as vacuuming and looking after their children, even though his peers saw these as 'womanish,' and as roles that should not involve men. Nonetheless, I agree with most authors like Segal (1990), Lupri (1991) and Mackie (1991, 1995) that change in men is slow, and that discrepancies exist between their ideology and practice (Hiller & Philliber, 1986; Blaisure & Allen, 1995 Hochschild, 1989) as evidenced in my findings.

Although the couples' household division of labour evolved, becoming more flexible in both cultural groups according to their socio-cultural norms, the division of labour was still along the lines of males doing more of the outside work, and women doing more of the inside work, as their routine jobs. The Chinese men, in comparison to the Euro Canadian men, were the slowest to change. Euro Canadian men were more reflexive and willing to change according to their perceived environment. I discovered that the greatest impediment to change for Chinese men was their belief that they should have more privilege than women in society and in the home. Even though all Chinese men had assumed unconventional household roles after they immigrated to Canada, compared to their counterparts in Hong Kong, three of the five Chinese husbands still believed that they were the head of the family, and that men

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should assume the role of earning money, and hence controlling finances. Even though the Euro Canadian husbands' involvement in household duties was considerably low, their wives felt very contented about the couple's gender role flexibility in their marriages. The Euro Canadian men no longer believed that men should have a privileged position than women, nor did they believe that a husband was the head of the family. Even though Mr Carter said he was the head of the team in marriage, his narration was more rhetorical and only semantically different from other Euro Canadian husbands'. He was ideologically more congruent with the other Euro Canadian men than the few 'traditional' Chinese men in my study.

Segal (1990) referred to a study in Michigan which found that men's daily household contribution had risen by only one minute over the ten years between 1965 and 1975. Statistics Canada found that employed women devote more than twice as much time per day to domestic work and child care as their employed husbands (Ramu, 1993). In my findings, the husbands' increased involvement in housework was more a recent phenomenon in both Canadian and Chinese groups. For example, it took more than fifteen years for the Scotts to evolve to sharing housework, as they were at the time of the interview. Mr Scott probably provided part of the explanation:

"And I guess mankind is reluctant to change [note: he is using the third person to talk here, not in a personal way] *to some degree so you don't jump right in [yeah] and then eh and suddenly start doing everything that she formerly did [yeah] you do it very very piecemeal bit by bit."*

Women as instigators of change in the marital relationship

Women are considered the key agents of change in contemporary Canadian marriages as they decide whether they will marry later in life in order to finish their education, bear fewer children, or not marry (The Vanier Institute, 1994b). My findings suggested that

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women, whether Chinese or Euro Canadian, were the instigators of change in the renegotiation of gender role relationships in marriage. Their stories, however, suggest that the changes did not come naturally. As the Chinese egalitarian wife, Mrs Fung, said in her individual narrative, "change needs struggle." The majority of Euro Canadian and Chinese women needed to ask their husbands to become involved in housework. All of the women who initiated change in their husbands' involvement in housework were stretched to the extent where they experienced burn out. Mrs Brown, for example, developed tension headaches, and Mrs Taylor had a depression before they asked their husbands to participate. A study found that women are less depressive and angry when their husbands are involved in housework (Michelson, 1985). In my study, Mr Brown's and Mr Taylor's increased involvement in housework was critical for the improvement of their wives' physical and mental health.

A significant societal force that led women to initiate changes in their marriages was their return to the paying workforce. Betty Friedan's call for women to remove themselves from the vicious cycle of oppression in the family meant joining the world of work (Friedan, 1983; Veevers, 1991). Paid work is crucial for many women's sense of self (Lupri, 1991; Conway, 1997). Women's economic independence allows them to be successful in demanding change in the power imbalance in their marriages and the gender division of labour (Ramu, 1993). Money signifies power. Even though three Euro Canadian women in my study stayed home to take care of their children when they were young, these women were conscious of contributing money to the family. Three of them, Mrs Brown, Mrs Scott, and Mrs Taylor, babysat during that period and they proudly asserted that the amount they earned

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was enough for the family's groceries for a week.

Segal (1990) emphasized that not only did men need to change their attitudes toward gender roles in marriage, but women needed to change as well. My study found that when husbands began to participate more in the kitchen, like Mr Wong and Mr Scott, the wives initially tended to criticize the way they did things as the spouses had different practices. After finding that criticism did not work, the wives learned to let the husbands do their work in their own way and at their own pace. The wives' mind set had changed. They expected their husbands to be more involved in housework, and relaxed their standards for cleanliness and orderliness.

Contesting the claim of division of labour according to who is good at the job

Mrs Scott remarked in her narrative,

"I think it's just a matter that over the years, you get to know what you are good in. [right] And so you do it. And there is no thought of what should be his job or should be my job."

Both Euro Canadian and Chinese couples claimed that they did things according to who was better at the job, and according to each spouse's strengths and gifts. However I found that their roles were very gendered. The Chinese husbands claimed they were good at going out to work and they never learned to understand how hard their wives worked at home. I found the following narrative more reflexive:

> *Mrs Brown: I think sort of I think you know you started out doing them together or one or the other doing them and then it's sort out of works out that one does better at it from the other, so you sort of take over that job. Like as far as his pay he always just hands his paycheck over and I just pay the bills and look after all the bookkeeping as it is, hmm and so I don't know, it's just sort of evolved I guess too over the years where one likes doing something better than the other one. But it's certainly has been*

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very much male and female jobs as we knew them as kids. There's no two ways about it, you know eh the man does the outside work or any hammering or anything like that. That's the way it has been. Women do the dishes and stuff. [bold mine]

Similar to their Euro Canadian counterparts, the Chinese couples, especially the husbands, used the principle of 'whoever could afford the time to do certain things or who could perform a household job better.' The wives ended up doing more as the wives made time to do work than their husbands, even by sacrificing their own careers, their health and leisure. Rather than following the principle of doing household jobs in accordance with a person's strengths, the Chinese wives assumed the supposedly Western men's jobs in addition to the general women's household jobs, when they first immigrated to Canada.

2. Gender compromise

In the discussion of gender compromise as a contributing factor to satisfactory long-term marriages, I discussed the empirical findings of Gottman and his colleagues (Gottman & Levenson, 1992; Gottman, 1993a, 1994a) on their longitudinal study which examined five types of couples over a period of four years to predict their stability over time. Among the five types, namely validating, volatile, conflict-avoiding, hostile, and hostile/detached (for detailed definitions refer to Gottman, 1993a, 1994a), the authors found that the first three types were able to maintain a stable marriage in the long course. The validating couples recognized differences and conflicts and addressed them with honesty and calmness. They possessed the kinds of communication and problem-solving skills that are described in most long-term marriage research. Such couples are regarded as models by most marital therapists (Gottman, 1994b; Burton & McGee, 1996). In my findings, three Euro Canadian couples, the Browns,

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the Scotts, and the Taylors, who shared much in their backgrounds, and two Chinese couples, the Fungs and the Tangs, who achieved good communication, resembled the validating couples described by Gottman.

Gottman's findings on the volatile style of couple communication pose a challenge to the dominant literature on long-term marriages. Contrary to Mace's (1982) views that the emotional states of anger and love are mutually exclusive, the empirical findings of Gottman and his colleagues suggest that the associated negativity and anger in arguments and conflicts are a function of a healthy marriage in the long run (Gottman & Krokoff, 1989, Gottman, 1994a). The Chinese couples, especially the 'traditional' ones, and one Euro Canadian egalitarian couple, the Smiths, who had different backgrounds, resembled Gottman's volatile couple type in the beginning of their marriages. Although the Smiths evolved to a validating communication style in the later years of their marriage, they took a long time to learn to accommodate each other's differences and handle them without being hurtful to each other. The wives of the two 'traditional' Chinese couples, who contradicted the Chinese ideal of preserving harmony in the family, risked arguments to fight for their own and their children's interests. Mrs Chung had the ability to fight with her husband for her interests which led to her marital satisfaction, but in the process, she sacrificed her health.

Gottman (1994a, 1994b, Burton & McGee, 1996) further discovered four disastrous ways that couples handle conflict – criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling. Gottman claimed that he and his colleagues found that 85% of the "stonewallers" in their sample were male (Gottman, 1994b, p.46). Among my ten couples' narratives, I discovered only one female, Mrs Wong, who reported stonewalling at the beginning of the couple's

marriage. Mrs Wong reported that she did not say anything whenever she had conflicts with her husband. It took her years to learn to understand her husband in a vicarious way. Mrs Lai reported that slight criticisms were made by her husband regarding her practices in the kitchen, which was considered her territory. However, Mrs Lai learned to withstand the criticisms by fighting back and letting go over the years of marriage. Contempt, which Gottman and his colleagues found to be predictive of a wife's susceptibility to illness over time, was definitely not the case for the Euro Canadian couples in my study. Among the Chinese, the two 'traditional' men, Mr Chung and Mr Lai criticized their wives in ways that might be interpreted as contemptuous in a Western context. As discussed in the findings chapters, the Euro Canadian couples communicated in a respectful manner while the 'traditional' Chinese men used more tyrannical words since they did not perceive their wives as equal. The two Chinese wives who had 'traditional' husbands tended to regard other factors such as security and fidelity as more important to their marital satisfaction than the husband's use of respectful language in a Western sense.

From over twenty studies of more than two thousand couples, Gottman and his colleagues (Gottman, 1993a, 1994a, 1994b; Gottman & Krokoff, 1989; Gottman, J. M., & Levenson, 1992) derived a balance theory which stated that if the proportion of positive and negative interactions can be maintained at a 5:1 ratio, the negativity will not be harmful to the stability of the relationship. For example, the volatile couples expressed many negative and positive emotions at the same time. These couples had a high level of engagement in their disclosures. Gottman proposes that marriage is an ecosystem in which negativity is as necessary as positivity for the survival of a marriage; totally positive or totally negative

interactions may be undesirable and unstable. My findings were similar; satisfactory long-term marriages were balanced by the positive and negative experiences of couples in both cultural groups, with the positive outweighing the negative experiences. The positive elements included the wife's substantial share in decision making, the couples' mutual agreement on major family issues, and the positive experiences in their companionship, understanding, care and support.

Marriage is made up of minute daily things which make for satisfaction or dissatisfaction in the marriage (Gottman, 1994b; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995). According to my findings, in the long course of the couples' relationship, the benefits outbalanced the costs. These couples had their problems just like other couples, but their satisfactions far outweighed the frustrations over the long haul (Roberts, 1979; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995). The contentment and fulfilment; a balance between the dyadic partners' needs, wishes, and expectations, and the history and foundations that the couples had built together helped them deal with frustration and hardship during their lives. Maintaining their perspectives on large issues and letting go of the minor ones helped their marriage grow. Last but not least, mutual forgiveness (Mace, 1982), acceptance, and fun and laughter contained most conflicts and day-to-day frustrations in the couples' relationship.

3. Gender mutuality

The dominant discourses on intimacy hold that women yearn for intimacy while men fear intimacy (Segal, 1990; Weingarten, 1991); men are separate/rational while women are connected/emotional (Mahler, Pine, & Bergman, 1975; Chodorow, 1978; Lang-Takac &

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Osterweil, 1992; Dien, 1992) and marriage studies use the concepts of "his marriage" and "her marriage" (Bernard, 1972; Siegel, 1982; Wynne, 1984; Nichols, 1988; Josselson, 1992). Recent research indicates that men and women are both capable of intimacy depending on the situation and their individual attributes in terms of nurturance and warmth (Segal, 1990; Weingarten, 1991; Worden and Worden, 1998). Weingarten (1991) explored intimacy from a social construction perspective. She disputed the 'natural' differences between men and women and examined males' and females' behaviours toward each other. My findings confirmed that both men and women can be equally capable of intimacy and gender mutuality. More than half of the couples in both cultural groups demonstrated a high level of "self-disclosure, friendship, and in-depth sharing," which constitute Weingarten's conception of intimacy (1991, p.286). Half of the couples in my study displayed gender mutuality, a higher level of intimacy which represents a higher form of marital satisfaction. According to Jordan (1991), mutuality in a dyadic relationship signifies a couple's ability to achieve an emotional connectedness through a reciprocal flow of empathy and concern. Gender mutuality, according to my findings, was manifested in the couple's reciprocal and vicarious understanding of each other's gender characteristics.

A major contention in Western feminist psychology whether there is a differential socialization of gender personality along the line of 'autonomous self' and 'relational self.' Scholars like Chodorow (1978) and Dien (1992) contend that in the first few years of male and female development, girls are encouraged to be involved with and connected with others, while boys have to deny this involvement and connection to achieve identification with their fathers. As a result of the differential identification process, women are more competent in

handling relationships because they experience a continuity of empathy and connection from their mother in their identity formation. On the other hand, men are pushed toward independence and differentiation, characterized by discontinuity and separation. As a result, men are generally perceived as more rational, and women as more emotional.

More recent research supports the possibility that men and women can co-create intimacy to make their relationship satisfactory. These scholars contend that the developmental processes of individuation and connection are possible for both sexes. Both female and male have the capacity and potential to differentiate from and connect with others. These authors argue that mutuality is possible in male-female relationships, while men and women can both acquire the quality of mutuality (Keller, 1985; Benjamin, 1988; Jaggar, 1990; Bergman, 1991; Miller, 1991; Surrey, 1991; Bergman & Surrey, 1992). Such growth-enhancing mutuality between men and women can realize its deepest manifestation in a heterosexual marital relationship.

Worden and Worden (1998) argue that society has carefully constructed a set of gender characteristics that are specifically and normatively different for men and women. According to this view, 'sex differences' can be measured in men's and women's beliefs, and these differences have a biological basis in our genes, hormones, or brain structures. The authors referenced to meta-analysis studies and found that gender differences account for less than 10% of the variance in cognitive abilities, personality traits, and social behaviour. In other words, there are greater differences within each gender group than between them (Worden & Worden, 1998). My findings further support the notion that the effect of culture is greater than the effect of gender. In my study, there was more agreement among men and

women within the same cultural group than among same-sex respondents across cultural groups. Men and women in the same cultural group were more likely to share a similar gender schema.

High- and low-status behaviour patterns are manifested according to the perceived context of power distribution. Women act in passive and dependent roles because they occupy subordinate roles, not because of innate personality traits. The discussion of mutuality and intimacy cannot be separated from the power distribution between the two sexes in a heterosexual marriage relationship (Nichols, 1988; Worden and Worden, 1998). As Nichols (1988) points out, "intimacy, status and power are interrelated" (p.21). My findings affirm that the more power the women share in the marital relationship, the higher the possibility that the couple can co-create mutuality. However, this was more the case for Euro Canadian couples than Chinese, probably due to the inherent power that the Chinese men perceived they were endowed with.

In my discussion of the four categories of respondents – Chinese women, Chinese men, Euro Canadian women and Euro Canadian men – I paid the least attention to Euro Canadian women. Euro Canadian women have been typically described as "self-in-relation" by Western literature (Miller, 1976; Surrey, 1991; Benjamin, 1988; Jordan et al, 1991; Bergman, 1991). It was only under cross-cultural comparison that Chinese women emerged more self-in-relation than their Euro Canadian counterparts, and in sharp contrast with the extreme cases of self-centredness among their husbands.

The Euro Canadian men in my study were atypical of those portrayed by Western literature. A remark by one of the respondents, Mr Scott, that his emotions got the best of him,

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is rare in the literature where men are constructed as supposedly autonomous and rational. The Euro Canadian husbands in my study were more articulate than their wives in discussing the couple's intimate relationship and focused their energy on their wives and relationships. I need to raise a question of whether including the three Euro Canadian male respondents who were ministers might have skewed my findings. These men, who experienced extensive human interaction, might have a different orientation towards relationships. I tend to disagree with this conjecture. The two non-minister Euro Canadian male respondents displayed similar characteristics as the three ministers in terms of their sense of relatedness and wife-orientedness, though they might have been less articulate than these three. Furthermore, there were two Chinese male respondents, Mr Wong and Mr Tang, who were involved in clergy or missionary work. The Chinese men, including Mr Wong and Mr Tang, were different from their Euro Canadian counterparts by being very self-centred in their narratives. The only Chinese male respondent who was wife-oriented was Mr Fung, who had no religious background. I found that the couples in my study with flexible or egalitarian gender beliefs and practices were more likely to construct gender mutuality in their marriages.

The concept of gender and culture in long-term marriages

"Gender is the most basic issue of diversity" (Worden & Worden, 1998, p.4). Gender difference is a social construct and most Western societies quickly assume that men and women are different. The majority of studies on gender have been both essentialistic and oppositional in viewpoint. The analytical dichotomies between public/private, production/reproduction (Rosaldo, 1974; Sacks, 1974), and culture/nature (Rosaldo, 1974;

Ortner & Whitehead, 1981; Ortner, 1974) are only different versions of the same theme of opposites between male and female. This dichotomized view is criticized for being overly simplistic and conceptually inadequate (Riger, 1994; Rhode, 1990; Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1990; Bacchi, 1990; Segal, 1990). The theoretical constructions based upon biological differences between male and female premised upon reproduction are also problematic. I referred to Yanagasiko and Collier's (1990) contention that both sex and gender have been constructed by society. As I pointed out in section IV (Chapter Seven), in the Chinese language, there is only the word "sex" to differentiate male and female. The Western notion of gender, according to Segal (1990), is a recent concept introduced by Robert Stoller in 1968 to differentiate the socio-psychological meaning of "masculinity" and "femininity" from the biological meaning of sex. Segal (1990) further asserts that biology affects culture, but how it influences people's lives is both a historical and a cultural phenomenon.

Feminist scholars (Rosaldo & Lamphere, 1974; Sacks, 1974; Ortner, 1974, 1981; Ortner & Whitehead, 1981) contend that the secondary status of women in society is a universal truth and that the cultural notion of male dominance is omni-present. Such a contention oversimplifies, and easily leads to a false universalization (Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1990). The theoretical orientations of these Western feminist scholars, who are mostly white and middle class, have been shaped and coloured by their own assumptions which reflect the historical, social, political, and cultural forces of their time. They were criticized for having overlooked the cultural and political forces behind each society in shaping male and female relationships, and for having imposed a Western lens over women from other cultural societies, such as Black, Asian, and Hispanic etc. (Enns, 1997; Bulbeck,

1998).

Although the discourse about differences has its value and place in human history, it should serve only as an initial analysis, rather than the conclusion (Rhode, 1990). Authors adopting this paradigm have neglected the fact that gender is culturally specific and historically fluid. The contemporary strategy in gender study is to dislodge "difference" as the exclusive focus of gender-related discussions. It is time to move beyond oppositions and dichotomies to understand the multiplicity of the constructions of gender and gender relations (Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1990; Segal, 1990) in their cultural contexts.

Cross-cultural studies (Malinowski, 1931; Fox, 1967; Leach, 1968; Gough, 1968; Spencer, 1968; Riviere, 1969, 1971; Mead, 1971) conducted in the fields of anthropology and cross-cultural psychology have exposed the diversity of meanings of and practices in marriage. The importance of contextual understanding of marriage (Needham, 1971) and the description of culture 'in it's own terms' (Collier & Yanagasiko, 1987) are emphasized in these studies. These cross-cultural comparative studies underscore the differences in cultural practices which reflect and present alternative ways of doing things; and equally important, they show that no society is more important than another (Fox, 1967).[19] My findings suggested that marital satisfaction and couples' expectations of marriage and gender roles were different for Chinese and Euro Canadian couples. As discussed in the findings chapters,

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[19]For my review and critique of the anthropological/sociological cross-cultural perspective in the study of marriage, and the anthropological/sociological and psychological perspectives of the study of gender, refer to my *Comprehensive Paper*, Wilfrid Laurier University 1995.

some of the Chinese husbands' practices and treatment of their wives might be interpreted as disrespectful in a Western context. However we need to respect the cultural context of meaning expressed by the couples and I eschewed the notion that one cultural practice is better than the other.

Marital relationships were not an easy topic for my respondents to discuss in in-depth interview situations. However, the couples could talk about male-female (or gender) relationships in their primary and daily experiences of the long course of their marriages through narrative expressions. The Chinese women, who were the most natural story-tellers among the four respondent groups, discussed male-female relationships naturally in their narratives. Chinese men also talked about male-female relationships, though not specifically in marriage, but from what they perceived and experienced in society. The Euro Canadian men, who were the most reflexive and articulate among the four respondent groups in their narrative accounts, and the Euro Canadian women reflected the evolving gender discourses in the Canadian society.

On the basis of my findings, I contend that gender was a concept to be discussed among my respondent groups, but culture was so embedded in the respondents' behavioural practices that it was only through strenuous comparison that culture could be made apparent. My findings on culture were articulated by a Euro Canadian husband's comment that *"culture is invisible."* When I asked my respondents about the impact of culture on their marriages, respondents from both groups found it difficult to respond. The following dialogue with the Taylors is a typical response:

M: How do you see your culture affects your marriage?

Mrs Taylor: I don't know what our culture is. What do you see as our culture?

M: Canadian, you were born in Canada and you know...

Mrs Taylor: I think our culture here is so, so broad that I don't see us as having a specific [umhum]....

Mr Taylor: I think so, yeah.

Mrs Taylor: Like we've all come from so many different areas that uh I don't know what our culture is.

Contributions of my study: What have I added to the existing knowledge on the study of marriages, in particular, long-term marriages?

My study of the mutual construction of culture and gender in long-term marriages brings new dimensions to the discipline of social work, and to family and marriage studies. My present work contributes to the theory and knowledge about long-term couple relationships. By employing the two important categories of culture and gender as organizing principles, my theoretical formulation contributes to a significant and deeper understanding of how long-term couples can work through their marriages satisfactorily in the midst of the stresses and strains that confront modern marriages. The theoretical linkage of gender and culture in the evolution of long-term marriages is unique and novel in the state of art of studying long-term marriages. The situation of the respondents' experiences in their historical and socio-political context of their cultures across their long course of marriage is new and distinctive. Moving beyond a list of interpersonal factors to examining the influence of ideological and structural transformations in the socio-cultural context on long-term marital satisfaction is an innovative work in the area of long-term marriage studies.

The existing literature on long-term marriages has identified a variety of significant factors that contribute to long-term marriages, such as commitment, respect, trust, and perceptual congruence. However, there is a lack of integration between theory and research. Building upon the existing knowledge of long-term marriages, I integrated the theoretical and conceptual formulations with empirical research grounded in a theoretical model which illuminates how social context and gender role expectations interweave with interpersonal life to create the meaning of a satisfactory marital relationship. I delineated a conceptual model which examined the gender factors that contributed to long-term marriages situated in their cultural contexts (refer to figure 3). I also formulated a conceptual model which explicated the process of construction and reconstruction of gender relationships in satisfactory long-term marriages (refer to figure 8). In my conclusion, I combined the two above-mentioned figures to reformulate an integrated model (figure 10) to illustrate the process of the construction of gender and culture in satisfactory long-term marriages.

The conceptual model (figure 10) I deduced from the in-depth narrative accounts of my respondents serves as a useful process in understanding: (1) the gender and cultural factors which contribute to long-term marital satisfaction: (2) the social construction and reconstruction of gender relationships in long-term marriages that lead to marital satisfaction; and (3) the interaction between the socio-cultural context and the construction of gender relationship. The processes identified in the above-mentioned model are useful for further research in this area and for clinicians working with couples in therapy. I identified the concept of gender mutuality which deserves further exploration into this new possibility of male-female relationship. My findings on Euro Canadian husbands being relationship-centred

may open a window for further research on men's role in martial relationships in transforming family dynamics, and hence, enhancing couples' long-term marital satisfaction. The cultural factors that I identified sensitize clinicians to pay attention to the culturally meanings that clients bring to therapy.

With the recent increase in Chinese immigrants in Canada, my cross-cultural study of long-term marriages illuminates the strengths of Chinese and Euro Canadian couples in order to advance a culturally-relevant understanding of long-term marriages in a multi-cultural Canadian society. The cross-cultural findings of the factors contributing to long-term marriages also have applications for developing new knowledge and skills in a culturally sensitive clinical practice with intimate relationships. My present comparative study is a pioneering endeavour in Canadian academia.

Implications of my study for the study of marriages in Canada

Nine out of ten Canadians will marry at least once in their lives, while nearly 40% of Canadians will divorce for a variety of reasons. Demographers predict that one in three Canadian marriages will end in divorce. Not everyone is married or wants a marriage in the twentieth century in Canada, but most Canadians need the sustenance of a loving and intimate relationship. People still cherish the interpersonal support that marriage provides (Kersten & Kersten, 1991). Statistics Canada projects that in the year 2011, Canada's husband/wife families will constitute 85% of the population (35 million people), with an average of one child (Conway, 1997). Carter and McGoldrick (1989) point out that today a couple can expect an average of twenty years alone together after their children leave home – the newest and

longest phase of the family life cycle. These findings suggest that looking for the contributing factors to a satisfying long-term marital relationship is important. Couples, both males and females, need to learn how to construct a satisfying companionship together.

The practice of and empirical findings about egalitarian marriages, which are based on the couple's construction of shared power, shared division of labour, and mutuality, point to the possibility of long-term couples achieving a higher level of marital satisfaction. The construction of an egalitarian marriage has strong implications for the cultural conception of gender roles in marital relationships. The egalitarian or peer type of sharing is based on an androgynous conception of sex roles (Rossi, 1988; Schwartz, 1994; Rabin, 1994; Dienhart, 1995). This concept implies that each sex cultivates some of the characteristics which are usually associated with the other sex in traditional sex role definitions. The male-female relationship in such marriages is built upon a mutuality in emotional exchange and decision making, in initiation of sex, and in planning for the future, and hence there is a more equal distribution of power among the marital partners (Rabin, 1994; Schwartz, 1994; Blaisure & Allen, 1995). This phenomenon calls for a redefinition of what it means to be a wife and a husband. This new possibility for both male and female engaging in a marital relationship based upon continuity and reciprocity is revolutionary for the cultural construction of gender relationships in many different cultures (Rossi, 1988; Schwartz, 1994; Rabin, 1994; Blaisure & Allen, 1995). This type of marriage arrangement bridges the gender gulf that has been prevalent for so many decades in different cultures in human history.

I found that although not only egalitarian marriages could achieve gender mutuality, the husbands needed to be aware of the long-term imbalance of power between the men and

women, which was experienced by the couples especially during their early part of their marriages. When the husbands brought themselves down from a privileged position to attend to the needs of their wives, positive things happened in the marital relationship. In both cultural groups under study, the wives needed to have influence over the relationship and access to resources in order to achieve marital satisfaction and happiness in the long term. However, most of the research on egalitarian marriages focuses on young couples who have been married for five to ten years. Further research is required on long-term egalitarian marriages.

According to Worden and Worden (1998), traditional-egalitarian gender ideologies are significantly related to a culture's social and economic development. The more industrialized a society is, the more egalitarian the male-female relationship is. The satisfaction and stability of marital relationships reflect the cultural values placed on marriage. The conception of gender in marital relationships also reflects societal expectations about the family roles of women and men. The second wave of the feminist movement has taken root in Canada over the last few decades. Canadian society had inherited the modern Western ideology that advocates an egalitarian relationship between husband and wife and values such relationships. The actual behaviour may be far from its cultural ideal, but such ideology is familiar to the younger generations. There are Canadian couples practising egalitarian marriages by flexibly arranging the male-female roles in the family (Dienhart, 1995). According to a 1992 poll, 63.3% of Canadian business and professional people indicated they would compromise their career advancement to preserve their family and personal lives, and half (52.2%) said they would consider a more flexible, less demanding job if need be (The

Vanier Institute, 1994a). As the new modes of behaviour and cultural expectations of gender are channelled into society through different means of communication (Beaujot, 1990) such as media and friends, the definition of female-male relationships in marriage will have its new cultural meaning.

Women are more conscious of their rights and gender identities. When women are aware that they do not have a fair deal in the marriage, they demand the relationship should be more equal, fairer, and less hampered by traditional sex role distinctions. With their increase in economic independence, they choose to leave the marriage if they find it hinders their development. As one-quarter of the wives in dual-earner families now earn as much as, or more than, their husbands (Csillag, 1995), women will continue to negotiate the gender roles at home so that their careers can be taken as seriously as their counterparts'. Canadian couples are adjusting to the socio-cultural changes in different forms. The changing roles of women, and the corresponding change in men's roles in the family, seem to be the determining factors in Canadian marital relationships.

Marriage today is held together by the strength and significance of the couple's interpersonal relationship – based on mutual respect, affection, empathic understanding, friendship, love and companionship (Solomon, 1989). In my study, the couples did the best they could to achieve a balance between satisfying and dissatisfying factors in the course of their marriages. A Euro Canadian husband and a Euro Canadian wife underscored in their individual narratives that they lived in a transitional generation, where the couple did not have a model to follow to construct their gender relationship in a way that would help them to meet the demands of change in their societal environment.

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The categories of gender have been considered invisible in the conceptualizations of marriage studies, and marriage and family practice (Goldner, 1985). However, the category of culture is more invisible. In Canada's multicultural context, the study of marriage needs to be cross-culturally oriented. Moreover, long-term marriages have been under-studied (Wood & Duck, 1995). They deserve more attention in the future study of marriage. In the conclusion of her minority marital study, Durodoye (1997) urges that more qualitative studies of marital satisfaction among ethnic minority relationships be undertaken.

In my narrative study of Hong Kong Chinese and Euro Canadian marriages, I demonstrated one of the many ways of conducting narrative analysis, an experience-near narrative approach that draws upon couples' accounts of their marital experiences of thirty to thirty-six years. Culture is the means by which we receive, organize, rationalize and understand our particular experiences in the world. Story and narrative are two ways of examining cultural patterning (Holland & Kilpatrick, 1993; Saleebey, 1994). My methodology included using narrative analysis to unpack the levels of detail in the narrative texts. By attending to what was said and how it was said, I examined the language and representation of experience in the discussion of the respondents, looked at the coherence of themes, and noted the paradoxes and ambiguities.

Narrative accounts are context-sensitive. We need to interpret the responses within the social-interpersonal context of the interview itself. Through the interaction between researcher and respondents, the exploration and interpretation of meanings, and the analysis of the language used by the respondents, a researcher understands the respondents' subjective experiences in their socio-cultural context. I hold that the present methodology is an

appropriate method for unravelling the processes which demonstrate the resilience of Canadian couples in adapting to socio-cultural changes, particularly the resilience of immigrant couples coping with changes in a new environment and co-creating a satisfactory marital relationship in the midst of changes.

Implications of my study for social work clinical practice in Canada

My cross-cultural comparative study unravelled the different cultural meanings of marital satisfaction and gender role expectations. I also deconstructed the notion that the Western model is the norm for understanding marital satisfaction and gender role expectations. In social work practice, in particular, family and marriage practice, a culturally sensitive approach is required. Western concepts like separation/individuation have been underscored in the literature on marital satisfaction (Ammons & Stinnett, 1980; Cole, 1984; Lauer & Lauer, 1986b; Josselson, 1992; Willi, 1992; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995). My study discovered that such a factor was only applicable to Euro Canadian couples but not to Chinese couples since the meaning of marriage, to the Chinese, was well embedded within the family.

The dominant literature in family therapy emphasizes a clear boundary between parents and children. I agreed that parents are the chief executive unit for the well-being of a family. However, the Western concepts of *enmeshment* (Minuchin, 1974), meaning that a family with diffused boundaries where "everybody is into everybody else's business" (Becvar & Becvar, 1996, p.193), and *triangulation* (Bowen, 1978), meaning that a couple diverts their disagreements to a third party, mostly their children, were not applicable to the Chinese

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couples. These Western concepts, which have served as fundamental guides for family assessment and intervention, would easily pathologize Chinese families or other non-Western families. According to my findings, Chinese families were "enmeshed" and easily "triangulated" as we remember that couples like the Lais, the Wongs, and the Tangs liked to consult their children when the couple had disagreements. These couples found such "triangulation" useful as a buffer in handling disagreements.

Counselling and therapy have been criticized as culture-bound, as dominated by a Eurocentric perspective (Sue, Ivey, & Pedersen, 1996). Many human developmental theories are not applicable to non-Euro cultures (Dien, 1992; Colls, 1992). Relevant concepts and theories based on cross-cultural samples are urgently needed to understand individuals and families in a wider cultural context. In searching for a multi-cultural practice of family and marriage therapy in Canada, the practitioner should not focus on stereotypical features of the culture that a client/family belongs to, but should find the meanings the clients have constructed from their internalized culture through social interactions. The social construction theory holds that meaning is fluid and contextual, as it arises out of a process of interaction between people. As emphasized from the process of construction of gender relationships in my findings, the interaction between an individual with his/her cultural environment through contact with media, education, peers, and family of origin was important in shaping gender beliefs and practice. For immigrant groups, the extent of a person's contact with other cultural groups during the acculturation process is critical for understanding the relevant issues that are confronting the client(s). I reiterate that gender and culture are two indispensable categories in family and marriage therapy today.

Limitations of research

(4) Since I used Mishler's (1986a, 1986b) interactive interviewing approach in my study, my report would have been more informative if I have expanded the mutual construction of the narrative texts in an interactive interviewing process. However, due to my lengthy data report, the co-creation process between the researcher and respondents was given less attention.

(5) Another limitation is that I have not used any qualitative computer software, such as the *Nudist*, to analyze my data. The complication lies in the technicalities of managing half of my data which is in Chinese. I chose to conduct my first reading and analysis of the Chinese data in its original language form. Such choice might sacrifice the possibility of utilizing a computer software to enhance my exploration of the interrelationship of concepts and theoretical abstraction of data.

(6) As I pointed out that narrative analysis has both hermeneutic and heuristic implications, I should have adopted a more reflexive approach in positioning myself in the analysis of data. Being congruent with the social construction perspective, the readers might benefit from my own reflection on and reaction to the meanings conveyed by the respondents to me as a researcher, and how that might have affected the research results. Since I came from a strong positivistic background, I still feel uncomfortable in taking such a reflexive stance in research.

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LETTER OF INVITATION TO SENIOR SERVICE AGENCIES
FOR RECRUITMENT OF SAMPLES

Dear [Agency Director/Service Co-ordinator],

Re: Recruitment of samples for a dissertation research on "Culture and Gender:
        Impact on Long-term Marriages"

I would like to request your help in recruiting about five research participants for my cross-cultural study of factors contributing to long-term marriages. In particular, I would examine the influence of culture and gender in fostering satisfactory long-term marriages. The present research is a partial fulfilment for my Doctor of Social Work Degree in Wilfrid Laurier University.

My sample criteria are:
(1)   heterosexual couples in their first marriage who have been married between 30 - 35 years;
(2)   first generation Chinese-Canadian couples who immigrated from Hong Kong for 3 - 10 years and Chinese (Cantonese) is their first language (for Chinese senior service agencies) or
        Euro-Canadian couples who are at least second generation in Canada and English is their first language (for English-speaking senior service agencies);
(3)   the couples consider themselves to be married satisfactorily.
        The research will take place in two phases:

Phase I -   A marital satisfaction questionnaire (the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, supplemented by the Role Orientation subscale of the Marital Satisfaction Inventory) will be administered to the participating couples. A small group of long-term satisfactory couples will be identified for further in-depth interviews.
Phase II -   In-depth interviews with the couples individually and jointly. Each of the interview will take about 1½ - 2 hours.

[For Chinese service agencies only] For the Chinese-Canadian couples, the interviews and part of the questionnaire will be in Chinese.

My study adopts a naturalistic qualitative method. Apart from the above-mentioned sample selection criteria, I shall decide further characteristics of the couples that I look for as I go along with my interview process. As a result, I request continuous discussion with your contact staff regarding the selection of samples during my interview process from September to December, 1996.

All couples' participation is voluntary. Privacy and confidentiality are guaranteed. I shall be responsible for informing the benefits and risks of participation in the study to the potential participants. An informed consent form (see attachment) will be signed by the participating couples. The data collection procedure is approved and scrutinized by my dissertation committee and the Ethics Review Committee of Wilfrid Laurier University. Whenever I use the materials I collect from the couples, I will not use their names or any other identifying information. Discreet quotes from respondents and interpretative statement will be available for participant's comment. Interviews with participants will be recorded by audiotape for my analysis purpose. They can ask

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that the audio recorder be turned off at any time during the interview process. The tapes of the interview and their transcripts will be stored in a locked file kept safely in my office and I am the only one who have access to them. The tapes will be erased upon completion of the study.

Your help in the study will greatly enhance a deeper understanding of how long-term couples can work through their marriages satisfactorily in the midst of the stresses and strains that are confronting marriages. With the recent increase of Chinese immigrants in Canada, my cross-cultural study of long-term marriages will illuminate the strengths of Chinese and Euro-Canadian couples to advance culturally-relevant family policies to strengthen marriages in the multi-cultural Canadian society.

I look forward to discussing my proposal with you in further details. I hope the results will be of use to your agency and I will be able to share my findings in any way that is helpful. For any queries, please contact myself at 519-886-5825 or Dr Anne Westhues, my supervisor, at 519-884-1970 ext. 2474.

I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you.

Your truly,

Maria Cheung, DSW Candidate
Date & Address

Wilfrid Laurier University

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Culture and Gender: Impact on Long-term Marriages

LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT

I am a graduate student at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario. I am requesting your participation in my research on factors contributing to long-term satisfactory marriages, which is a partial fulfilment for the Doctor of Social Work Degree. The research is a cross-cultural study of Hong Kong Chinese couples who immigrated to Canada and Euro-Canadian couples who were born in Canada. The purpose of the study is to identify the differences and similarities in the two cultural groups of factors contributing to long-term satisfactory marriages. Using in-depth interviews, I am interested in hearing your story of being a wife or husband and how you have made your marriage work for more than 30 years.

In the first phase of the research design, I shall use a marriage questionnaire to identify a small group of long-term satisfactory couples for further interviews. I shall invite you to fill out the questionnaire individually. The approximate length for filling out the questionnaire is about 15-20 minutes. For comparative purpose in my research, I shall invite you to participate in the second phase of in-depth interviews when certain criteria can be matched with the Hong Kong Chinese counterparts. The interviews comprise an individual interview with you and a joint interview with you and your spouse. The length of each interview is approximately an hour. If I have further questions during my analysis, I may contact you for a further interview.

Your participation in the study will greatly enhance a deeper understanding of how long-term couples can work through their marriages satisfactorily in the midst of the stresses and strains that are confronting marriages. With the recent increase of Chinese immigrants in Canada, my cross-cultural study of long-term marriages will illuminate the strengths of Chinese and Euro-Canadian couples to advance culturally-relevant family policies to strengthen marriages in the multi-cultural Canadian society. With thirty years or more of your marital life, I believe both pain and joy will be touched upon in the interviews. There may be recall of unhappy experiences in your marriage. If you have any upset feelings after the interview, you can contact me for information about counselling that is available in your community.

Your participation is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study or may withdraw from it at any time or may omit the answer to any question. Withdrawal from the study has no consequence on your part. The interviews will be recorded by audiotape for my analysis purpose. You can ask that the audio recorder be turned off at any time during our discussion. The tapes of the interview and their transcripts will be stored in a locked file kept safely in my office. The tapes will be erased upon completion of the study. The research records will be kept strictly confidential. Discussion of the interview materials is solely for my learning purpose with my dissertation supervising committee members. In any publications, I will not quote your name or any identifying information, to ensure anonymity. I may use the results of the study in a journal article or a

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presentation, I ensure that your confidentiality will be maintained in every way possible. Direct quotes, together with my interpretive statements, can be reviewed by you before they are published. Since the study highly honours your role of participation as my collaborator, I am ready to hear your feedback at anytime and welcome your comments of my analysis of findings which will be available by mid-1997.

My research is approved and scrutinized by my dissertation committee and the Research Ethics Committee of Wilfrid Laurier University. If you have any questions about the research, the procedures employed, your rights, or any other research related concerns, please feel free to contact myself or my supervisor at the telephone numbers listed below.

Yours truly,
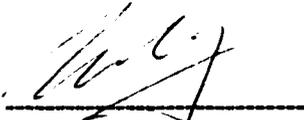
Maria Cheung
Doctor of Social Work Candidate
Faculty of Social Work
Wilfrid Laurier University

October, 1996

Phone number for contact:
Maria Cheung (Researcher) 519-886-5825
Dr Anne Westhues (Supervisor), Assistant Professor, Wilfrid Laurier University 519-884-1970 ext. 2474.

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Wilfrid Laurier University

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文化與性別對長久婚姻的影響

研究簡介

我誠意邀請您參予我的社會工作博士論文的研究。研究重點是長久婚姻的要素。我將本地出生的歐裔加籍夫婦及從香港移民加拿大的夫婦作一比較，以探索其維持長久婚姻的重要因素。

研究將分兩階段進行：
(1) 由於我需要配合兩個不同文化背景的夫婦的特質，我會邀請您先單獨填寫一份簡單的問卷，需時若十五至廿分鐘。
(2) 如果雙方在特質上配合，我將邀請您與我詳談您婚姻的經歷及您作為丈夫/妻子的體驗，需時約一小時。我希望先與您個別交談，稍後再與您及配偶一起詳談。

交談內容絕對保密。在交談當中，若您不願意談任何事情，我會尊重您的意願。您可以隨時退出參予，對您沒有任何不良後果。由於我需要分析交談內容，交談過程將會錄音。錄音帶會存放於安全的辦公室內。整個研究過程完成後我會把錄音帶洗掉。錄音帶只容許我及我的教授作分析用途。所有發表的研究結果及文章不會提及您的姓名。由於我的研究強調被訪者的參予性，所以我希望您將來對我訪問的分析給予意見及指教！

這項研究探討兩個不同文化背景的婚姻要素，對這個種族多元化的國家的婚姻關係將有一定的貢獻。在與您交談的過程，您可能會敘述婚姻中快樂及不快樂的回憶。如果在訪問後您有任何憂傷的情緒，請告訴我，我將安排適當的輔導服務與您。

我這項研究均獲得我的督導教授及大學的研究審核委員會通過。如有任何問題，請與我或我的督導教授聯絡。

多謝您的合作與支持！

張葉玲謹啟
一九九六年十月

本人聯絡電話： 519-886-5825
教授聯絡電話： 519-884-1970 x2474 Dr. Anne Westhues

註：研究介紹原意以英文本為準。

Faculty of Social Work
Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 3C5 (519) 884-1970 Fax: (519) 888-9732

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Wilfrid Laurier University

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Culture and Gender: Impact on Long-term Marriages

CONSENT FORM

I _____ have read the Letter of Informed Consent for the project entitled "Culture and Gender: Impact on Long-term Marriages" and agree to participate in this study under the conditions discussed above.

_____

Name (please print)

_____

Signature of participant

_____

Date

CONSENT TO AUDIOTAPE

I give permission for my interviews to be audio taped. I understand that I have the right to turn the tape recorder off at any time during the interviews.

_____

Signature

Maria Cheung's (Researcher) phone number: 519-886-5825
Dr Anne Westhues' (Supervisor) phone number: 519-884-1970 ext. 2474

Oct. 1996
\method\consent.doc

Written Feedback on the Participation in the Research on Long-term Marriages

Thank you very much for your participation in my research process. Kindly take some time to fill out this feedback form. I appreciate your time to complete this form as it will help me improve my interviews in future.

(1)   How did you find the talking with me about your marriage experience (e.g. about the ways of talking individually and then with your spouse, the style of talking together ... etc)

(2)   Did our level of talking reflect upon your marital relationship?

(3)   In what ways was our talking beneficial to reflecting/reminiscing your marriage?

(4)   Having experienced this process of telling your stories, what advice would you give to a new researcher if he/she would study the same topic of long-term marriage? What would you want to tell them?

(5)   Any other comments? (Will you talk about your experience in a different way if my first language is English?)

對「長久婚姻」是項研究過程的意見反映.

多謝佳/您參于我的研究訪問. 希望佳/您用幾分鐘填寫以下一些意見, 以幫助我改善日後的訪問.

<1> 您/妳对是次訪問問下的婚姻經驗有何意見? (例如有關先個別傾談然後与配偶一起傾談; 以傾談形式進行訪問等…)

<2> 在訪問中作出您/妳的傾談有多大程度反映佳/您實際的婚姻關係?

<3> 我們的傾談如何令佳/您細想或反醒問下的婚姻?

<4> 若有一位新的研究人員同樣研究「長久婚姻」此題目, 您/您就是次傾談經驗將有甚麼建議提供与他/她? 您/您会告訴他/她甚麼?

<5> 有沒有其他意見?

THE QUANTITATIVE SCALES

The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976)

The DAS is one of the most widely used measurement scales for examining satisfaction and adjustment of close relationships. Over 90% of the studies have involved married respondents. More than a thousand reported studies have used the DAS (Spanier, 1988; Touliatos, Perlmutter & Straus, 1990; Miller, 1991; Shek et al., 1994; Young, 1995). The 32- item Likert-scale (with two yes-no items) has well documented reliability and validity. The Cronbach alpha coefficient of internal consistency for the overall DAS is .96. The DAS consists of 4 interrelated dimensions revealed by factor analysis: (1) Dyadic consensus - the couple's degree of agreement on aspects pertaining to the relationship (coefficient alpha for internal consistency is .90); (2) Dyadic cohesion - the couple's degree of shared activities (coefficient alpha for internal consistency is .86); (3) Dyadic satisfaction - the couple's degree of marital satisfaction and their confidence in the future of their relationship (coefficient alpha for internal consistency is .94). This part is widely used by long-term marriage studies in assessing marital satisfaction. (4) Affectional expression - the couple's degree of loving and sexual interactions in their relationship (coefficient alpha for internal consistency is .73).

The DAS has been confirmed of its content validity based on the theoretical dimensions by independent judges. Criterion-related and construct validity have also been reported (Spanier, 1976; Miller, 1991; Shek et al., 1994). The scale is well known for its screening ability which differentiates between distressed and nondistressed samples, and between married and divorced samples[1] (Spanier, 1976; Touliatos, Perlmutter & Straus, 1990; Miller, 1991; Shek et al., 1993; Young, 1995). A test on the correlation in theoretical concepts between the DAS and the Locke-Wallace Marital

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[1]   Spanier (1976) reported that for each item of the DAS, the divorce sample of 94 persons rated significantly different from the married sample of 218 persons (p<.0001).

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Adjustment Scale demonstrated the high construct validity of the DAS.[2] The correlation between the DAS and the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale is .86 among married couples and .88 among divorced couples (Kazak, Jarmas, & Snitzer, 1988; Miller, 1991).

The DAS has its cross-cultural applications evidenced from tests with different cultural populations (Young, 1995). A Chinese version of the DAS (C-DAS) has been widely used in marital research and clinical assessment in Hong Kong (Shek et al., 1993, 1994; Young, 1993, 1995). The translation of the 32 items of C-DAS has ensured that the original meaning embedded in the items was conveyed in the Chinese version by using methods like back-translation and construct comparison. The reliability and validity of the C-DAS are well accepted (Shek et al., 1993; Shek, 1995). The C-DAS has adequate reliability with Cronbach's alpha being .91 (Shek et al., 1994). The concept of dyadic adjustment and the four factors of DAS have been replicated in a study of 1501 married adults in Hong Kong drawn from a multiple-stage cluster sampling. It was found that the factor structure of the C-DAS is basically consistent with the framework originally proposed by Spanier, except for three items (Shek, 1995).

The DAS was used as a screening instrument to confirm the couple respondents' claim of their marital satisfaction and to measure their marital adjustment. The mean score of an individual spouse is calculated to compare with the "norm" result. Reported mean scores for married and divorced spouses are 114.8 and 70.7 respectively (Touliatos, Perlmutter & Straus, 1990; Miller, 1991). In a recent study of a group of 261 couples in Hong Kong, the mean scores for husbands and wives in committed marriages were 116.4 and 101.1 respectively; while that for conflictual marriages were 74.3 and 66.1 respectively (Young, 1993).

In review of the research that use the DAS for screening couples who are adjusted and satisfied with their marriage in North America and Hong Kong, a well-accepted cut-off point for distressed and nondistressed couples is 100, or 200 for both husband and wife (Floyd & Markman, 1983; Young, 1995). In Davidson, Balswick and Halverson's (1983) study, with a sample of 162, they

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[2]   The DAS was built on the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale, a scale developed long ago to measure marital adjustment (Lauer & Lauer, 1986a, 1990).

found the median score for husbands was 111.6 while the wives was 114.5. Based on the above-mentioned studies, with reference to Spanier (1976), and Davidson, Balswick and Halverson's study (1983), I adopted a cut-off DAS score of 110 as a criterion for screening nondistressed or satisfactorily-married Euro couple respondents. I followed Young's (1995) method and adopted the lower cut-off DAS score of 100 for Chinese husbands and wives. Since there are a few items in the DAS are not culturally relevant to Hong Kong Chinese couples, they tend to score lower in those questions. For example, item 23 of the scale is: "Do you kiss your mate?" Chinese couples are much less likely than their Euro-Canadian counterparts to kiss their mate.

There are a few items that are too sensitive for Hong Kong Chinese couples, such as the items of "sex relations," "too tired for sex," "not showing love." Chinese couples do not discuss sex openly. They feel sex is the most private matter. Moreover, "affection" is not a Chinese concept. The manifestation of love among Chinese couples is more through tangible support and concern rather than emotional expression. I suspect that the questions will not be answered in a way that is valid because of cultural differences between Chinese and North American couples. The sensitivity of the above-mentioned items were verified during fieldwork. The majority of refusal cases among the Chinese-speaking elderly club members who fell into my sample criteria claimed that the above-mentioned items were too sensitive and private for them. A male member even felt offended when he saw those items regarding sex in the questionnaire. Those who were willing to fill out the questionnaire said they helped because they gave "face" to the club or agency they were affiliated with.

The Role Orientation Subscale (ROR)

The Role Orientation (ROR) is one of the eleven nonoverlapping subscales of the Marital Satisfaction Inventory[3]. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of internal consistency and the test-retest reliability coefficient for ROR are .89 respectively. This subscale has a low correlation with the rest of the MSI scale in a factor analysis, signifying its independence from other subscales (Snyder, 1989).

Although the Marital Satisfaction Scale is a widely used scale in measuring marital satisfaction with strong evidence of validity and reliability, the 280 items are too long for the respondents to answer. Certain broad areas such as finance, affective expression, time together, and sex are already covered by the DAS. I did not want the quantitative process to take over the in-depth qualitative part.

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[3] Each subscale of the MSI has its own cut-off score (Snyder, Lachar & Wills, 1988).

MARRIAGE QUESTIONNAIRE

Husband / Wife

The following is a questionnaire on your views about your marriage. There is no right or wrong answers. Please ✓ the most appropriate column for you in each of the following questions.

Within your marriage please indicate the extent you agree/disagree on these items:

	Always agree	Almost always agree	Occa-sionally disagree	Fre-quently disagree	Almost always disagree	Always disagree
1. Handling family finances						
2. Matters of recreation						
3. Religious matters						
4. Demonstrations of affection						
5. Friends						
6. Sex relations						
7. Conventionality (correct or proper behavior)						
8. Philosophy of life						
9. Ways of dealing with parents or in-laws .-						
10. Aims, goals, and things believed important						
11. Amount of time spent together						
12. Making major decisions						
13. Household tasks						
14. Leisure-time interests and activities						
15. Career decisions						

	All the time	Most of the time	More often than not	Occa-sionally	Rarely	Never
16. How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or terminating your relationship?						
17. How often do you or your mate leave the house after a fight?						
18. In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?						
19. Do you confide in your mate?						
20. Do you ever regret that you married (or live together)?						
21. How often do you and your partner quarrel?						
22. How often do you and your mate get on each other's nerves?						

	Every day	Almost every day	Occa-sionally	Rarely	Never
23. Do you kiss your mate?					

	All of them	Most of them	some of them	Very few of them	None of them
24. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?					

How often would you say the following occur between you and your mate:

	Never	Less than once a month	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Once a day	More often
25. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas						
26. Laugh together						
27. Calmly discuss something						
28. Work together on a project						

There are some things about which couples agree and sometimes dis-agree. Indicate if either item below caused differences of opinions or were problems in your relationship during the past few weeks. (Check yes or no.)

	Yes	No
29. Being too tired for sex		
30. Not showing love		

31. The dots on the following line represent different degrees of happiness in your relationship. The point, "happy", represents the degree of happiness of most relationship. Please circle the dot that best describes the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship

•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Extremely Unhappy	Fairly Unhappy	A Little Unhappy	Happy	Very Happy	Extremely Happy	Perfect

32. Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about the future of your relationship:

5   I want desperately for my relationship to succeed and would go to almost any lengths to see that it does.

4   I want very much for my relationship to succeed and will do all that I can to see that it does.

3   I want very much for my relationship to succeed and will do my fair share to see that it does.

2   It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, and I can't do much more than I am doing now to help it succeed.

1   It would be nice if it succeeded, but I refuse to do any more than I am doing now to keep the relationship going.

0   My relationship can never succeed, and there is no more that I can do to keep the relationship going.

Please choose <u>either</u> true <u>or</u> false in each of the following question:

<u>True</u>   <u>False</u>

1. The husband should be the head of the family.

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

3. Women who want to remove the word "obey" from the marriage service don't understand what it means to be a wife.

4. A major role of the wife should be that of housekeeper.

5. A husband and wife should share responsibility for housework if both work outside the home.

6. A woman should expect her husband to help with the housework.

7. Such things as laundry, cleaning, and childcare are primarily the wife's responsibility.

8. A husband should take equal responsibility for feeding and clothing the children.

9. If a child gets sick and the wife works, the husband should be just as willing as she to stay home from work and take care of the child.

10. The most important thing for a woman is to be a good wife and mother.

11. A woman's place is in the home.

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12. The responsibilities of motherhood are a full-time job.

13. There should be more daycare centres and nursery schools so that more mothers of young children could work.

14. A preschool child is likely to suffer if the mother works.

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

16. Only in emergencies should the wife contribute to the financial support of the family.

17. Earning the family income is primarily the responsibility of the husband.

18. It's only natural for a man to be bothered if his wife makes more money than he does.

19. Most women are better off in their own home than in a job or profession.

20. A woman should be able to choose a career outside the home just as her husband does.

21. A wife should not have to give up her job when it interferes with her husband's career.

22. A wife's career is of equal importance to her husband's.

23. Where a family lives should depend mostly on the husband's job.

24.   A woman should take her husband's
       last name after marriage.

25.   Basically, most men still desire
       nurturant and "traditional" women.

****

The End

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

婚姻問卷

丈夫／妻子

第一部份

在婚姻關係中，很多人都會與配偶對一些事情有不同的看法。請就著第 1 至 15 題所列出的項目，根據你們兩夫婦對它們的看法之一致程度，在每一個項目中，將一個你認為最適切的答案圈上。

例子：管教子女的方法

如果你和配偶對管教子女的方法的意見總是一致，請選擇（1）
如果你和配偶對管教子女的方法的意見幾乎總是一致，請選擇（2）
如果你和配偶對管教子女的方法的意見間中不一致，請選擇（3）
如果你和配偶對管教子女的方法的意見經常不一致，請選擇（4）
如果你和配偶對管教子女的方法的意見幾乎總是不一致，請選擇（5）
如果你和配偶對管教子女的方法的意見總是不一致，請選擇（6）

你和配偶對以下事情的看法一致的程度：	總是一致	幾乎總是一致	間中不一致	經常不一致	幾乎總是不一致	總是不一致
1. 家庭財政的處理	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. 娛樂活動	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. 宗教信仰	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. 情愛的表示	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. 朋友	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. 性關係	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. 傳統觀念和習慣（正確或合宜的行為）	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. 人生觀	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. 與父母／姻親相處的方式	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. 目的、目標和認為重要的事物	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. 共同相處時間的多寡	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. 作出重要決定	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. 家務工作	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. 餘暇嗜好和活動	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. 有關職業的決定	1	2	3	4	5	6

由第 16 至 25 題，請按著你覺得這些事情出現的頻密程度圈上最能代表你的情況的答案·

	一直都有	大部份時間都有	經常都有	間中有	很少有	從來沒有
16．你有沒有與配偶討論或曾經考慮離婚，分居或終止你們之間的關係？	1	2	3	4	5	6
17．你或你的配偶有沒有在爭吵或打架後離家而去？	1	2	3	4	5	6
18．一般來說，你有多少時候認為你們夫婦間的關係是好的？	1	2	3	4	5	6
19．你是否信賴你的配偶？	1	2	3	4	5	6
20．你曾否後悔結婚？	1	2	3	4	5	6
21．你和你的配偶有多少時候會吵架？	1	2	3	4	5	6
22．你和你的配偶有多少時候會令對方感到心煩？	1	2	3	4	5	6

23．你有沒有親吻你的配偶？（請 ✓ 一項）

_____ 每天都有
_____ 差不多每天都有
_____ 間中有
_____ 很少有
_____ 從來沒有

24．你和你的配偶有沒有一同外出進行社交或興趣活動？（請 ✓ 一項）

_____ 所有的活動是一起進行的
_____ 大部份的活動是一起進行的
_____ 部份的活動是一起進行的
_____ 很少部份的活動是一起進行的
_____ 沒有任何活動是一起進行的

你認為在你們夫婦之間，有多少時候會出現下列的情況？圈上最能代表你的感受的答案．

	從來沒有	少於每月一次	每月一或二次	每週一或二次	每天一或二次	經常
25．有啟發性或激勵性的意見交流	1	2	3	4	5	6
26．一起歡笑	1	2	3	4	5	6
27．冷靜地討論一些事情	1	2	3	4	5	6
28．一起進行一件事或一個計劃	1	2	3	4	5	6

夫婦間在某些事情上會有時意見一致，但也有時會持不同的意見．在過去數個星期內，以下的事情曾否引致你們夫婦間有不同的意見，或這些事情已經成為你們婚姻關係中的問題？（請 ✓ 是或否）

　　　　　　　是　　　　　否

29．＿＿＿＿＿　＿＿＿＿＿　我覺得不想有性行為

30．＿＿＿＿＿　＿＿＿＿＿　沒有向對方表示愛意

31．在以下的直線上的每一點是代表著你從婚姻關係中可能感受到的不同程度之快樂。中間點「快樂」是代表大多數夫婦從他們婚姻關係中所感受到快樂的程度。請你考慮所有有關因素後，圈出最能代表你們夫妻關係快樂程度的數字。

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
．	．	．	．	．	．	．

極度
不快樂　　顏為
不快樂　　少許
不快樂　　快樂　　　很快樂　　極度
快樂　　　完美
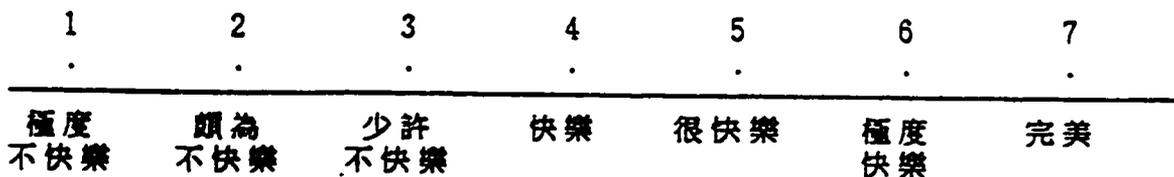
32．你認為以下那一句子最能夠形容你對你們夫妻關係的將來的感受？（請 ✓ 一項）

＿＿＿＿＿　我極度渴望這段婚姻關係能夠成功，我亦會竭盡所能去令它成功
＿＿＿＿＿　我極希望這段婚姻關係能夠成功，我亦會盡力去令它成功
＿＿＿＿＿　我極希望這段婚姻關係能夠成功，我亦會做我份內應做的去令它成功
＿＿＿＿＿　如果這段婚姻關係能夠成功是好的，但我不能再做得比現在更多去促使它成功
＿＿＿＿＿　如果這段婚姻關係能夠成功是好的，但我拒絕再做得比現在更多去維繫這段關係
＿＿＿＿＿　這段婚姻關係是永遠不能成功的，而且再沒有甚麼我可以做去維繫這段關係

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第二部份

請在下列每題選擇對或錯：

Please choose either true or false in each of the following question:

	對 True	錯 False
1. 丈夫應該是一家之主。 The husband should be the head of the family.		
2. 在婚姻裏有一些平等是一件好事，但大體而言，丈夫應該在家庭事務上有多一些主意。 Some equality in marriage is a good thing, but by and large, the husband ought to have the main say-so in family matters.		
3. 一個女人若主張在結婚儀式刪除「服從」一詞，她跟本不明白作為妻子的意義。 Women who want to remove the word "obey" from the marriage service don't understand what it means to be a wife.		
4. 妻子最主要的其中一個角色應該是作為管家。 A major role of the wife should be that of housekeeper.		
5. 如夫婦二人均在外工作，家庭應共同分擔。 A husband and wife should share responsibility for housework if both work outside the home.		
6. 一個女人應期望丈夫幫忙家務。 A woman should expect her husband to help with the housework.		
7. 諸如洗衫，清潔及照顧子女等工作是妻子的主要責任。 Such things as laundry, cleaning, and childcare are primarily the wife's responsibility.		
8. 一個丈夫應在喂食孩子及替孩子穿著衣服等工作上負上同等責任。 A husband should take equal responsibility for feeding and clothing the children.		

	對 True	錯 False
9. 如妻子工作，當孩子生病，丈夫應該像妻子一般願意留在家中照顧孩子。 If a child gets sick and the wife works, the husband should be just as willing as she to stay home from work and take care of the child.		
10. 作為一個女人，最重要的是成為一個好妻子及好母親。 The most important thing for a woman is to be a good wife and mother.		
11. 一個女人所屬的地方是她的家。 A woman's place is in the home.		
12. 母親的職責是一份全時間的工作。 The responsibilities of motherhood are a full-time job.		
13. 應有更多的日託中心及託兒學校使更多有幼兒的母親可以工作。 There should be more daycare centres and nursery schools so that more mothers of young children could work.		
14. 如母親工作，未入學的孩子多會受害。 A preschool child is likely to suffer if the mother works.		
15. 一個有年幼子女的母親應該只是在家庭需要錢的情況上出外工作。 If a mother of young children works, it should be only while the family needs the money.		
16. 妻子只應在緊急的情況下對家庭的經濟作出支持。 Only in emergencies should the wife contribute to the financial support of the family.		

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	對 True	錯 False
17. 賺錢養家是丈夫的主要責任。 Earning the family income is primarily the responsibility of the husband.		
18. 如果太太賺錢多於丈夫，丈夫覺得受困擾理當自然。 It's only natural for a man to be bothered if his wife makes more money than he does.		
19. 大部份女人在家比有工作或有自己的專業為好。 Most women are better off in their own home than in a job or profession.		
20. 一個女人應該如她丈夫一樣可以選擇自己的事業。 A woman should be able to choose a career outside the home just as her husband does.		
21. 當一個妻子的事業對其丈夫的事業有防礙的時候，妻子也不應該放棄她的工作。 A wife should not have to give up her job when it interferes with her husband's career.		
22. 一個妻子的事業與其丈夫的事業有同等重要性。 A wife's career is of equal importance to her husband's.		
23. 一個家庭在那裏居住應大部份根據丈夫的工作所在。 Where a family lives should depend mostly on the husband's job.		
24. 一個女人結婚後應取其丈夫的姓氏。 A woman should take her husband's last name after marriage.		
25. 基本上，大部份男性仍渴求含有照顧別人的特質及「傳統」的女性。 Basically, most men still desire nurturant and "traditional" women.		

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