When it comes to love, do parents know best?

Exploring the roles of cultural identity, acculturation, and gender, in the perceived acceptability of parental involvement in young adults' romantic relationships

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Declaration

The research reported in this thesis is original work. It has not been submitted for a higher degree in any other university or institution.

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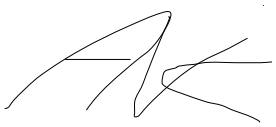

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ABSTRACT

In Western societies young adults typically choose their mates independently, and although parents may be more or less supportive of their young adult children's romantic relationships, the general expectation is that they are free to choose their romantic partners. However, this is not necessarily the case in non-Western societies where the expectation is that parents will play a significantly larger role in their young adult children's mate choices (Buunk, Park, & Duncan, 2010). Research has demonstrated that for immigrant families with young adult children, an acculturation gap may occur as the children adjust more quickly than their parents to the cultural practices and norms of the new culture (Baptiste, 1987; Portes, 1997). For these families, the acculturation gap may be particularly difficult to navigate when their young adult children begin dating. Here, parents from non-Western societies may expect to have greater control of their children's mating choices than their children believe is acceptable. This in turn may contribute to intergenerational conflict and ultimately, parental rejection of their young adult offspring and their romantic partners. A large body of research has found that parental rejection and lack of support are associated with higher rates of depression, low self-worth, and other negative consequences for children (Rohner & Khaleque, 2010). However, although parental rejection is known to be detrimental to young adult children's emotional wellbeing, there is relatively little research on the potential role this might play in influencing young adult children's mating decisions in immigrant families from non-Westernized cultures who are adjusting to a Westernized host culture.

Using a mixed-methods approach, the overall aim of this thesis was to explore the roles of cultural identity, acculturation, and gender in young adults' perceptions of the acceptability of parental involvement in their romantic relationship choices. In Study 1, several focus group discussions were held with young adult women from a variety of cultural backgrounds residing in Canada. The 95 women were grouped according to their reported levels

of acculturation to Canadian society (high, low and "in the middle", or bicultural) and were asked to discuss a wide range of issues around parental involvement, both hypothetical and real, in their romantic relationships (including cross-cultural relationships – i.e., where the daughter becomes involves with a male from a different racial, religious, and/or cultural background). They also discussed how they would manage parental rejection of their partners and romantic relationships. The findings showed that, compared to highly acculturated respondents, low acculturated and bicultural respondents were more willing to accept parental involvement in their dating decisions, in part because they believed their parents were more experienced in such matters. They were also more likely than highly acculturated respondents to report relationship dissolution in response to perceived parental rejection of their partners, whereas highly acculturated respondents opted to employ a range of other negotiation strategies, including rebuffing their parents and attempting to change their opinions. Bicultural respondents reported experiencing the most intergenerational conflict, due to the large discrepancies between their desire to acculturate (e.g., date freely, stay out late, and other typical "Western" behaviours) and their parents' desires to uphold their traditional ways.

Studies 2 and 3 followed up a number of the qualitatively derived findings from Study 1 using a hypothetical vignette approach. Study 2 investigated whether certain sociocultural factors, specifically acculturation level, cultural identity, and gender impacted young adults' emotional and behavioural reactions towards hypothetical parental rejection of their dating partners. Hypothetical dating partners were described as differing with respect to culture, race, religion, or language, to the participants. Overall, the results confirmed Study 1's findings, with low acculturation positively associated with likely relationship dissolution following perceived parental rejection. The study also found that cultural identity significantly impacted respondents' attitudes towards parental rejection, with non-Westernized individuals

reporting greater acceptance of such rejection than Westernized individuals. However, an unexpected gender difference emerged in Study 2, with males reporting greater negative impact from perceived parental rejection of their romantic relationship than females. They were also more likely than females to report that they would dissolve their relationship with a rejected partner. Finally, the results showed that differences in language between partners were considered the most problematic amongst the four types of potential partner dissimilarity.

Study 3 investigated the same research question from the parents' perspective. Specifically, using the same hypothetical vignettes as Study 2, participants (who were also parents) were asked whether parental rejection of the hypothetical adult children's dating partners was justified. The results confirmed that parents' attitudes towards the acceptability of parental rejection were also influenced by their cultural identity. As expected, non-Western parents' views were congruent with the views of Study 2's non-Western participants, including the particular undesirability of language dissimilarity in their children's romantic relationships.

This thesis is the first to empirically investigate whether parental involvement and rejection has an impact on the mating choices of young adults. Overall, the findings demonstrate the importance of understanding such influence, as acculturation distress and intergenerational conflict are severe consequences which threaten overall family harmony. For first and second generation young adults, whose parents are still important to young adults' mating decisions, the growing prevalence of interracial and interethnic marriages in the United States (Le, 2008) leads to an increased need for immigrant families to navigate these new challenges together.

Chapter 1: Introduction

As the world becomes increasingly globalized, Western nations in particular are becoming home to large numbers of immigrants from many countries representing a wide variety of cultures and ethnicities. For immigrant families, emigrating to a new culture may bring a host of new challenges. The process of immigration creates both conflict and opportunities in personal and familial development, especially in families with young adults. Following immigration, acculturation towards the host culture is expected to occur. Acculturation is the simultaneous process of cultural and psychological change that occurs when two or more cultures interact (Graves, 1967; Berry, 1997). The non-dominant group or the home culture (i.e., the culture from which the individual is emigrating is strongly influenced to adopt the behaviours, ideals, and values of the dominant group or host culture (i.e., the culture to which the individual has immigrated) (Berry, 1998). At the individual level, acculturation can cause changes to people's values, ideals, behaviours, and more broadly, their cultural identity. Cultural identity is then defined as an underlying social identity which provides a sense of belongingness, and is related to nationality, ethnicity, religion, social class, and generation, among other group distinctions (Hall, 1990). However, the overall process of acculturation involves two subcomponents: first, the extent to which the individual retains the behaviours and values of their culture of origin and second, the degree of association to their host culture (Berry, 1980). Therefore, the acculturation process may strengthen or weaken an individual's original cultural identity, or may cause an individual to integrate both host and home culture together.

A major contribution to the current body of research on acculturation has been primarily provided by Berry (1997), who argued that acculturation could be divided into two dimensions: maintaining one's original cultural identity or adopting that of the host culture. This led to an understanding that acculturation can be further split into four categories: inte-

gration, separation, assimilation, and marginalization. Integration occurs when individuals prefer to retain the cultural values and behaviours of their home culture, in addition to endorsing the values of their host culture. Separation, however, occurs when individuals favour maintaining their home cultural values without acquiring the values of the host culture. In contrast, individuals who endorse an assimilative strategy do not retain their home culture, and adopt the values of their host culture. Finally, marginalization occurs when individuals maintain neither the values of their host nor their home culture.

Although Berry's four acculturation strategies remains highly cited in the acculturation literature, other terms for different acculturation strategies or "levels" have been suggested by other researchers. For instance, "biculturalism" has been used to describe an acculturation strategy in which the individual simultaneously identifies with two cultures that are in contact (Cameron & Lalonde, 1994), which is similar to Berry's integrative strategy. Gordon (1964) also referred to two different forms of "incorporation", prior to Berry's acculturation framework. Gordon suggested that newcomers may undergo cultural or structural assimilation, and when both occur simultaneously, total assimilation (termed integration, by Berry) is bound to occur. Structural assimilation involves a high degree of contact and participation with the new (host) culture and in contrast, cultural assimilation requires higher cultural maintenance of the home culture. These forms of incorporation or "assimilation" are similar to Berry's acculturation strategies, however, they suggest that maintaining both host and home cultural values are possible for acculturating individuals. Berry's acculturation framework suggests that all non-dominant groups and their individual members have the freedom to decide which acculturation strategy best suits them, however, this is not always the case (Berry, 1974). Preference towards one acculturation strategy may depend on several factors, such as one's location or the broader environment. In the private spheres, such as the home or one's ethnic community, more cultural maintenance may be necessary, especially compared

to more public spheres, such as the workplace or school, especially if lower intergroup contact is required in the private spheres (Berry, 1997). The broader environment may also affect how one chooses a preferred acculturation strategy. In explicitly multicultural societies (e.g. Canada), individuals may desire to match their cultural context and prefer to integrate with others, or in contrast, in assimilationist societies (e.g. the United States), acculturation may be easier if one prefers to assimilate instead (Krishnan & Berry, 1992).

The principal purpose of Berry's acculturation framework has been to predict the wellbeing of immigrants by understanding their ability to adapt to their new host culture. Researchers have found that Berry's acculturation strategies (1990) may have severe impacts on the identities that individuals hold and their immigration experience. For instance, the integrative strategy is associated with lower stress, in comparison to marginalization and separation, which have been associated with the most acculturative stress (Berry, Kim, Power, & Mok, 1987) and young adult immigrants, who integrate into their host society, have also been found to have the best psychological and sociocultural outcomes (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006).

Acculturation Related Issues In Intercultural Romantic Relationships

Acculturation theory suggests that following immigration, a decline in functioning is to be expected, due to immigrants' unfamiliarity with a new environment (Berry, 1997). Throughout this process, immigrants are more vulnerable to experiencing specific acculturative-related stresses, including feelings of depression, alienation, hopelessness, and identity confusion (Berry & Annis, 1974). In addition, factors such as lower English proficiency, discrimination, and reason for migration have all been found to exacerbate immigrants' experiences with acculturative stress (Lueck & Wilson, 2010).

One interesting and important source of acculturative stress may derive from intergenerational issues. In particular, a major source of acculturation stress can occur as a result of differences between parents and children in their rates of acculturation (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996), a phenomenon referred to as "acculturation gap" (Birman, 2006). The acculturation gap-distress model suggests that while parents and offspring may immigrate to another culture simultaneously, younger, more flexible children may acculturate at faster rates than their parents (Birman & Trickett, 2001; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1980). This acculturation gap may lead to increased conflict and maladjustment within families (Kwak, 2003), since parents typically retain closer ties to their heritage culture than they do to their host culture (Khaleque, Malik, & Rohner, 2015). For example, higher acculturation gaps between parents and young adults have been found to be positively associated with depression in young adults (Crane, Ngai, Larson, & Hafen, 2005) and increased conflict between Chinese-American mothers and young adult offspring (Tardif & Geva, 2006). Within Indian-American families, lower acculturation gaps have also been found to be associated with higher self-esteem, lower overall family conflict, and less anxiety (Farver, Narang, & Bhadha, 2002). Overall, parent-child relationships have been found to be negatively impacted by perceived acculturation gaps (Dinh & Nguyen, 2006).

Acculturation gaps and associated acculturation stress within immigrant families may develop as children begin to acculturate to the norms of their new culture. Parents may expect their offspring to maintain the behaviours and values of young adults from their home country, but their offspring may desire to "fit in" with their Westernized peers (Segal, 1991; Singh, 1997). Consequently, parents may be required to endure a series of transitional issues that they would not have had to consider in their home country. Baptiste (1993) highlighted four of these transitional issues, including changes to familial boundaries, lessening of paren-

tal authority, fear of losing children to the new culture, and unpreparedness for change and conflict. These will be discussed in turn below.

Changes to familial boundaries. Social norms within families from Eastern countries, in particular, are for parents to enforce strict boundaries and overt social rules for their young adult offspring. These boundaries and rules may not be as strictly enforced in Western countries. The social norms that exist in collectivistic cultures dictate that individuals should value interdependence, group harmony and conformity to group norms (Triandis 1990; 1995) and offspring are expected to obey parents and fulfil family obligations (Matsuoka, 1990; Nguyen & Williams, 1989; Rosenthal, Ranieri, & Klimidis, 1996, Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam, 1999). Collectivistic parents normally fulfil the role of head of the household by enacting certain rules and thus, they have power and authority over family decisions. For immigrant parents whose first language may not be English, the transition between their home and host culture may be exceedingly difficult and so they may become reliant on their offspring to act as mediators or translators. Lowered parental self-confidence and undue stress on children have been found to be a result of this altered power relation between parents and offspring (Kibria, 1993; Buki, Ma, Strom, & Strom, 2003). Consequently, immigrant parents may experience severe dissonance when confronted with situations in their host culture where the boundaries between parent and offspring may inadvertently shift.

Lessening of parental authority. A related problem concerns the reversal of authority in immigrant families, which may have negative effects on immigrant parents' emotional wellbeing. For example, many immigrant parents feel a loss of authority and report feeling more like a "puppet" as they become dependent on their children to translate for them and thus, less like the adult in charge (Baptiste, 1993). These shifts in power may cause parents to feel less in control and especially, less like parents of a household. Furthermore, immigrant parents have argued that Western governmental institutions perpetuate this shift in power

from parents to children by allowing children the right to challenge their parents on methods of discipline, such as the ones that may have been socially acceptable in their home culture (i.e., spanking or "using the rod"; Baptiste, 1993).

Other parental responsibilities may change due to this shift in authority. As many immigrant families originate from Eastern cultures where parental influence in marriages is typical, such post-immigration parents may be more likely to want to continue this tradition. Thus, for highly traditional families, conflict may begin when parents are introduced to a stressor (i.e., young adults beginning to date) resulting from a disturbance in their traditional role as parents (Baptiste, 1993). For immigrant families with a young adult offspring, these changes may cause major disagreements within families and may have a negative impact on family cohesion when those young adults date or even marry individuals from other ethnicities (Tseng & Fuligni, 2000; Gim Chung, 2001).

Fear of losing children to new culture. An important stressor for immigrant parents may be caused by the fear that offspring are becoming too Western or "White washed". As they acculturate, these originally collectivistic young adults may desire increased autonomy and thus, may act more individualistically. Parents may see this process of adopting new values and ideals as a sign of rejection of their traditional values and as a loss of their cultural identity. Such changes in behaviour may violate the collectivistic family's intrinsic values and as a result, parents may try to force acculturating young adults to behave more like young adults back in the home culture. The parents' immediate solution to their offspring's 'Westernization' may be to impose exceedingly traditional behavioural expectations, such as becoming more involved with religion, forbidding certain styles of attire for females, and demanding the spoken language at home to be in their native tongue (Baptiste, 1987). Increased conflict within the family unit may occur despite parents' good intention. For example, parents may originally choose to immigrate to Western nations in search of a better life but may

actively reject their offspring's acculturation to their new host culture. For these young adult offspring, it may be important to "fit in" with their new peers by learning their customs; however, in so doing they risk alienating and challenging their traditional parents. As a result, immigrant families are then placed at a paradox and may find themselves with exceeding conflict between parents and offspring.

Unpreparedness for change and conflict. For immigrant families, a considerable source of stress may arise from the unexpected challenges that they face when they first arrive to their new host culture. For example, there may be language difficulties, with an important predictor of overall functioning for immigrants deriving from their ability to be proficient in English (Phinney, 2003). Parents may be forced to rely on their offspring to translate for them, which can exacerbate their feelings of helplessness. Further, parents may believe that the host culture is corrupting their offspring (Baptiste, 1987). While immigrant families may in time adjust to the environmental and social changes that their move brings, they may not be prepared for the *intergenerational conflict* that frequently occurs. Intergenerational conflict is defined as the conflict that occurs between parents and offspring, usually due to differences in values and a divergence in perspectives (Chung, 2001). In families that immigrate without prior experience in non-collectivistic cultures, parents may believe that their cultural rules and traditional parenting norms will be easily transferred, unmodified, to the new, individualistic culture (Baptiste, 1993). Thus, additional acculturation stress can be expected when immigrant parents become frustrated with the realization of the difficulties in adjusting to a new, non-traditional culture and with the changes to their family structure. Further, parents who undergo the process of immigration later in life may experience more conflict with their offspring. Compared to young immigrants, adults who emigrate to a host culture later in life have already acquired a strong identification with their home culture, and

tend to hold more strongly to their traditional values and ideals than their offspring (Rosenthal, Ranieri, & Klimindis, 1996).

Offspring Dating and Marriage: A Potent Source of Intergenerational Conflict Within Immigrant Families

A major aspect of this thesis concerns the intergenerational conflict that may arise between immigrant parents and their young adult offspring in relation to the latter's dating relationships and mate choice. In order to set the scene for this research, it is important to provide some background on cultural values and their transmission between parents and children. The transmission of values from parents to offspring occurs in every cultural setting and context. Cross-cultural researchers have broadly delineated cultural identities into two divergent categories: individualism, the cultural identity found in societies that values the goals of the individual by maintaining a sense of independence and a lower sense of concern for others and in contrast, collectivism, found in societies that value interdependence, including higher concern for others and fostering harmony amongst a group (Hui & Triandis, 1986). Western societies, such as Canada, Australia, and the United States have been found to score higher on individualism, whereas Eastern societies, such as Pakistan, Singapore, and Thailand, scored low on individualism (Hofstede, 1984).

Individuals who are more conservative oppose values that emphasize an individual's own independent thought and action and endorse values that emphasize submissive self-restriction, conformity, and preservation of traditional practices (Triandis 1990, 1995). Further, within collectivistic cultures, the core unit is the group and the group's public image is a function of individuals' identity and self-concepts. Consequently, immigrants from collectivistic cultures may seek to control their adult children's mate choices because of the potential threat that 'inappropriate' relationships pose to the group's public face, or cultural and

ethnic identity (Oyserman & Lee, 2008). Thus, the interplay between cultural identity and the acculturation process is important to investigate in order to better understand its impact on romantic relationship outcomes.

As a result of immigration, traditional parents may expect their offspring to "carry on" their traditions in their new culture. However, a major concern for some parents is that, as a result of frequent interactions with other young people from a different cultural background, their first-generation offspring may become romantically involved with a partner without their knowledge or approval. Parents from highly traditional cultures may find this threatening and unacceptable, and so may attempt to exert an increased amount of control over their young adult offspring. Increased control may generate familial tension and intergenerational conflict in the household and potentially, even lead to parental rejection of the child. Further, these parents may particularly disapprove of, or actively reject, their offspring's' *intercultural relationships* (i.e., a romantic relationship between two individuals who differ in some culturally significant way; religious, language, and/or ethnic difference) and this may be even more likely to lead to the estrangement of offspring from their parents and family.

Throughout history and in many societies, marriages have been arranged as a result of familial considerations rather than individual desires (Cott, 2009). In many traditional societies, more direct parental involvement may occur in the form of arranged marriages with partners who might be strangers to one another; however, in contemporary societies, indirect parental involvement may occur in the form of persuading offspring to make specific mate choices or by rejecting or accepting certain mate qualities. Arranged marriages have allowed parents to maintain control over the mating choice decisions of their offspring (Goode, 1959; Buunk, Park, & Dubbs, 2008), a desire that may derive from a number of factors to be discussed below. However, their offspring may not be so enthusiastic about the prospect of an

arranged marriage, particularly if they are living in an individualistic culture where the expectations are that people mate and marry for love. Parents may continue to attempt to indirectly control their children by persuading them to meet or date certain individuals or by imposing rules against dating others (Goode, 1959).

Why might parents care about their children's mate choices? The influence that parents have over their offspring's mating decisions has been investigated from a number of different perspectives, including the evolutionary perspective. According to inclusive fitness theory, parents should be interested in their offspring's mating decision due to their shared genes. Specifically, the survival of their own genes and those of their offspring depend on their offspring making good mating decisions; thus, parents should prefer mates for their children who possess good traits (i.e., strength, good health, attractiveness, intelligence; Hamilton, 1964). As a consequence, parents can be expected to have a large impact on their offspring's romantic life decisions (i.e., engaging in relationships, having sex, getting married). Further, a significant feature of the current evolutionary literature focuses on parent-child mating decision conflicts (see Apostolou, 2007).

According to parental investment theory (Trivers, 1972), intergenerational conflict arises from differences in what parents and offspring desire in potential mates. As Apostolou (2008a) noted, parental control over an offspring's mating decisions would not exist if both parties shared similar interests. Mating partners are thus chosen with differing "mating values" in mind, and their worth may be evaluated based upon several genetic, emotional, and socioeconomic factors. Much of Apostolou's work focuses on the intergenerational conflict that arises in families due to dissimilarities in shared values. For example, a potential mating partner's family background (Apostolou, 2008a) was found to be a source of conflict when parents perceived it to be important for cementing alliances and attaining resources. Attractiveness, however, is frequently more highly valued by offspring than by parents (Apostolou,

2008b). From an evolutionary perspective, attractiveness may act as an indicator of reproductive fitness, a trait that directly benefits the individual more than the parents.

Although there is some debate about the extent to which our distal evolutionary history affects proximal social values and norms, cultural, historical and ethnographic evidence suggests that parents typically exert a great deal of control over their daughters' mate choices (Apostolou, 2007). For example, across cultures, parents tend to allow sons more control over mate choice than daughters, who are frequently regarded as mating resources (Hanassab, 1998). Parents of daughters have been found to allow less autonomy over mate choice compared to parents of sons (Apostolou, 2007; 2010); moreover, parents have been found to prefer that their daughters initiate sexual behaviours later than sons, yet marry earlier, in contrast to what their daughters might prefer for themselves (Apostolou, 2010a).

From an evolutionary perspective, the importance of female chastity is contingent on paternity certainty, since males who acquire a chaste mate are assured that the offspring they provide resources for are actually genetically related to themselves (Alexander & Noonan, 1979). Historically, the societal consequences for an 'unchaste' female may have dire consequences on her future ability to gain a suitable mate (Buss, 2003). Flinn (1988) hypothesized that while 'daughter guarding' may not increase a father's inclusive fitness, it may ensure that if his female offspring mates with a successful male, the reproductive fitness of his grandsons may also be guaranteed. Indeed, by ensuring the successful marriage of a female offspring, parents could receive numerous benefits of daughter guarding along with genetic benefits, including psychological factors such as seeing their daughter's emotional happiness, maintaining the family 'honour', and gaining material benefits (Flinn, 1988).

From a socio-cultural perspective, it has been noted that the act of daughter-guarding occurs more often in societies where traditionally, there is an emphasis on arranged marriages

through the consent of parents (Buunk & Solano, 2012). Similarly, it has been found that parental control over mate choice is stronger in highly collectivistic than individualistic cultures (Buunk, Park, & Duncan, 2010).

Parental Control Strategies: Functional and Dysfunctional

Clearly, the need for parental love and care is essential to an offspring's positive adjustment, and healthy familial functioning is important to adult romantic relationships. Further, positive engagement and lower hostility between different generations have been found to predict the same in later adult relationships (Whitton et al., 2008). Additionally, familial disagreements have been negatively correlated with life satisfaction, regardless of ethnic background and immigrant status (Phinney & Ong, 2002). Family dysfunction was also directly related to lower relationship success in young adults and poorer interactions between romantic couples (Johnson, Nguyen, Anderson, Liu, & Vennum, 2015).

Implications of Parental Rejection for Young adults and their Relationships

Given that the need to belong is fundamental to humans (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), severe distress can occur when one's in-group members (i.e. parents or parental figures) do not provide acceptance (Fitness, 2005). The Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection theory (IPARTheory, formally known as the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory) is a theory of socialization that illustrates how psychological adjustment is largely dependent upon attachment figures (i.e., usually parents) and their treatment by them (Rohner, 1986). It is characterized by parental acceptance (i.e., warmth, love, care, support) or parental rejection (i.e., the lack thereof) (Rohner & Khaleque, 2002). Parental rejection is defined as an offspring's perceived ongoing dismissal of their desires. IPARTheory suggests that when this need to be accepted is unmet, there are significant impacts on an individual's wellbeing (Rohner, 1986).

Individuals who receive parental acceptance are likely to be less aggressive, more independent, have positive self-esteem, and a more positive worldview, among other positive psychological adjustment traits. On the other hand, individuals who are rejected by parents are likely to be more aggressive, overly dependent, have negative self-esteem, emotional instability, and a more negative worldview.

Numerous studies have found strong links between parental rejection and negative emotional, developmental, cognitive, and social outcomes on offspring (Rohner & Khaleque, 2010). For example, researchers have found strong links between parental rejection and depression in young adults (Robertson & Simons, 1989; Nolan, Flynn, & Garber, 2003) and with cynical hostility and distrust towards others (Meesters, Muris, and Esselink, 1995; Fitness, 2005). Parental rejection has been associated with maladjustment in young adults, even if only one parent in the household was perceived as rejecting (Miranda, Affuso, Esposito, & Bacchini, 2015). Parental rejection and psychological control have also been positively associated with rejection sensitivity, the tendency to readily perceive and overreact to interpersonal rejection, in young adults (Rowe, Gembeck, Rudolf, & Nesdale, 2015). Rejection sensitivity was also elicited in adults following a remembrance of childhood parental rejection (Ibrahim, Rohner, Smith, & Flannery, 2015). Furthermore, individuals who reported experiencing parental rejection in early childhood also reported feelings of dissatisfaction and partner rejection in current romantic relationships (Varan, 2005), suggesting that the long-term effects of parental acceptance-rejection may severely impact later experiences of intimate partner acceptance-rejection. In contrast, perceived parental acceptance in early childhood was positively correlated with positive psychological adjustment and perceived partner acceptance in later life (Varan, 2005; Khaleque, Rohner, & Laukkala, 2008). This finding was also supported cross-culturally, with parental acceptance being positively associated with psychological adjustment in both males and females (Ali, Khaleque, & Rohner, 2015).

Young, Chinese adults also reported parental warmth to be associated with higher life satisfaction (Leung, Wong, Wong, & McBride-Chang, 2010).

Research that has investigated the impact of cultural background on the effects of parental rejection on offspring have shown that the impacts of such rejection within collectivistic cultures may be particularly severe. For example, within Islamic cultures, the most important aspect of wellbeing of the in-group or family unit lies in the construct of *izzet* (Siann & Khalid, 1984). Izzet refers to the status of the entire family, based upon the chastity of women and the influence this has on upholding the honour of the family name. These cultural notions are essential to the understanding of the severe impact that parental rejection may have on overall offspring wellbeing, especially if it culminates in an "honour killing". Honour killings are described as acts of pre-meditated violence perpetrated by male members of a family upon female members who are seen as improper (Amnesty International, 1999). In comparison to the Western world's definition of honour as a moral value, the Eastern world holds honour as a valued possession, especially one that may be taken away easily (Sev'er & Yurdakul, 2001). For instance, an ethnography on Turkish immigrants living in Sweden detailed the symbolic transferral of their sexuality from their father to their husband. The ethnography illustrated Fadime's experiences, a young Kurdish woman shot to death for falling in love with a Swedish man, instead of obeying her parents' wishes to marry her cousin. Akpinar (2003) insightfully argues that the association of honour with shame can be analyzed on a continuum of patriarchal domination, without reducing its occurrence to a "cultural" phenomenon.

However, certain collectivistic values may mitigate the negative influence of parental rejection, or the threat of rejection and the control this threat affords, on their offspring's dating choices. For instance, Arab Canadians have been found to perceive more parental rejection compared to their White Canadians peers; however, various protective aspects of the

parent-child relationship in Arab families were argued to have mitigated the impact of such rejection on their adjustment (Rasmi, Chuang, & Safdar, 2012). Similarly, although the goals of collectivistic parent-child relationships focus on obedience towards parents (Kayyali, 2006), submitting to the established familial hierarchy (Schwartz, 2006), and enforcing strict rules and regulations (Hofstede, 2001), underlying collectivistic values around family connectedness and support may help soften the potentially negative impacts of parental control. However, Western parents may believe such control to be damaging to the parent-child relationship. Therefore, it is important to further investigate the extent to which cultural identity mitigates or exacerbates these effects.

Gaps in the Current Literature and Thesis Aims

A major limitation in the current body of research on parent-child relationships within immigrant families has been the tendency to apply Western parenting models to these families, without considering the importance of cultural context (Harkness & Super, 2002). The IPARTheory partly compensates for this, as it views parent-child relationships within varied ethnographic populations, allowing it to be applied universally. However, many of the studies in IPARTheory research focus on non-Western cultures by conducting studies in participants' home countries. As a result, there is limited understanding about how IPARTheory impacts immigrant groups, where higher intergenerational conflict and more variation in families and cross-cultural interactions may occur.

Additionally, the current body of research suggests that parents' acceptance of, and involvement in their children's lives are important ingredients for young adults' healthy relationship development. However, much of the parental involvement research focuses on parents as a homogenous cultural entity, without investigating potential cultural influences amongst them. This is problematic since, for example, Buunk, Park, and Duncan (2010) re-

cently found higher levels of parental influence on mate choice within collectivistic than in individualistic cultures. Moreover, acculturated individuals with an East Asian background reported greater parental influence on mate choice than did individuals with a European background (Buunk et al., 2010).

There is also an important need to further investigate parenting influences within the acculturation process itself. For example, with globalization, Asian parenting styles have changed dramatically, including a shift from highly controlling and traditional parenting to more lenient and autonomy based parenting (Lieber, Fung, & Leung, 2006). However, it is important to note that while Asian parents may be transitioning towards more "Westernized" parenting styles, traditional values may still exist in immigrant families, who may continue practicing a frozen notion of their heritage cultural practices. Thus, research on parental influences on wellbeing in young adults must focus on several groups of parents: those who have recently arrived in a Western society from their heritage culture, immigrants who have acculturated to Western society, and European Americans, in order to determine whether a mix of culture and acculturation process influences parenting practices, such as parental involvement in offspring's mating decisions.

Clearly, while immigration may provide an important context in which to investigate the importance of differing parenting styles, the changing cultural landscape in collectivistic cultures are also important to highlight. For example, in another qualitative study, Way et al. (2013) also found that tiger parenting did not exclusively exist in rural China anymore, rather, Chinese mothers emphasized goals outside of academic success including, happiness, social and emotional adjustment. These studies clearly justify the importance of qualitative studies that focus on providing a rich description of previously unexplored cultural phenomena that cannot be adequately explored quantitatively.

Implications for Mate Choice Research

Numerous studies have investigated the causes, features and consequences of acculturation gaps between offspring and parents (see Birman, 2006; Buki, Ma, Strom, & Strom, 2003; Farver, Narang, & Bhadha, 2002; Kwak & Berry, 2001). Acculturation gaps in families may lead to increasing intergenerational conflict and subsequent rejection between parents and offspring. However, as mentioned earlier, parental rejection may be more likely to occur when young adults begin to date, and especially if their dating involves inter-cultural (e.g., interfaith or interracial) relationships. This particular type of conflict may occur as a result of the divergence in values between traditional parents, who may value *endogamous* relationships (i.e., homogamous relationships, marrying or dating within parents' ethnic heritage group) and offspring, who may value independent choice of partner based on attraction and love. However, while the current body of research suggests that immigrants from traditional backgrounds are more likely to oppose their offspring's "Westernization", what is not known is whether parents from certain cultural backgrounds are more prone to actually reject their adult children's intercultural romantic relationships. Additionally, while the negative influence of parental rejection on young adults is known, it is unclear whether such negativity has any impact of young adults' romantic relationship decisions or outcomes.

Another gap in the current body of research on parents' influence on offspring relationship development concerns the lack of a truly broad cross-cultural perspective. For example, the majority of cross-cultural research on parenting focuses on Chinese or Korean American families. There are few studies that have examined South Asian families exclusively or have combined all Asian families together in order to investigate similarities that may exist. Further, cross-cultural research on different parenting styles has focused largely on their im-

pacts on academic achievement. In contrast, there has been relatively little investigation into young adults' romantic relationship development, especially intercultural relationships. Similarly, the process of acculturation has also been largely overlooked in cross-cultural research on parental involvement and offspring relationship development. As Dennis, Basañez, and Farahmand (2010) discussed, simply comparing acculturation levels between offspring and parents may not necessarily capture the extent to which these gaps create problems or challenges. While it is well known that acculturation gaps can be expected to occur between offspring and immigrant parents, previous studies have not investigated the context in which these conflicts transpire nor their consequences.

It is also important to note that while immigrant families may be more prone to intergenerational conflict (Phinney & Vedder, 2006), it is not uncommon to expect all types of families with young adults to disagree over children's mate preferences, regardless of immigration status. However, intergenerational conflict over dating issues is particularly important to investigate within immigrant families since both parties must negotiate several sets of frequently competing ideals and values over time. Only a handful of studies have investigated the impact of acculturation gaps between parents and adult offspring in reference to the latter romantic relationships (Lalonde, Hynie, Pannu, & Tatla, 2004; Tong, 2013) and even fewer have focused on intercultural relationships (Lou, Lalonde, & Wong, 2015). Further, little is known about the factors, such as acculturation status and cultural identity that may influence parental rejection of adult children's intercultural relationships or their responses to parental rejection.

Finally, and as mentioned previously, positive familial relationships, especially parental acceptance, have a significant impact on young adults' life satisfaction. However, little is known about the ways in which such support enhances young people's romantic relationships

or conversely, how active parental discouragement may impact young people's decisions to initiate or motivations to maintain such relationships. Further, although previous research has highlighted an existing bias for parents to attempt to control the mate choices of their female offspring, little to no research has been conducted on the effect that such biases have on the individuals themselves and the outcomes of their romantic relationships.

Given the literature discussed above, this thesis has three broad aims:

Aim 1: to identify whether acculturation level (low, high, or bicultural) impacts how young adults interpret and negotiate parental involvement in their mating decisions in both intercultural romantic relationships and homogenous romantic relationships.

Aim 2: to investigate whether certain factors such as acculturation level, cultural identity, and gender, influence the outcomes of specifically intercultural romantic relationships.

Aim 3: to explore the influence of cultural identity in parents' own attitudes towards parental involvement in, and rejection of, their adult children's intercultural romantic relationships.

Overview of Thesis

In order to address these aims, this thesis utilized a mixed methods approach. Due to the lack of existing research on acculturation and its impact on rejected intercultural romantic relationships, Study One was exploratory in nature. As the literature review outlined, the impact of immigrant acculturation status on young adult romantic relationship outcomes is multifaceted and involves many levels of influence (i.e., parental, social, cultural, religious, etc.). Accordingly, a qualitative approach involving multiple focus groups was used in order to ful-

ly explore and understand the different aspects of the research questions. Further, since the literature suggested that parents generally, and collectivist parents in particular, are more likely to control their daughters' than their sons' mate choices, it was considered important to begin with an exploration of young women's attitudes towards these issues. Hence, Study One's focus groups comprised females only from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

Given the evolutionary and sociocultural literature discussed previously, it was expected that all females, irrespective of acculturation level, would report relatively strict parental control of their mate choices and dating relationships. However, it was also anticipated that, compared with females who self-identified least strongly with a collectivistic cultural background, females who most strongly self-identified with a collectivistic background would report more severe parental disapproval of their making autonomous dating decisions, with the most severe disapproval related to potentially intercultural dating relationships. Similar findings were expected for low acculturated females from collectivistic backgrounds, as opposed to highly acculturated females from immigrant backgrounds. Both low acculturated and strongly self-identified collectivist females were also expected to be more accepting of parental control of their dating decision than highly acculturated and less strongly self-identified collectivist females. Finally, it was anticipated that bicultural females who straddle a cultural divide between their home traditions and their modern day-to-day lives, would experience the most intergenerational conflict and challenges in relation to parental control of their dating decisions.

Chapter two outlines the focus group methodology used in order to investigate females' attitudes towards parental involvement in romantic relationships. Chapter three, four, and five report the qualitative findings of high acculturated, low acculturated, and bicultural participants separately. Each chapter focuses on their unique viewpoints and experiences with parental involvement in their dating relationships. These main findings chapters have been

divided based on participants' acculturation levels (high, low, or bicultural). This division allowed for thematic categories to be explored within a specific acculturative context, by demonstrating how each minor and major thematic finding may be interdependent upon each other or exclusive of one another. Chapter six provides an inclusive insight into the negotiation strategies that young adult females perceived they would employ following parental rejection of their relationships. These plans of actions were perceived as strategically used in order to maintain the rejected relationship as long as possible, whilst maintaining a positive parent-child relationship.

Following Study One's findings chapters (chapters three to six), a discussion on study one's findings are presented in chapter seven. Following Study One, Study two (chapter eight) investigated the reactions of young adults to perceived parental rejection of young adult children's dating relationships. Acculturation level, gender, and cultural identity (Easternized, Westernized, and bicultural) were key factors in understanding the influence of parental rejection on romantic relationship outcomes. The results demonstrated that acculturation level and cultural identity significantly impacted participants' reactions to parental rejection. Further, the results revealed that bicultural identity was the most strongly associated with higher intergenerational conflict in marriage and dating issues.

In order to further examine whether young adults' claims of parents' attitudes towards intercultural relationships were accurate, Study three (chapter nine) investigated parents' attitudes towards rejected intercultural romantic relationships, specifically within the context of cultural identity. Study three demonstrated that Easternized parents were more likely to have a positive reaction towards hypothetical parental rejection. These parents believed that parental rejection was a positive strategy towards the rejected offspring, as rejection indicated a sense of care and support.

The final chapter (chapter 10) provides a brief review of the findings of this thesis and discusses the significance of those findings. It also includes a discussion on the merits of understanding the influence of parental involvement and rejection on their children's romantic relationship decisions through the lens of cultural identity, gender, and acculturation factors.

Chapter 2: Study One Methodology

Participants

Ninety-six females between the ages of 18-27 years and from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds participated in Study One. Participants were recruited from the University of Toronto at Scarborough campus (UTSC) and from the surrounding community in Toronto, Canada. Advertisements were placed in public areas within the community and on campus billboards. The study required participants to be female, between the ages of 18 to 27 years old and comfortable speaking about their culture in a small group setting. Participants were not required to currently be in a romantic relationship of any kind, nor have any experience with intercultural romantic relationships. Participants were also required to have a strong fluency of English in order to participate in group discussions. There were 33 focus groups run in total, with three to five females in each group. Focus groups were run in a social psychology lab located on the UTSC campus following ethics approval (see Appendix B).

Participants in this study belonged to various ethnic groups: East Asian (37), South Asian (21), Caucasian (14), African (7), Middle Eastern (2), Caribbean/West Indian (2), Hispanic/Latina (1), Biracial (8), and Other (4). Participants also belonged to a wide variety of religious backgrounds, including Catholic (17), Christian (15), Muslim (16), Buddhist (15), Hindu (7), Greek Orthodox (1), Sikh (1), Atheist (13), and Spiritual/Agnostic/Other (9). Two participants declined to answer this question.

Participants were divided into one of three groups based on their acculturation level. Acculturation level was assessed through two measures: 1) Ethnic identity, and 2) an adapted item from the Self-Identification item on the Suinn-Lew Asian self-identity acculturation

scale (adapted from Suinn, Ahuna, & Khoo, 1992). The adapted Suinn-Lew Asian self-identity item asked participants "How would you rate yourself?" on a 5 point scale from "very Easternized" to "very Westernized". The original wording of "very Asian" and "mostly Asian" was changed to "very Easternized" to "mostly Easternized" in order to ensure that all non-Westernized individuals were included in this study. Both measures were presented within the screening questionnaire (See Appendix A).

Participants who identified themselves as Caucasian or as African/Black or as Other (i.e., mixed, biracial, or Caribbean) and as "mostly" or "highly" Westernized were placed in the "high acculturated" group. All other individuals who identified as Asian, South Asian, African, Indian or Hispanic or Latino were assessed based on their self-identification item on the Suinn-Lew Asian Acculturation scale to further divide them into either the "low acculturated" or "bicultural" group. The individuals who identified as "mostly" or "highly" Easternized, were placed in the "low acculturated" group and finally, the individuals who identified as "bicultural" were placed in the "bicultural" group. In total, there were 10 low acculturated groups, 11 bicultural groups, and 12 high acculturated groups.

Assigning Caucasian/White and Black individuals to the "highly acculturated" group was done out of consideration of the multifaceted concept of cultural and ethnic identity. For example, a young adult born in Bangladesh, who immigrated to Canada at the age of 3 may very well consider themselves "highly acculturated" to Canadian culture, yet Easternized at home. In contrast, a White young adult who is a 3rd generation Canadian may also consider themselves "highly acculturated", yet still "part Greek" because they celebrate Greek holidays. However, these individuals may not always consider themselves "Bicultural" if they only uphold their traditional values in the private spheres of their home or only prior to adulthood. For many individuals, considering themselves "Bicultural" may mean that they hold both cultural orientations equally, which may not hold true for all immigrant young adults.

Moreover, it can be argued that young adults who are 2nd, 3rd, or 4th generation Canadians are not only undergoing enculturation to Canadian culture, but also an acculturation process. While their acculturation process is dissimilar to the process of acculturation for a Chinese immigrant, many White/Black young adults believe that they held different values and beliefs from their parents, especially when concerning issues related to dating. Since acculturation can be defined as "a merging of cultures as a result of prolonged contact", it may be that young adults who are growing up in a vastly different cultural landscape from their parents' generation must negotiate changes in beliefs and values within their family. So, White or Black individuals who are raised in Canada may hold highly similar values and beliefs to their parents', they may still have to negotiate and merge newer, more contemporary ideas into their intergenerational relationship. As a result of these considerations, a label of "highly acculturated" was disseminated from "bicultural" and was allowed to include all ethnicities, including White and Black individuals.

The low acculturated group comprised 31 participants who self-identified as "very Easternized" or "mostly Easternized" and had ethnically originated from a collectivistic culture ($M = 2.00$, $SD = .931$). The "bicultural" group comprised 32 participants who self-identified as "Bicultural" and had ethnically originated from a collectivistic culture ($M = 3.19$, $SD = .859$). Finally, the "high acculturated" group comprised 33 participants who self-identified as "very Westernized" or "mostly Westernized" and had ethnically originated from an individualistic culture ($M = 4.21$, $SD = .740$). There was a strong positive correlation between ethnic identity and acculturation group, r_s (94) = .741, $p = .01$. A Kruskal Wallis H test determined that the distribution of ethnic identity median scores were statistically significantly different among acculturation groups, X^2 (2) = 52.210, $p < .0001$. The post-hoc analysis revealed statistically significantly differences in median ethnic identity scores between the

low acculturated (2.00) and bicultural (3.00) groups, the low acculturated (2.00) and highly acculturated (4.00) groups, and the high acculturated (4.00) and the bicultural (3.00) groups.

Materials

The focus group manual (Morgan, Krueger, & King, 1998) was used as a guide for developing and creating the focus group questions used in Study One. An initial list of open-ended questions was created by the primary researcher and reviewed with her supervisor and research colleagues. The aim was to devise a list of questions that tapped into key themes around the overall research question; i.e., how do young adult females perceive and respond to parental involvement and rejection in intercultural romantic relationship decisions. However, it is important to note that not all focus group questions discussed relationships that were solely intercultural. This approach allowed participants who did not have personal experience with dating cross-culturally to have equal opportunity to engage in the focus group sessions. This was done specifically in mind for the low acculturated and bicultural groups whose members may have little to no experience or desire in such relationships. If Study One's focus group questions and participant recruitment focused solely on females who had experience in intercultural relationships, certain thematic categories may not have been explored (e.g., negative aspects of intercultural relationships, race and ethnic preferences). More specifically, only questions three and nine explicitly focused on cultural differences (see Table 1). This allowed for a more exploratory approach, while maintaining the aim to further understand females' attitudes on parental involvement and rejection of intercultural relationships. Furthermore, this semi-structured approach to generating focus group data ensured that every group was asked the same questions (for consistency across groups) while leaving room for the researcher to probe and follow up individual responses that may have

differed according to acculturation status. Table 1 presents the full list of focus group questions.

Procedure

All focus groups were conducted in English. Demographic and biographical information was collected during the screening process (see Appendix A). Each focus group question was asked in the same order during each focus group session but participants were given the chance to have an open-ended discussion following everyone's turn. This allowed each question to be answered by all participants but also allowed for natural and more wide ranging themes to be raised. Depending on the specific focus group session, between three to five participants were seated at a round table with a microphone in the middle. The researcher sat behind the group and moderated the conversation when necessary to ask a new question, probe responses, or conclude the discussion of a question. Each participant was given the entire list of focus group questions but was instructed to hide later questions with another sheet of paper. This was done in order to ensure that participants stayed on topic and would not be primed by later questions. Participants were also given pens in order to allow them to write down any thoughts if they so wished. However, they were told that the researcher would not collect their papers at the end of each session. Once the researcher delivered each question, participants were given the opportunity to write down their thoughts and were asked if they were ready before commencing. Participants had a small sign in front of them to indicate their participant number which ranged from 1 to 5. This allowed participants to know whose turn it was to answer the question first when the researcher ended each question with, "…and this question will start off with participant 1." Each question began on a rotating basis to ensure that each participant had the opportunity to begin or end each question. This also ensured that any one participant would not feel pressured or placed "on the spot" by having to

continuously begin each discussion. Further, it also ensured that more confident and outspoken participants did not dominate any focus group session. However, participants were told that they were able to skip any questions they did not want to answer.

Participants were also told to address each other by their participant number in order to ensure that the transcripts would not contain any personal or identifying information. However, many individuals participated in the focus group sessions with their friends and so, were told that if they naturally stated their friends' names, these would be removed during the transcribing phase. Before each question was asked, participants were told that the microphone was only recording during their discussion.

All focus group sessions ran between 60 to 90 minutes. Each participant was given an equal chance to respond to each question. The researcher probed responses with follow-up questions in order to elicit greater insights. Follow-up questions included probing questions (i.e., How did you feel about that? What did you do then?), clarifying questions (i.e., What do you mean by that? Can you give an example?), and challenging questions (i.e., What would happen if I changed the word influence to control?) that were used to get more accurate and in-depth responses (Krueger, 1998b). Following the completion of each question, open-ended discussions were permitted in order to ensure a more natural conversation. The researcher would end each question by asking, "Is there anything else you want to add to this question?" If participants spent more than 15 minutes on one question, the researcher would end the discussion. She would state, "For the purpose of keeping time, let's move on to the next question" and would gain participants' consent before ending the discussion by asking "Is this okay? Do you have any last thoughts to add to this question?". This not only ensured that focus group sessions moved along smoothly and on time, but also that participants did not feel cut off.

Participants were also asked to give examples so as to avoid hypothetical answers. This also allowed them to relate each question to their own experiences. If participants had no experiences with dating or parental involvement and rejection, they were told to give examples from the experiences of their female friends or family members or were told just to perceive or imagine what might happen. After the closing question, participants were asked if they had anything to add that they felt they may have missed. Participants were debriefed and were given the space to have a short open discussion with their focus group colleagues before the focus group session came to an end.

Data Collection

The focus group sessions were recorded, and the primary researcher and several research assistants transcribed each session for the purpose of analysis. Care was taken by transcribers to delete any mentioned names in order to ensure that participants' and their stories would not be identifiable in subsequent reports. For the purpose of analysis, participants were assigned a participant number. In order to maintain accuracy, audio clips were transcribed in verbatim. If a participant's speech was difficult to understand, it was transcribed as "inaudible" in order to avoid misinterpretation. However, filler words (i.e., um, like, ah, you know) were removed for the purpose of flow. Incomplete sentences were also deleted. An ellipsis were used for run-on sentences and [*sic*] was used immediately after a quoted word or sentence to indicate that grammatical errors were transcribed in verbatim in order to communicate the lack of transcription error. This was important as many of the low acculturated participants spoke English as a second language and care was needed to ensure that their dialogue was not misinterpreted by transcription editing.

Transcripts averaged around 20 pages in length. Transcription turnaround time varied upon the transcriber; however, the average length of transcription took approximately four hours per focus group session. Once the final transcripts were created, all audio clips from the focus groups were destroyed. Audio clips were destroyed in order to uphold high ethical standards and ensure the anonymity and/or confidentiality of participants and the data obtained from them.

Data coding. The primary researcher conducted data coding. All focus group transcripts were coded through NVivo 10 using typological analysis (Ayres & Knafl, 2008). This strategy involves the development of distinct categories that relate to each other without hierarchical arrangement. According to Ayres and Knafl (2008), typologies may be used to distinguish among behaviours such as parenting styles or learning styles, and so, this method was used to divide the focus group's data into reoccurring main themes and sub-themes. Before the first stage of analysis began, the overall objective of the study was reviewed and a list of anticipatory themes was created (e.g., intergenerational conflict, parental rejection, tradition). Following the completion of the first few focus group sessions, the primary researcher reviewed the transcripts in order to reaffirm the list of anticipatory major themes. From the transcripts, key ideas or themes were marked as codes (i.e., *nodes* in NVivo 10). When a new topic outside of the anticipatory themes presented itself in the transcript, the researcher labelled it as it appeared (e.g., gender roles, virginity, fear of pregnancy). As any subsequent responses that fit under pre-existing themes emerged, the appropriate labels were attached.

During analysis, the researcher considered the context, extensiveness, intensity and specificity of responses. This was important because of the wide range of ethnic, cultural, racial, and religious backgrounds of each focus group participant. Individuals' responses were

coded as whole “chunks” to ensure the context of the dialogue was clear. Further, dialogue that was extensively repeated was coded as many times as necessary, as it indicated an important perception of the participants. While this may mean that certain themes appear repetitive in the reporting of results, the repetition of themes signaled the importance of certain concepts to particular acculturation groups. The intensity and specificity of dialogue was captured by the quotes provided by participants. Thus, greater attention in coding was given to dialogue that provided actual, first person examples, as opposed to hypothetical responses. This process allowed for a systematic review of the transcripts, as recommended by Krueger (1998a).

The first stage of coding ended once several focus group sessions under each acculturation category had been coded. This allowed the researcher to gain a basic impression of the overall findings before continuing to expand upon them. The researcher and her supervisor then reviewed the list of themes and together decided upon the further categorization of the data. If a theme was found to be redundant or non-existing in the dialogue, it was either deleted or merged into an appropriate category. This process also allowed for the researcher and her supervisor to refine the language of each category to fully grasp the conceptual framework behind each theme. Thus, once a full list of major categories had been created, the researcher and her supervisor reached consensus on themes that were major, minor and ones that should be merged or deleted. This not only ensured the validity of the coding procedure but also allowed for data reduction (see Krueger, 1998a).

In the second stage of analysis, all transcripts were coded in their entirety and selected quotes and dialogue for each main theme and sub theme were chosen as examples for inclusion in the following findings chapters. The third and final stage of analysis involved reaching full consensus on thematic categories with a trained research assistant. This research assistant was chosen as a secondary coder due to her experience with invigilating the largest

number of focus groups (n = 5) following the primary researcher (n = 24). Once the researcher and her supervisor determined the main themes and sub-themes, the research assistant reviewed all the coded dialogue to ensure that the content was effectively captured within the thematic categories and subcategories. This in turn helped to ensure the reliability of the coding process and outcomes.

Identified Themes

The themes identified within Study One's findings are listed below. Each of these major thematic categories also includes several minor categories that exist within its structure. These themes are presented in no particular order; however, each of the minor categories discussed exists only within its parent theme. Additionally, Study One examined attitudes and experiences towards both intercultural romantic relationships and romantic relationships in general.

Perceived parental attitudes towards daughters' dating relationships themes. The analysis of responses to the focus group questions around the perception of parental attitudes toward daughters' dating decisions revealed two main themes: positive attitudes and negative attitudes. The analysis further revealed eight sub-themes beneath the positive and negative attitude themes (see Table 2 for a full list). There were two sub-themes falling under the positive attitude category, which included *obedience and respect for family* and *Westernized parental values.* The first positive sub-theme was primarily found among the low acculturated focus groups. This category described a tendency for young women to believe that their parents had every right to control their behaviours, mainly because it was reasoned that obedience to their elders was expected of them. The second sub-theme, Westernized parental values, depicted high acculturated individuals' belief that their parents were open to diversity

and were more accepting of intercultural relationships. This positive attitude towards dating allowed these participants to feel more open and lenient in their choices.

In comparison, sub-themes falling under the negative attitude category comprised six sub-themes. *Protection of the daughters within the home* described a tendency for parents to believe that female offspring were safer within the domestic sphere of the home. *Gender role expectations* described experiences of females to perceive that parents held much higher standards or expectations for their daughters due to the little opportunities they felt females had. *Chastity and reputation concerns* was an important thematic category for all acculturation groups as it detailed the unanimous experience of females being told by parents that a lack of chastity was directly related to a negative reputation. *Need for protection* explained why parents were particularly strict with female offspring (i.e., due to their belief that they were incapable of protecting themselves, both physically and emotionally, in romantic relationships). *Need for financial independence* described the importance of gaining more freedom from their parents. Finally, *arranged versus love marriages* detailed a thematic category found only in the bicultural groups, where differences in these types of marriages are discussed in relation to parents' negative attitudes towards love marriages.

Parental attitudes towards specifically intercultural dating relationships themes. Although Study One's findings mainly focused on attitudes towards perceived parental involvement, the topic of intercultural dating relationships was discussed amongst participants. Generally, each of the acculturation groups discussed how parents may perceive intercultural romantic relationships and whether their attitudes would be positive or negative. Two sub-thematic categories existed within the parent theme: *race or ethnic preferences*, which detailed whether parents preferred a romantic partner of a specific background, and *positive aspects of intercultural dating*, which discussed the benefits that parents may reap from intercultural relationships (see Table 3).

Parental involvement themes. The analysis of responses to the acceptability of parental involvement in young adult children's romantic relationships revealed three, major themes: *acceptance of parental involvement* (see Table 4); *contingent acceptance of parental involvement*, (see Table 5), and *rejection of parental involvement,* (see Table 6). As can be seen in their respective tables, a number of sub-themes were identified under each of these three main themes. Some of these sub-themes were universally important to all three acculturation groups; others were salient to only one or two of the acculturation groups (to be discussed in the subsequent findings chapters).

Acceptance of parental involvement themes. Within the acceptance of parental involvement category, there were six minor sub-themes that described scenarios which may entice young adults to allow their parents to be involved in their dating decisions (see Table 4). *Signs of parental acceptance* described the signs of acceptance perceived by participants and the favourable aspects of an intercultural partner. *Parents as guides and objective observers* described the experiences of young adults who believed that parental involvement was beneficial to the learning process. The thematic category *transition to marriage* detailed the importance young adults placed upon parents to be accepting of their romantic partner before their relationship could become more established. *Parental regard for offspring well-being* described the belief that parental involvement reflected parents' need to ensure that their offspring made the best mate choice possible. *Importance of parents and parental blessings* was a special thematic category for bicultural participants that described the importance of parents for immigrant children, as they highly valued parental approval of major decisions. Finally, *consequences of rejecting parental involvement* was an important category for low acculturated individuals which described the negative consequences of not allowing parents to have a say in important decisions. Overall, these thematic categories comprised attitudes

from all acculturation groups on the importance of parental involvement in relationship matters.

Contingent acceptance of parental involvement themes. Within the contingent acceptance of parental involvement category, there existed eight minor sub-thematic categories (see Table 5). *Developmental stage and age* described the need for parental involvement to end once young adults had reached maturity. *Issues with control* described a boundary between acceptable parental involvement and unacceptable control. *Need for respect* described young adults' need for independence and autonomy, as a sign of parental respect and trust. *Differences in values and ideals* described the intergenerational conflict young adults faced as a result of differences in what they and their parents valued in potential romantic partners. *Protection from abusive relationships* detailed the need for parental involvement only in instances of partner abuse, as a form of protection. *Meddling versus caring* described beliefs that most forms of parental involvement were irritating and therefore, unnecessary. *Stage of relationship* described the belief that parental involvement was only necessary when the romantic relationship became "serious". Finally, *sex and intimacy issues* described difficulties in communicating with parents about certain aspects of dating relationships.

Rejection of parental involvement themes. The main category of rejection of parental involvement included four sub-themes (see Table 6). One of the most important and reoccurring themes was *desire for independence*, which described the need for autonomy in young adults. *Pressure from parents* described parental involvement in terms of pressuring the couple to marry or break up. *Divergent values* described the problems involved in holding divergent values from parents and the impact these would have on their relationships. Finally, *relationship with parents* described a category of avoiding parental involvement in order to protect the relationship with parents.

Negotiation strategies following perceived parental rejection themes. The final findings chapter will discuss the "negotiation strategies" that emerged from Study One's findings. Negotiation strategies are defined as plans of action following perceived parental rejection of an adult child's romantic relationship. This theme included five major thematic categories (see Table 7), which will be discussed fully in a later chapter. *Relationship dissolution* involved the acceptance of perceived parental rejection and terminating the relationship. *Rebuffing parental disapproval* involved young adults' refusal to allow parents' negative opinions to affect their relationship. *Adjusting parents to match partner's values* described a negotiation strategy that participants perceived they would use to persuade parents to recognize a romantic partner's positive aspects. However, *adjusting partner to match parents' values* was employed in order to ensure that romantic partners modified a previously rejected aspect of themselves in order to please their parents. Finally, *no experience in parental disapproval* detailed experiences of participants who believed their parents would never disapprove of their romantic relationships.

Overview of the Structure of Study One's Findings

In order to fully address the numerous pages of rich text elicited by Study One's focus groups, it was imperative to focus clearly on emergent themes, both major and minor. Further, and in order to provide as much structure and coherence as possible to the findings, they are presented here within four chapters. The first three chapters (Chapters 3-5) describe the focus group findings according to participants' self-described acculturation level (high, low, and bicultural). The results pertaining to negotiation strategies following parental rejection of a participant's romantic relationship are presented in a fourth chapter (Chapter 6). The overall findings are then integrated and discussed in Chapter 7.

Table 1

Focus Group Questions

Question Order	Question	Type
1	Are parents stricter, or more stringent, with their daughters or sons? Give examples.	Leading
2	Are mothers or fathers stricter on their young adult children?	
3	How would your parents feel about you dating someone of another culture? Why?	Key
4	What are some signs of acceptance from parents of their young adult's romantic relationships?	
5	What are some signs of rejection from parents of their young adult's romantic relationships?	
6	Do you think parents are more rejecting of romantic relationships of their female or male young adult?	Key
7	Do you think parents should be involved in their young adult's romantic relationships?	Key
8	Should parents have any influence over their young adult's romantic relationships?	
9	Do you believe culture plays a role in how involved parents are in their young adult's romantic relationships? Give examples from your own culture.	Key
10	If your parents rejected a romantic partner of yours, how would that affect your relationship with that person?	Closing
11	Is there anything you would like to add or that we may have missed?	Final

Table 2

Main and Sub-themes of Perceived Attitudes Towards Daughters' Dating Relationships

Main Themes and Sub-themes	Category	Description
Positive attitudes	Main	positive reaction, accepting society's gendered rules, traditional and submissive thoughts and values
Obedience and respect for family	Sub	filial piety, honouring parents, up keeping traditional values, parents governing females' behaviours
Westernized parental values	Sub	Open-minded, laid back about dating, no strict rules regarding dating
Negative attitudes	Main	negative reactions, previous pessimistic life experiences, disgruntled attitudes, dismissing gendered rules, restricted freedom due to gender
Protection of the daughters within the home	Sub	domesticity of females, earlier curfews, chastising events occurring outside during evenings
Gender role expectations	Sub	higher academic achievement due to lack of opportunities for females in top positions (i.e., glass ceiling effect), romantic relationships as distractions against future goals
Chastity and reputation concerns	Sub	restrained sexuality, poor outlook for marriage following negative reputation, indecency of losing virginity before marriage, negative stereotypes of "whores/sluts"
Need for protection	Sub	weakness of females, inability to fight back rapists/attackers, propensity of female victims, ability to be overpowered by males
Need for financial independence	Sub	need for financial stability, link between financial independence and maturity

Arranged versus love marriages	Sub	need for dating before marriage, lack of 'modernity' in arranged marriages

Table 3

Main Themes and Sub-themes of Parental Attitudes Towards Specifically Intercultural Dating Relationships

Main themes and Sub-themes	Category	Description
Parental attitudes towards specifically intercultural dating relationships	Main	Disapproval of relationship, fear of differing values, 'too many barriers', loss of cultural identity
Race or ethnic preferences	Sub	Stereotypical attitudes towards minorities, preference for Caucasians
Positive aspects of intercultural dating	Sub	many existing intercultural couples in family, diverse nature of Canada, openness towards other cultures, exoticism of other cultures, low traditional ideals, high contemporary outlook

Table 4

Main Themes and Sub-themes Related to the Acceptability of Parental Involvement in Adult Children's Romantic Relationships

Main Themes and Sub-themes	Category	Description
Acceptance of parental involvement	Main	allowing parent to be involved; taking advice; understanding parents want the best for child; parents have input in relationship decisions
Signs of parental acceptance	Sub	involving partner in family events, family dinners, accepting partner as family member
Parents as guides and objective observers	Sub	parents as educators; parents as guides; parents as role models; parents have wisdom (e.g., previous relationship experience, have previous sexual experience)
Transition to marriage	Sub	need for parental approval, allowing parents to see partner as future addition to family
Parental regard for offspring wellbeing	Sub	parents wanted best for child, parents as 2nd perspective, parents giving honest opinions
Importance of parents and parental 'blessings'	Sub	family harmony, filial piety, strict adherence to traditional way of life, belief in strong collectivistic ideals
Consequences of rejecting parental involvement	Sub	losing family as a support net, losing your strong ties to family, disownment, facing parental rejection

Table 5

Main Themes and Sub-themes Related to the Contingent Acceptance of Parental Involvement in Adult Children's Romantic Relationships

Main Themes and Sub-themes	Category	Description
Contingent acceptance of parental involvement	Main	magnitude of involvement dependent on several variables or conditions; minimum or maximum levels of behaviours expected; low tolerance or "drawing the line" of certain behaviours e.g. controlling behaviours
Developmental stage and age	Sub	certain age limits exist where involvement is needed e.g. under the age of consent; young adults over 18 need independence
Issues with control	Sub	dictating young adults, enforcing strict/harsh rules and regulations, forcing relationship dissolution following rejection, forcing young adults to marry (i.e., forced marriage, early marriage)
Need for respect	Sub	allowing privacy, need for autonomy and independence, ability to make own decisions
Differences in values and ideals	Sub	unattainable standards, unfair treatment of romantic partner, parents' values far too traditional/conservative
Protection from abusive relationships	Sub	enforcing rules when offspring's partner is abusive, recognizing signs of abuse, becoming involved in dangerous situations
Meddling versus caring	Sub	overt parental involvement as equal to being treated as a child, inability to make own rules, excessive questions
Stage of relationship	Sub	parental involvement occurring before engagements or marriage, involvement needed during sexual immaturity (as protection)

Sex and intimacy issues	Sub	inability to open up to parents, inability to be seen as an adult, parents rebuffing sexual needs

Table 6

Main Themes and Sub-themes Related to the Rejection of Parental Involvement in Adult Children's Romantic Relationships

Main Themes and Sub-themes	Category	Description
Rejection of parental involvement	Main	hiding relationship decisions; little to no communication with parents about relationship matters; rebuff parents' advice or suggestions
Desire for independence	Sub	Need for ability to make own decisions, importance of autonomy, need for mutual trust
Pressure from parents	Sub	high expectations from parents e.g. unattainable qualities in potential partners; unmatched goals between parents and offspring e.g. parents desiring marriage before offspring is ready
Divergent values	Sub	Difference in parents' and individuals' values, inability to accept parents' traditional ideals
Relationship with parents	Sub	Parental involvement equalled automatic disapproval, inflexibility of parents

Table 7

Negotiation Strategies Following Perceived Parental Rejection

Main Themes	Category	Description
Relationship dissolution	Main	Breaking up, termination of relationship
Rebuffing parental disapproval	Main	Disowning family, spurning parents, refusing parents' opinions
Adjusting parents to match partner's values	Main	Changing parents' mind, allowing parents to get to know partner, displaying partner's redeeming qualities
Adjusting partner to match parents' values	Main	Changing partner, asking partner to adopt certain values
No experience in parental disapproval	Main	Lack of parental rejection, highly permissive parenting

Chapter 3: Study One Results, Part 1

The results of Study One will be presented over the course of this and the next four chapters. This first chapter will focus on the highly acculturated participants and will discuss: a) their perceptions of parental attitudes toward daughters' dating relationships; and b) their views concerning the acceptability or otherwise of parental involvement in their own dating relationships. Chapters four and five will discuss the same issues from the perspectives of the low acculturated (Easternized) and bicultural participants respectively. Finally, chapter six will discuss participants' proposed negotiation strategies following perceived parental non-acceptance of their own dating relationships. It is important to note, however, that participants were asked to speak about both intercultural romantic relationships and monocultural romantic relationships. When participants speak about intercultural romantic relationships specifically, it will be indicated.

Perceived Parental Attitudes Toward Daughters' Dating Relationships From the Perspective of Highly Acculturated Young Women

Of the 33 participants in highly acculturated groups, 43% identified as Caucasian, followed by 25% who identified as biracial, and 21% who identified as African-American. Nearly a quarter (24%) identified as Christian; another quarter (24%) identified as Catholic, and 33% identified as agnostic/atheist. They came from highly educated families with 90% indicating that both parents had college or university degrees. They also had a long history of living in Canada, with 82% of these participants being 3rd or 4th generation Canadians. It is not surprising, then, that these participants considered themselves to be highly acculturated to Western culture.

Positive Parental Attitudes Toward Daughters' Dating Relationships

Westernized parental values. A prominent view amongst the highly acculturated females was that their parents were relatively Westernized (i.e., laid back and open) in their approach to dating. They believed that their parents' experiences with Canadian culture allowed them to appreciate diversity, which in turn encouraged them to be more lenient and accepting of their daughters' involvement in a romantic relationship. This process of Westernization was seen to be instrumental in generating tolerance, with one participant able to compare the reactions of her traditional mother and her progressive father. She explained:

> "She grew up in the Philippines and my dad grew up in Canada. He eases her out a bit because I know originally when we were younger, she was so strict and she was like, (note: "like" in this instance indicates an individual repeating what another individual had said earlier) '*You can't have a boyfriend until after you're done university'* and then as we grew older, she westernized herself a little bit (i.e., became more open)…but definitely, even when I was in early high school, she was a lot stricter than my dad." (HA Group 11)

Interestingly, for several biracial or mixed race participants in the high acculturation groups, becoming romantically involved was seen as relatively effortless. Two such participants argued that their experiences with dating were more negotiable due to their parents' own intercultural relationships. One said:

> "My mom and my dad are from two completely different cultures so that mix allows more leeway into what I'm allowed to do or how involved they are in my relationships." (HA Group 2)

While this participant did not further explain the association between her parents' intercultural relationship and their level of involvement in her dating decisions, she seemed to

relate parental intercultural relationships with more tolerance and openness. In the same group, another participant explained this connection. She stated:

> "I have a White father and a Burmese mother, who left Burma when she was four so she's basically White too, and because we are Canadian and we have tolerance and acceptance and politeness…that's how they tolerated and accepted and were polite about my (intercultural) relationship." (HA Group 2)

Negative Parental Attitudes Towards Daughters' Dating Relationships

Need for protection. Although many participants reported positive parental attitudes toward daughters' dating relationships, there was also a strong consensus amongst these highly acculturated individuals that parents preferred daughters to stay at home, typically in order to be protected from the outside, non-domestic sphere. In addition, although many participants detailed the numerous domestic chores they had to complete, especially compared to their brothers or male cousins, there was an underlying idea that females were expected to be homebound for enjoyment as well.

> "My parents are content if we stay home and we just do fun things versus going out and being out late because they don't really know what we're doing. I guess they like to know what we're doing…(and know) where we are." (HA Group 11)

These participants suggested that making home-life enjoyable was offered by parents as a way of keeping their daughters at home to protect them from dangers outside the home. In particular, there was an emphasis on parental beliefs that daughters were prone to attacks outside the home and needed protection from rape.

> "You hear so many stories about girls getting raped and going to a club and get drunk. You don't really hear stories about some girl drugging some guy and taking him out of

> the club so…I think that's why they're more concerned (about girls staying home)." (HA Group 10)

Along with perceiving daughters to be more physically vulnerable than sons, many participants argued that parents were stricter with daughters than sons due to females' emotional vulnerability. Specifically, participants argued that parents believed that females needed extra "protection" since they typically became more "emotionally attached" in romantic relationships.

> "I wouldn't say historically speaking but stereotypically speaking, girls are more emotional and vulnerable. It only hinders a point that we do need that extra protection and extra care in the eyes of our parents. Boys, not so much." (HA Group 10)

Need for financial independence. Interestingly, there were also some practical concerns that highly acculturated participants believed influenced their parents' attitudes: specifically, the difficulty for females in obtaining high-paying jobs, compared to males. This was reflected in the perception that many parents actually had higher academic expectations of daughters than of sons.

> "Both my parents have university degrees and I think both of them think a girl will get more success in life by going to university. Whereas a boy...I think they think if you can just find a good paying job, he doesn't necessarily have to have a university education." (HA Group 4)

Participants noted that there were fewer job opportunities for females following graduation and hence, less opportunity for financial independence. Consequently, they argued that parents were stricter with their daughters with respect to achieving academically in order to improve their employment prospects.

> "They don't want me to be in any romantic relationships at the moment because of studies and focus. It ties back to the question before, how as a female going to school and in this country…in the world, it's very hard for women to be in the same level as men. I think they're right, they want me to focus more on my education and make sure I have a degree so that whenever I'm facing the world, it'll be easier to get a job than not have to finish school." (HA Group 4)

This second quote is interesting in that it suggests that some parents may be worried that romantic relationships are too distracting for daughters. In particular, because parents appear to hold a belief that females become more emotionally attached within their romantic relationships, they may not be able to concentrate on their studies after acquiring a romantic partner. Parents who may worry about this happening may enforce stricter dating rules to ensure that daughters concentrate on their studies and "getting ahead".

Chastity and reputation concerns. Unsurprisingly, the belief that a daughter's reputation was easily damaged was a concern shared unanimously among all acculturation groups. Although this theme was not as prominent among the highly acculturated participants as within the other acculturation groups, these participants understood that females had more to "lose" by gaining a negative sexual reputation. Some participants commented that parents were concerned for daughters who dated "too often", for their reputations would be questioned. Participants also explained that many parents believed that the stigma around "promiscuous" females could have disastrous implications for their future mate choices. This may explain why some participants believed that females were perceived to be more vulnerable than males in relationships, since visible signs of unrestrained sexuality (i.e., pregnancy, multiple partners, casual sexual outlook) are not relevant for males.

> "My parents would just be generally more concerned of who their daughters were seeing, as opposed to their males, just because in the back of my parents head they'd just be like, '*oh my gosh, they can get pregnant*'. As opposed to the guys my parents could say, '*oh, well you know, it could've been someone else*' and they wouldn't have to deal with the

> stigma of having a pregnant teenage daughter…They're always afraid of us getting pregnant for some reason." (HA Group 1)

Overall, then, highly acculturated females perceived parents in general to be more controlling and strict towards daughters due to beliefs that they were more vulnerable than sons. A daughter's vulnerability was believed to stem from the impression that females are emotionally vulnerable and physically weaker than males and so, cannot protect themselves from sexual assault. Further, many participants perceived that parents believed that an "unchaste" female had a damaged reputation and would not gain a high quality mate. As a result, parents were perceived to believe that excessive dating in females would have to be controlled.

Parental Attitudes Towards Specifically Intercultural Dating Relationships

With respect to parental reactions to specifically intercultural dating, a lack of strong cultural or religious ideals was frequently cited as explaining why parents would be "fine" with it. For example:

> "I think they'd be fine with it. There wouldn't be an issue with religion or anything because we go to church on Christmas Eve but that's it. So, they don't care, they just want everyone to be happy." (HA Group 3)

Another participant argued that cross-cultural tolerance was a result of the number of culturally diverse marriages in her own family. Similarly, another participant claimed that because of the high rates of intermarriages within her mother's background, her mother was more accepting of intercultural relationships than her father. She explained:

> "Whereas in my mother's side, it's coming to a point where you can marry any ethnicity, it doesn't really matter. I feel like it's because my cousins have broken the barrier, and brought people of other ethnicities to family events. Whereas in my father's side, whoever you bring is Asian descent [*sic*]." (HA Group 6)

The idea that familial experiences with intercultural relationships could "break the ice" in relation to their acceptability was mentioned by several participants. Further, there was discussion of the ways in which participants' families had become more accepting of intercultural relationships after their experiences with other, peripheral intercultural relationships and increasing exposure to Canadian culture generally. For example, one participant explained that the inclusion of non-Asian individuals in Asian media and the popularity of intercultural relationships on TV promoted increased tolerance towards these relationships.

> "I think that Asians can marry Whites now because of so many television shows. There's more Asian celebrities and they're often with White counterparts. Also, I feel like a lot of Caucasians are entering the Asian cultures. If I see Asian movies, a lot of white people are in the movies speaking Chinese or speaking Mandarin, and people are like, '*Wow! They can do so much and they can speak another language.*' There's also a famous Indian guy that was in a Chinese film as well and there's a white singer who lives in China now. I feel like that with that stuff (i.e., increasing diversity) in the media, more people are more accepting." (HA Group 6)

While many individuals in the high acculturated focus groups stated that their parents were open minded about their daughters' intercultural dating, a few did discuss potentially negative attitudes towards culturally dissimilar romantic partners. The main concern was that some parents would perceive culturally dissimilar individuals to be just too different from them and hence, incompatible in values, ideals, and beliefs. For example, one Caucasian participant had previously dated two Sri Lankan individuals. While her parents had hesitated

with her first partner, who had attended their church, they were more concerned with the second non-Catholic partner. The difference in religious values seemed to exacerbate his cultural dissimilarity from them. She explained:

> "With my first boyfriend, he was Sri Lankan but he was also from the church so my parents were kind of okay, because they knew at least some of his values were similar but my parents would always kind of be like, '*But he's gonna want you to stay at home…'* and I'm like, '*No, mom…relax.'* Second boyfriend went more so off that tangent. He was also Sri Lankan but not from our church and my parents were really concerned – they told me that they weren't pleased about it." (HA Group 1)

The necessity for perceived cultural similarity was especially important for highly acculturated individuals with highly traditional parents. For example, the following participant's quote was revealing as she stated that her father's hesitancy towards intercultural dating was due to his insistence in preserving his traditional values. Her father seemed to believe that intercultural relationships brought about more difficulties, as there were more issues to navigate that culturally similar relationships would avoid. She said:

> "My dad I know for a fact that he would not approve of me dating someone of a different culture. My mom was okay with it at first but dad came out and said to me '*I wouldn't mind if you had a boyfriend, if he was Oriental* (a colonial term for East Asian)*'*. He wants me to stick with my own culture and my race because...I have mixed ethnicities in my family too and my dad feels like, 'O*h, your kid's not going to look like you'.* So, he's scared that that's what I'm going to have to go through. He doesn't want me to adapt to a different lifestyle. He wants me to stick to with what his ways are…" (HA Group 11)

Similarly:

> "If it was a culture that's closer to our own, say Hispanic, because they're also Christian and they have a lot of similar ways of life, they wouldn't have too much of a problem with it. They probably wouldn't have any problem with it at all actually. But if it came to

> like Indian or an Asian culture or something like that, they'd probably be pretty uncomfortable with it just because we're from a smaller town, so they don't really know much about other cultures so it'd be really just awkward for them." (HA Group 3)

This perception that intercultural relationships produce more difficulties for couples to negotiate was a major discouragement towards intercultural dating for some of the highly acculturated participants. Other participants, too, despite being highly acculturated, believed that a partner's religious affiliation was crucial to choosing a potential mate. They argued against dating a person with dissimilar religious beliefs on the basis that this would contradict their own understandings. For example:

> "I think religion's just something that goes…it's not really skin deep. It's something that's really personal to you and if you don't have someone that shares the same beliefs as you...if you don't believe in the same God or with Christianity, you believe that Jesus was the saviour, if someone else is really against that like, '*No, he wasn't!'*...you're just not going to get along. If it's something really special to you, like your religion, they're not going to mesh and you're going to end up having fights over it." (HA Group 3)

Many of these participants also argued that parents who had not been exposed to different beliefs were more inclined to reject religiously dissimilar individuals, owing to their negative preconceived notions about them. Participants perceived that these negative preconceived beliefs would be the largest barrier for some parents. Two participants' views follow:

> "She (her mother) has a lot of Jewish friends. I'm Christian and she has a lot of Jewish friends so I think she'd be okay if I dated a Jewish boy. But I think Muslim or Sikh, they're so much further different from Christianity and Jewish…I don't know if she would start to have an issue then [*sic*]." (HA Group 4)

> "I think it's because they don't understand other cultures…they just assume they're not gonna treat their women right. There's stigmas with other cultures…Middle Eastern es-

> pecially, they think they're gonna dominate the wife instead of caring for her [*sic*]." (HA Group 6)

In line with perceived parental attitudes, one participant highlighted her perceived view of the differences between her ideals and those of Muslims. This was an interesting exclusionary criteria for a few participants who believed that Muslim partners would be far too traditional in their views of women and that this value would negatively affect their romantic relationship. She explained:

> "I think culture does a role in how involved your parents are…because I don't want to sound racist but my mom always says if somebody is too traditional and I'm not just talking about an Indian or a Muslim race…like anybody, they're not open minded pretty much. If they're from an Indian or a Muslim culture, because they're too set in their ways…all they know is their culture." (HA Group 7)

These findings suggest that intercultural relationships that are religiously dissimilar might be the most difficult for parents to accept. However, there were also some highly acculturated individuals who believed that parents would disapprove of intercultural relationships with partners from certain ethnic backgrounds. Clearly, although all individuals in these focus groups self-identified as highly acculturated, this did not necessarily mean that their parents also did so. Highly acculturated individuals tended to be 3rd generation Canadian or "older" (i.e., whose family had been in Canada for more than three generations). However, for the few individuals who were 1st generation Canadian, their parents had immigrated to Canada. This history could explain their retention of traditional values. One participant addressed this dichotomy in mate choice values by stating:

> "I feel like with my dad's side they are very strict and traditional, much of them are immigrants or refugees that came here. They are very traditional in marriage. You have to marry someone of Asian descent." (HA Group 6)

Another participant gave a personal example of the ethnic preferences her parents held for her and her sister:

> "I know how my parents would feel because my sister was dating a Caucasian. They did not take it well at all...but now they've softened up and they've accepted him. But deep down they would definitely prefer somebody that was Indian as well [*sic*]." (HA Group 6)

When asked why her parents preferred an Indian mate for her, she explained:

> "They just want an Indian boy because Indian boys are good. I think it's also a competition thing. They have brothers and sisters whose children are dating successful Indian engineers, doctors, or lawyers. They want something to compare to." (HA Group 6)

For this Indian participant, there was a cultural stigma attached towards families who did not make acceptable mate choices. She suggested that for traditional, Indian families, Indian partners were considered appropriate mate choices due to their similarity in cultural values. This was supported by another participant who believed that parents also presumed Caucasians to have more similar values to South Asian individuals, in comparison to Black individuals. Again, this was due to her parents' proximity to Caucasians in their community. She said:

> "If I came home with a black individual, my parents might have a heart attack. With a white person my parents would be like, '*Oh okay, they're not that bad*'. White people are generally harmless…but I know that they would definitely lose their minds of I came home with a Black person. (Investigator: Why?)…They associate danger and not good things with Black people." (HA Group 6)

The cultural stigma associated with Black mates for traditional parents was just as taboo as Muslim mates for other, less traditional parents. For example, one Caucasian participant recounted how her mother outwardly rejected romantic relationships with Muslim mates for her offspring. She elaborated:

> "My mom, all my sisters and myself told her we're having mixed kids so my mom knows that we like different cultures. She said…there's some cultures where the women are oppressed…Just like some Muslim cultures...from her experience, she thinks that they don't treat women as well as they should. So, she's like, *'Okay and you know if you marry someone from this culture, then you're going to have to convert to their rules. Don't do that.*' " (HA Group 7)

These findings were especially striking, indicating that some families are clearly less likely to accept certain ethnicities than others. Current attitudes towards Muslims and Black individuals may cause families to be less willing to accept mates from such ethnic backgrounds. However, while race preference was an interesting theme for highly acculturated individuals, it was not a major issue. While a few participants believed that their parents would disapprove of certain intercultural relationships due to their misconceptions about Black and Muslim individuals, the majority of participants recounted the openness of their families.

Overall, participants in the high acculturation groups believed their parents' attitudes toward their daughters' dating choices were generally positive. They argued that Westernized

parents were not overly strict or demanding, and that an increased level of acculturation to the multicultural society of Canada generated a “laissez-faire” attitude in their own parents. Interestingly, this lack of parental interference in participants’ dating decisions was seen as positive, with parents seen as less likely to interfere in their daughters’ dating choices. Of those participants who did believe their parents would have difficulty accepting an intercultural relationship, concerns primarily focused on the differences in values parents believed an intercultural partner would bring. This was especially prominent for Muslim or Black partners, for whom many of these participants believed that the cultural differences were too vast to negotiate.

Degree of Acceptance of Parental Involvement in Highly Acculturated Participants’ Own Romantic Relationships

Along with expressing their views about parental perspectives on daughters’ romantic relationships, participants were asked to discuss how acceptable they would find parental involvement in their own dating decisions. However, it is necessary to note that participants may have chosen to give examples of acceptability or rejection of parental involvement in either intercultural romantic relationships, monocultural romantic relationships, or both. Some highly acculturated participants expressed their willingness for parents to be fully involved in their romantic relationship decisions; however, they also discussed the importance of independence and autonomy as core values.

Acceptance of Parental Involvement in Highly Acculturated Adult Children's Dating Relationships

Parents as guides and objective observers. The importance of parental support was a common rationale given by highly acculturated individuals who desired their parents' involvement in their lives as trusted guides. This was especially important for young adults who were sexually inexperienced and so, believed that parental advice would act as an advantage. As one participant stated,

> "Parents should be involved on a day-to-day. Because there's some stuff that…like if you get involved sexually, you might not know everything. Whereas your parents could have that experience and they can look at it from a third party." (HA Group 5)

Parents were also seen as guides whose input would protect infatuated females from making relationship mistakes. Another participant stated:

> "They should have some influence because as she said before, if your parent gets to know the person you're dating, they'll see something that you missed. Or if they see that you're in a dangerous relationship then I think that it would be okay to say maybe this isn't a good relationship for you. I think in that aspect, it would be okay because they're concerned for you." (HA Group 4)

Another related justification for parental involvement revolved around the idea of parents acting as an outside perspective, which allowed for greater support towards their offspring. Here, participants argued that when individuals became heavily invested in a romantic relationship, they might be losing sight of problematic issues. This was an interesting finding which supported the claim that high acculturated individuals greatly desired independence. Parents who acted as an outside perspective could still be allowed to be involved in their off-

spring's relationship decisions in a peripheral manner without impeding on their sense of autonomy.

Parental involvement was strongly supported by highly acculturated individuals if it was seen to be in their interests, and especially if they believed their parents would assist them in some way. This discourse is especially revealing for Westernized, highly acculturated females, who may have negotiated parental involvement in dating decisions, a trait commonly associated with more traditional families, to be on their own terms. However, the need for parental support ultimately seemed to end when their own needs were fulfilled. An example of this is demonstrated where one participant reported that parental involvement would be rendered unnecessary once the daughter had gained enough experience to make her own decisions.

> "I find that it's really good that parents have opinions…because if people are dating someone for the first time, it's helpful because a girl at thirteen, fourteen who is getting into a relationship with a guy they don't know, [*sic*] they've never been in one before. You just want to have insight in it but after that point you're already in the game on your own…I feel like if they're (i.e., parents) just a few steps away and they let you know that they're available for any questions or any concerns or advice then that would make it a lot easier for that person or the daughter or son to just date and figure it all out on themselves or on their own with that help that's on the side." (HA Group 2)

Together, these findings suggest that although some highly acculturated individuals deemed parental support to be necessary in a young adults' developmental process, ultimately, they felt that it was the young adult who should eventually make their relationship choices independently. Indeed, highly acculturated individuals appeared to believe that some parental involvement in their relationships was positive, so long as it was kept to a minimum, since maintaining their sense of independence and autonomy was also extremely important to them. This need for independence is in line with the values of the individualistic culture in

which they were living. These individuals also reported that parental involvement tended to be more indirect than direct (e.g., through the shaping of values).

A number of participants also argued that parental involvement in dating relationships started at the very beginning of socialization when parents were most heavily involved in teaching their children values. They pointed out that, although individuals were accountable for making their own decisions, they themselves were cognizant that their parents had shaped the values that helped them to make good relationship decisions as independent young adults. This meant that, although parental influence may not be evident on a day-to-day basis, young adults would inherently follow the "dating rules" absorbed from their parents.

> "As you grow up you know what your parents' ideals are and you know what they'd approve of and not approve of [*sic*] so I think it's always in the back of your mind whenever you're doing something. I think you can make your decisions independently of your parent's opinions but it's always in the back of your mind." (HA Group 3)

Overall, the dialogue between highly acculturated participants suggested that parental involvement was acceptable to the extent that offspring respected their parents and regarded them as role models. This indicated that while parents may be influential in their decision making process, it was still up to the young adult to make decisions regarding the relationship themselves. For example, one participant explained:

> "I do think parents do play a huge role in the relationship with the person and if they don't accept the person that you are attracted to or you feel comfortable around, it gets difficult. Because, like you were saying, you look up to your mom so if your mom doesn't like the person it's kind of hard." (HA Group 4)

This idea of parents as role models was further endorsed by a participant who argued that respect played a large role in parental involvement but who explained further that this respect stemmed from having a good relationship with one's parents. She said:

> "I think it's nice to have your parent's approval and that's really great and if you are in a good relationship with your parents, I guess it's really the relationship between you and your parents and how that is. If you respect your parents and you have a good relationship, I think then its fair game, they can be involved." (HA Group 11)

While this rationale was positive in nature, another participant argued that a parent's influence could negatively influence a relationship, as it was strong enough to cause relationship dissolution. She said:

> "When I end up with someone for the rest of my life, I want my family and I and my husband to be able to share moments together…if they don't like whoever I'm with, that's just not going to happen…if it's someone they really really can't stand then obviously it's not going to be something that works out for everybody in the long run." (HA Group 3)

The bond that participants shared with their parents seemed an important rationale for relationship termination. While this was regarded as indirect parental involvement, it was evident that participants strongly upheld this principle.

> "I think I'd have to consider, I think it would a strain between me and my parents if they really didn't like the person I was dating. I think I'd really have to consider, is it worth having a worse relationship with my parents…to date this person? I think if I saw it was really affecting my relationship with my parents, I would probably consider breaking up with them." (HA Group 4)

Clearly, the core value of family was deemed to be more important to these individuals than the continuation of rejected romantic relationships. These findings are interesting as they suggest that highly acculturated individuals are susceptible to indirect parental involvement, which they did not perceive as hampering their sense of independence. These findings indicate the priority that family holds to these individuals. They were not only willing to accept indirect involvement in their romantic relationships but were also willing to seriously consider decisions that their parents made regarding them.

In summary, high acculturated individuals were fairly accepting of parental involvement, as long as this did not compromise their need for independence. This individualistic ideal was paramount in their development as young adults, as making relationship decisions was important to their learning process. Many participants believed that parents were already lenient towards intercultural dating, as they were Westernized and used to Canadian society's diversity. The overall attitude held seemed to be that young adults should receive parental involvement indirectly through support and advice and that parents should still be available to their offspring. However, their ultimate message was that once a young adult had gained some "life experience" (i.e., sexual maturity), they should be free to make their own relationship decisions.

Contingent Parental Involvement in Highly Acculturated Adult Children's Dating Relationships: "It Depends"

Whereas many participants emphasized the importance of parental involvement in their dating relationships, others did not perceive it in such a positive manner. This section's theme, *contingent parental involvement*, explores participants' beliefs about the conditions under which they would or not necessarily accept perceived parental involvement. While the-

se participants did not overtly reject parental involvement, many of them discussed both positive and negative aspects and explained the necessary thresholds, or boundaries, they would place upon parental involvement.

Developmental stage and age. One important threshold condition involved age. Many participants believed that after a certain developmental stage, young adults had the right to be independent from their parents' influence, especially in decisions that they felt they could make unaided. However, one participant believed that parents with offspring who were financially dependent needed more involvement, and that only individuals who lived away from home and were financially independent warranted little parental involvement.

> "I don't think that they should be outright involved as their child is a young adult. I think parents should always be interested in their child's relationships…but I think once their child hits a certain age, once they hit a certain amount of independence within their family, the parents should honour that. So it all depends on the child, if the child is still at home, still isn't working and is incredibly dependent on the parents then parents totally have more of a right to be involved as the child is more of a child. But if you're out in the world, independent, living on their own…then I don't think so." (HA Group 1)

Issues with control. A second important threshold concerned the extent to which parental control generally was regarded as acceptable. As noted in the previous section, many highly acculturated participants accepted the need for guidance and support from their families. However, many participants were also strongly opposed to parents controlling their decision-making process. One participant argued that making mistakes and growing from past experiences allowed individuals to make better relationship decisions in the future. She believed that parental control was equivalent to dictating young adults on how to live their lives, based on parents' own expectations. She explained:

> "I think that when they start telling you how to live your life and how they think you need to live it in order to be happy based on their experiences…I think that that shouldn't happen. I think they should let you, especially to grow, let you learn from your own experiences, and then you'll be able to make smarter decisions in the future." (HA Group 3)

Another participant also believed that parental control in the form of forcing relationship outcomes was undesirable. She stated that although explicit parental influence was unwelcome, open communication with parents was important. She added that parental control over relationship outcomes would be undesirable and made a distinction between appropriate parental support (i.e., advice) and inappropriate parental control (i.e., breaking up partners).

> "I don't think they should have any direct influence but you should all be able to share opinions and discuss why they may not like someone…But I don't think they should feel that they have the right to have the say that you should end your relationship..." (HA Group 3)

One participant discussed the advantages of including parents in her romantic relationships. She detailed the closeness she would feel with both her romantic partner and her parents if they were all to get along. However, like previous participants, she invoked a threshold for parents controlling a relationship's outcome.

> "Since your relationship with your parents and your romantic relationship are…two very important parts of your life. I think if you would be able to share that with your parents, it would be less stressful than if you had to hide. I think it's nicer, the relationship does get more serious that your family accepts them…But I don't think that they should be involved to the extent that they say, '*You need to break up with this person because we don't like them.'* I think they shouldn't be so involved that they want to try to control who you can date [*sic*]." (HA Group 4)

A number of participants believed that parents' opinions on their mate choice was necessary, as they strongly desired that parents know their relationship status. However, it was also considered important for these participants to invoke a boundary when parents became too controlling. One example of this is highlighted below:

> "I think they're definitely allowed to have an opinion. I definitely value my parent's opinion because I know they don't want me to make stupid choices. I definitely value if they tell me they don't like who I'm dating. But I don't think they could have control over it either. I don't think they should be able to be like, *'No, you can't date him because I said so.'* " (HA Group 6)

Many participants were adamant that any influence from parents had to be indirect. They believed that parents should be able to voice their opinion, especially if it concerned their offspring's romantic partner but ultimately, they believed that the young adult should make their own decisions. Some participants invoked a serious boundary, stating that it was not parents' place to pass judgements or give unsolicited advice.

> "If it's going to affect me in the big picture, then she should have an input...She shouldn't be able to tell me where I go with him, how long I can hang out with him for, or if I should be seeing him or not…but she can still give her opinions." (HA Group 7)

Another participant explained that high parental involvement was unnecessary as parents were a third party who did not accurately understand the dynamics of their daughter's relationship. However, she still seemed to believe that parents should be involved at a basic level, by ensuring that their daughter was safe and sensible. To her, the basic level of involvement meant ensuring her daughter avoided becoming sexually active too quickly.

> "They should have a little bit of influence because they're not the ones in the relationship so they don't really know what's going on. They should know that you have a job and where you're going in the future. They can give their advice so they don't move too fast and (make a) mistake." (HA Group 8)

Overall, this sub-theme of "control" reinforced the need that many young adult females feel to be independent and autonomous in their relationship decision-making processes. Many of these highly acculturated participants felt the need to involve their parents in the decision making process of relationship continuity, especially if it had progressed to a serious relationship. However, this sub-theme highlighted the boundaries invoked by these participants between acceptable involvement and unacceptable control.

Need for respect. Another striking threshold that some highly acculturated participants invoked derived from their perception that highly involved parents lacked respect for them. This was in stark contrast to those participants who believed that young adults *owed* their parents some degree of involvement as a sign of respect. Two participants felt they lacked privacy when their parents were constantly watching their relationships. One mentioned that this lack of privacy would indicate a similar lack in trust. She believed that if her parents trusted her to make the right decisions, they would allow her more freedom. She explained:

> "They can be there but they don't need to be up your butt all the time, 24/7. I think just to be able to trust me enough that they'll be able to let me go and have faith that I won't do anything wrong or anything like that." (HA Group 10)

The second participant explained:

> "I also think it's important for some level of privacy and that's just respect from the parents and allowing your child to grow from the parent. I think that's important." (HA Group 5)

Her comments indicated that she valued her independence, especially after becoming a young adult. An additional factor that was important to one participant was the mature treatment of her romantic relationships. She seemed to allow some parental involvement, in the form of questions, but ultimately believed that parents should respect her relationship as much as their own. She said:

> "If you're curious about the relationship you can ask questions about it, but you don't want to press too far in. Parents should treat their kids' relationship with the same level of respect that kids treat their parents' relationship." (HA Group 9)

These findings indicate that some high acculturated individuals may feel disrespected by their parents if they are denied the independence they desire in their romantic relationships. This was associated with the idea that parental involvement was a parental privilege, to be granted by the daughter rather than taken for granted by the parent.

Differences in values and ideals. Another important boundary that the highly acculturated participants placed upon parental involvement derived from perceived intergenerational differences in values and ideals. Many participants believed that if parents did not like something about their partner that they themselves felt was trivial, they would rebuff their involvement. For example, this participant was adamant that her partner be a Muslim, a value that her parents supported. However, she stated that if they still did not like him, even if he was a Muslim, she would rebuff their opinion of him.

> "For my sister for example, she's at this marrying age where a lot of our cousins too are getting married in their twenties and in that case if my sister finds a really good guy and

> he is a very good Muslim. But (if) my parents don't like him for some reason that's very trivial, that doesn't have anything to do with religion or maybe culture, then I think that that's where you have to make a decision between is your parents opinion more important or is this what you really want?" (HA Group 11)

Other participants felt the same way. For example, two argued that parental involvement was contingent upon the justifications for their opinions of their romantic partners:

> "I think that when it comes to meeting somebody for the first time that's up to us as young adults or as people looking to get married. In terms of influence I think the parents, again, approval is important but also if they're giving opinions it has to be justified and it has to come from good, reasonable grounds. It can't be something petty like, '*I don't like him…I don't like his family'*. They have to give good reasons." (HA Group 11)

For these participants, the values that their parents held needed to be in line with their own. Otherwise, participants would rebuff parental involvement and even conclude that their parents were biased or racist. These values were not considered to be appropriate or congruent with their own, and under these circumstances, their own values would trump parents' desires. Overall, highly acculturated participants seemed to value open-mindedness and cultural tolerance and it seemed that these were values that they expected their parents to hold as well.

Protection from abusive relationships. The most distinct category of threshold to parental involvement occurred when participants speculated about the occurrence of abuse in their relationships. While there were many discussions about abusive situations, almost all participants believed that parental involvement under these circumstances was completely acceptable. In fact, many believed that their involvement was crucial to ending their daughters' abusive relationships. One notable example of this included:

> "If there's something going wrong in the relationship and the parents notice then I think it's okay if they say something because it's their child and they're trying to protect them. If there's an abusive relationship then I think that the parents should be able to say something and then maybe their child needs that help to get out of that. But I think if everything's going well and the parent just doesn't like the person for no good reason I don't think that's okay, then they shouldn't be voicing that opinion." (HA Group 1)

Again, it is interesting to note that this highly acculturated individual invokes a boundary for parents who may attempt to become involved without the pretence of an abusive situation. Another participant also argued that without an actual abusive relationship, parental involvement should not occur. She further explained:

> "When she was involved in an abusive relationship, they stepped in but, if they don't see any abuse happening and it's clearly a happy relationship and if it's not being lead down a path of destruction, then they should just stand back and let your kid be happy and see where it goes." (HA Group 2)

Similar dialogue was obtained from other focus groups with many highly acculturated participants supporting each other's thresholds. For example, two participants mentioned that it was a parent's ability to provide a third party perspective that would allow them to intervene in an abusive relationship.

> "I think they should have an influence if it's an abusive relationship where they can clearly see that it's not healthy or it's toxic or you guys are just not good for each other then I think it's their right to step in and intervene and stop it." (HA Group 7)

Interestingly, a second participant seemed to invoke a much higher threshold. She needed her friends to support her parents' beliefs before she could allow them to be more involved.

> "If they don't like them, take it into consideration but still let yourself decide. Only if it is unhealthy and then your friends are telling you and your parents are telling you then maybe you can kind of see that they're right, and it's true, and then go from there." (HA Group 7)

Many participants were adamant that this would have to be considered a "serious" issue before parents could get involved. One participant explained:

> "I think parents should influence their kid's relationship to a degree. If you're dating somebody that everybody around you knows that you shouldn't be dating and your parents are telling you that and you don't see it then, you should take into consideration your parents' influence because they're probably right." (HA Group 7)

Overall, these highly acculturated participants believed that parental involvement was necessary in abusive relationships. The main impression from their dialogue seemed to indicate a sense of independence that is desired by highly acculturated individuals. While they may accept some limited forms of parental involvement, the main theme suggests that unless it is to their benefit, increased parental involvement was not supported.

Meddling versus caring. Several highly acculturated participants spoke about feeling annoyed or frustrated at their parents for "meddling" in their romantic relationships. However, most appreciated that it was due to parents caring for them. Participants acknowledged the good intentions parents held for them and all highlighted that these intentions were for their own protection. While some highly acculturated individuals believed that parental involvement was indirect and positively intentioned, another individual argued that it was an

annoyance. She agreed that some involvement was for a young adult's benefit but it could also be construed as "nagging":

> "Even though ideally we do not want our parents to butt into our personal relationships where we're trying to figure it out ourself, we don't need another opinion or extra pair of eyes to check on our every move…but then it is for our benefit and our safety even though it is quite annoying to hear something we don't want to hear or something they always nag about. The overall reality is that even though it's not idealistic, it's beneficial [*sic*]." (HA Group 10)

One participant argued that parents cared about their offspring's romantic relationships because it showed their investment in their offspring's mating decisions. She believed that without this "prying", they would not achieve relationship closeness with one another. She explained:

> "As much as I don't like my parents always hovering over me, I feel like they show that they care…that they're trying to get to know you better, to get to know what's happening in your life and ultimately, they're trying to protect you." (HA Group 10)

While high acculturated participants consistently noted that increased parental involvement in dating matters could be annoying, there was much discussion on how it also indicated parental care.

> "It shows that they care, because if they weren't involved, I think that's a sign that they don't care…Having them wanting to know might be annoying but at least we know that they're always going to be there and they care. Because if they're not asking us questions or not wondering it's like, do they really want this? Do they like this person, do they not want us to see this person anymore? But if they're involved, asking if you're okay, how's

> everything going, you feel more included, or togetherness with your parents." (HA Group 10)

Another participant believed that although parental involvement was positive in nature, it would ultimately be up to her to allow their involvement to influence her:

> "I didn't really bother to listen to what they said but as they kept going on and as relationships went on, I would always just listen to what they would have to say because I would understand where they were coming from because they want what's best for me. So sometimes it (parental involvement) will have an effect but sometimes it won't." (HA Group 11)

In sum, the boundaries that highly acculturated females invoked as a reaction to parental involvement illuminated the importance they placed on gaining a sense of independence and free will. While they believed that the relationship between parents was important to upkeep, many believed that intrusive involvement was disrespectful and unnecessary due to their maturity level.

Rejection of Parental Involvement

In this final thematic section, participants who had rejected or rebuffed any direct parental involvement in their romantic relationships are featured. There were a number of reported causes for their rejection, many of which involved a desire for personal growth and independence as young adults.

Desire for independence. As reported earlier, many of these highly acculturated young adults desired independence from their parents. This need for independence was para-

mount for some participants, as they greatly desired the ability to have personal agency over important decisions. A common justification for rejecting involvement was that young adults had a requirement to experience life without the assistance of their parents.

> "There comes a point where parents should leave their kids to experience their life on their own." (HA Group 8)

When another participant was asked if she believed her parents had any control over her decisions, she explained:

> "Right now as a young adult, neither parent would be, because since I have moved out, they don't really have any control over my life. They try to assert control. They try to voice their opinion, definitely, in everything I do, but they can't do anything." (HA Group 1)

This participant seemed to have complete agency over her decisions, especially as she seemed to be financially independent from her parents. However, it is interesting to note that this agency is justified by the fact that she was a young adult. This finding indicated that some young adults perceived that a transition period existed where they should have control over their mating decisions, without a great deal of parental influence. Another participant rejected parental involvement mainly to assert her independence from her parents. Her autonomy was of the utmost importance to her, and she described herself as stubborn in order to rebuff her parents' rejection. She said:

> "If such circumstance ever happened, either my dad or mom or both rejecting a romantic relationship, being the stubbornness that I am [*sic*], I'll prove them wrong. But then at the back of my mind as I still continue to be in a relationship with the person I'll still have

> their rejection in mind while the relationship's still on going. One, because I'm stubborn and two, just to prove them wrong." (HA Group 10).

This was supported by another participant in the same group who stated:

> "The rebellious side of me would probably want to stay with that person and say, *'Hey…look mom, dad…I don't approve of what you're saying. I'm going to go ahead and do it anyways.'* " (HA Group 10)

This discourse indicates that some highly acculturated participants may completely rebuff their parents if they feel that their independence is infringed upon. This theme was fairly common among highly acculturated individuals, whose values and ideals are strongly connected to Western ideals of autonomy and free will. One participant explained that it was the Canadian values that caused her to desire independence. She said:

> "I think that the parents should play a pretty neutral role…not supervise on one side or super strict on one side. They should let their kid choose because this is Canada and we have lots of choice and freedom and I feel like that should be started here at a young age." (HA Group 2)

In a different focus group one participant believed that independence was warranted as she deemed herself capable of making her own decisions.

> "Because, relationships are between two people. At least for me I like to think that I'm capable of making good judgments on my own. So, I think it's important that maybe, you have open discussion about whoever your significant other is. But for the most part, no, I don't think there should be too much involved [*sic*]." (HA Group 5)

This indicated that participants disliked being treated as adolescents or children. Unsurprisingly, many participants believed that high parental involvement was unnecessary as it hindered their ability to develop into mature adults, capable of making their own decisions and learning from their mistakes. Notable examples of this dialogue include:

> "There's always an extent that the parents can be in your personal life. I feel like if they're always there holding your hand, you're not going to learn either." (HA Group 10)

One participant believed that it was important for young adults to learn how to handle difficult relationship situations themselves as their parents would not be around to support them forever.

> "I think you've got to be strong yourself. I feel like the young adult has to learn themselves. If they're in a bad situation, then they're going to have to change it because their parents aren't going to be around forever. But even so, I think lessons are learned by personal experience [*sic*]." (HA Group 5)

Again, an important factor for some participants was the ability to gain knowledge from experiencing relationships without parental interference. One participant believed that this was how most parents gained their knowledge and thus, seemed to believe that it was imperative that young adults go through that learning process as well. She said:

> "I think that parents got their knowledge through their own experience and we should be able to get our knowledge about relationships through our experiences." (HA Group 7)

This thematic category was revealing, as it demonstrated the rationale behind the high acculturated group's need for independence. It was evident that these young adults greatly desired the ability to make their own decisions, even acknowledging that mistakes were allowed and necessary in order to reach maturity.

Pressure from parents. Some highly acculturated participants were wary of parental involvement as they felt that it would mean increased pressure to either marry their partner or break up. One participant believed that her mother's experiences with early marriage would lead her to pressure her daughter to also marry at a young age. Since this participant was currently single at the time of their focus group session, she felt increased pressure from her mother, who seemed to be unhappy with her current relationship status. She explained the difficulty she experienced by allowing her mother to be involved in her relationship decisions:

> "I don't think that my mom should be involved in that way because it's putting pressure on me and I don't see what the rush should be if I'm happy. Just let things happen in my own way…So then [*sic*] I didn't meet someone when I was 18 and now she's like, '*What's going to happen?'* " (HA Group 1)

Interestingly, in the same high acculturated group another participant had a similar experience with her grandmother. She had experienced a significant amount of pressure from her grandmother to settle down with her partner. Consequently, she explained the impact that this additional pressure had on her relationship with her grandmother.

> "My grandmother…she does the same thing to me. She's like, '*When I was your age, I already had 3 kids. I want great grandkids.'* When I was with my last partner, she was constantly badgering us about getting married, having kids, seriously settling down and it started to build a little bit of a rift. Whenever we were in public, in family gathering I

> tried to just kind of stay away from her a little bit because I didn't want to have to deal with that." (HA Group 1)

A third participant explained that the issue she had with parental involvement involved the unrealistic standards that they placed upon her and the negative emotion she experienced when she was unable to meet the standards. Clearly, this participant would have preferred to make relationship decisions on her own, rather than attempt to meet her mother's high standards. She explained:

> "She would just have that whole disappointment thing if I brought home someone that was not smart, or less smart than I was or not as outgoing as I was. She was just influential in the way that she acted and how I took it when I was younger because I had her opinion on the highest thing (i.e., regard) instead of having my own opinion at the highest thing (i.e., regard)..." (HA Group 2)

Interestingly, many participants were adamant that their parents would not be able to change their commitment to their romantic partner. However, one participant believed that while parental involvement was important and highly desired, she was still inflexible in allowing her mother any influence over her relationship outcome. She explained:

> "I think it's important what my mother says. But if she ever told me to stop dating someone, I wouldn't stop dating someone just because she told me. It would have to my own (decision). I think parents should have an influence but in the end, it's the adult who has the final say…the young adults who have the final say." (HA Group 5)

This inflexibility stemmed from the idea that young adults should have the final say in their relationship decisions, an opinion strongly shared by many other participants. While

they believed that parents had a right to be involved in their children's relationship, if that involvement hampered their sense of independence, highly acculturated individuals would reject their parents' influence. For example, another participant described an event where she brought up the topic of sex with her conservative parent, who did not take the situation well. She explained:

> "I feel like if you push someone to such an extent they will rebel and go against it. With me and my mom, I remember the biggest fight we had was because I brought up sex with her. I remember I was in grade 8 and I kept talking about sex and I kept asking questions about the sex topic [*sic*]. I asked my mom because they kept saying you should bring it up with your parents…and with all these TV shows about Caucasian descent (i.e., individuals) bringing up sex…and so I went to my mom. She was like, '*Do you know what sex is?'* and she just shut me out for 2 days and she didn't talk to me at all." (HA Group 6)

This sub-theme gives a unique view into why some individuals preferred to keep their romantic relationship decisions to themselves, rather than allow their parents to become more heavily involved. In particular, many felt that parents put too much pressure on them to marry before they were ready.

Summary

In sum, parental involvement in highly acculturated participants' own relationships were deemed to be beneficial if daughters were sexually inexperienced or during times of need as a support system. However, many thresholds were invoked due to perceptions that parental involvement meant increased pressure, meddling, and nagging. This was reflected in the views of participants who rejected parental involvement because of their need for independence. While a range of viewpoints on the acceptability of parents being involved in daughters' dating relationships was expressed, the central theme for these high acculturated

individuals was that while parental guidance and support were appreciated, actual involvement was not desired. Overall, the quality of the relationship that young adults have with their parents appears to influence the degree of acceptance they have towards their parents' involvement in their dating relationships. Interestingly, even for highly acculturated individuals, intergenerational conflict can arise around mating decisions where there are differences in values between themselves and their parents.

Chapter 4: Study One Results, Part 2

Perceived Parental Attitudes Towards Daughters' Dating Relationships From the Perspective of Low Acculturated Young Women

Of the 31 participants in the low acculturated groups, 81% identified as East/South-East Asian (Chinese, Vietnamese, Malaysian, etc.) and 19% identified as South Asian (Bangladeshi, Nepali, Indian, etc.). The low acculturated groups mainly identified as either Buddhist (31%) or Atheist (31%). Similar to the high acculturated groups, these individuals came from highly educated families with 98% indicating that both parents had either college or university degrees. However, in contrast to the high acculturated groups, this low acculturated group had a more recent history of living in Canada, with 94% indicating that they were born in another country. Interestingly, 77% of these individuals also indicated that they almost exclusively or mostly always associated with other individuals from their own ethnic backgrounds (i.e., other Asians). Based on these demographic details, it is likely that these participants had a low acculturation to Western culture.

Positive Parental Attitudes Towards Daughters' Dating Relationships

Whereas the highly acculturated participants reported a relatively high degree of parental acceptance of, and positive attitudes towards, their daughters' dating choices, participants in the low acculturated groups reported strong expectations that parents would have a considerable degree of involvement in their daughters' dating relationships.

Obedience and respect for family. Overall, there was an emphasis among low acculturated females on daughters' obligations towards parents. Amongst the Chinese participants, in particular, the values of obedience and respect for elders stemmed from the Confucian philosophy of filial piety, a Chinese virtue of respect and honour towards parents, elders, and

ancestors (Ye, 2004). Many of these participants reasoned that obedience towards parents is required and desirable, since parents are solely interested in the wellbeing of their offspring. One participant explained:

> "I think parents are strict because they want the best of their daughters and sons. I don't really know the purpose of my parents being so stricter on marriage but I will still follow what they want because they have done a lot for me [*sic*]." (LA Group 1)

These values were specifically framed within the Chinese culture, as the opinions of elders are considered to be important and revered.

> "Because in China, the older people in a family, their opinion is more important and even my parents won't disagree or say no to them so I should respect their opinion." (Low Acculturated Group 3)

These participants' opinion on obedience towards parents revolves around the idea that parents' wishes and desires must be obeyed, regardless of their own personal opinions and feelings. One interesting comment suggested that filial piety was so fundamental to Chinese culture that even family members might look down upon those who went against tradition:

> "I think parents should be involved and take the example of me and my sister. Me, I think I'm obedient and listen to my parents but my sister is disobedient. She always wants to break the rule of the parents give to her. The more she want to break up (i.e., become independent), the more the parent control, more strict. In my opinion, I think my sister is a little not mature [*sic*]." (LA Group 1)

This finding suggests that an ingrained norm in many Chinese participants is to accept parental control, especially for young adults. This is an important finding, as strict adherence to parents' rules affects romantic relationship decisions. This is especially the case for daughters, for whom parents have specific rules:

> "In old China, the girls are not freedom [*sic*]. The girls need to stay at home and here someday she married and the girls didn't have freedom to choose the man who she want to married. The parents will help girl to choose the man...The girls can't decide for herself, the parents would decide for her and the girl's only responsibility is to accept the parents' decision." (LA Group 3)

These attitudes towards obeying elders, especially parents, were considered positive within the low acculturated groups. While these participants acknowledged that these values are traditional (i.e., framing these behaviours as occurring in 'Old China'), there was strong support for these ideals, specifically, that young adults are expected to maintain a sense of obedience out of respect for their parents.

Negative Parental Attitudes Towards Daughters' Dating Relationships

Within the low acculturated groups, negative parental attitudes towards their daughters' relationships mainly concerned protecting them from negative influences. Low acculturated individuals perceived that parents would enforce stricter rules upon them and that these rules were there as a source of protection.

Need for protection. As with the highly acculturated participants, several low acculturated participants agreed that parents may enforce gender specific rules upon daughters as a measure of protection. Many of the gender specific rules mentioned by low acculturated fe-

males revolved around curfews and acceptable attire. Participants also noted that sons did not suffer the same constraints, but were much more "free" (i.e., sexually unrestrained) than daughters:

> "Even if, for my family, even if you called them, they wouldn't let a girl to stay past midnight outside. I know my brother who's younger than me...he can come back at 2 am if his friends' parents are bringing him home but me...that can never happen. I wouldn't even dream of doing that kind of thing." (LA Group 8)

Chastity and reputation concerns. Like the highly acculturated participants, low acculturated participants discussed the importance to parents of their daughters' chastity and good reputations. Unlike the highly acculturated participants, however, low acculturated participants were more accepting of such concerns and more likely to accept their parents' behavioural rules. They noted, for example, that parents were wary of daughters' romantic relationships as they could be a precursor to premarital sexual initiation.

> "I think they accept boy being in a relationship more than a girl because for a girl...in Chinese culture, virgin is really important [*sic*]. When you get married, you're a virgin. It's really important." (LA Group 1)

Chastity was considered particularly important because of its links with purity and good moral character. A daughter's chastity was also related to the family's reputation, with family honour used as a justification by parents to enforce increased strictness upon their daughters. Many participants believed that parents were worried about "losing face" or would feel dishonoured if a daughter did not uphold their dating/mating rules:

> "All the Chinese society think like this. The girl is virgin…for parents it's decent. *In Audible* (There's) shame if it's not...They think the girl is not a good girl [*sic*]." (LA Group 1)

This belief that a female's value was based on her virginity supported parents' need to protect their daughters before marriage. Since virginity and reputation were closely linked, participants believed that parents would be stricter on daughters than sons. For example:

> "I think it's because girls are usually looked on as dignity and honour. Basically why you're protecting your daughter is a way to protect your reputation. My mom says this, it's like, "*If something happens to a girl, a whole family will have to pay for it…*" but when a son does something, it gets pushed under the carpet because he's a boy. So definitely more strict on girls [*sic*]." (LA Group 10)

When asked why parents were more rejecting of the romantic relationships of their daughters than of their sons, the most common explanation involved the importance for daughters of making a "good" marriage (hence the concern for reputation). Many low acculturated females noted that a poor choice could lead to unfortunate outcomes:

> "In my part, I find parents are more rejecting of the romantic relationships of their daughters. Because I think it's very important for a girl to have a very good marriage. Because it means you have to spend your life with this man, and if unfortunately, if you divorce, the women are suffering more bad things than a man [*sic*]." (LA Group 6)

The stigma of divorce was especially strong for low acculturated individuals, due to the shame and dishonour it was seen to bring to families. Again, this was seen to be especially the case for females, who in traditional cultures are unable to remarry without the fear that they are labelled as "used". These two participants gave similar examples of the negative consequences of divorce for women. They said:

> "It's a big deal, in my culture. It's a big deal to get remarried. If you get remarried, they would look down on you. They'd rather stay in a horrible marriage then get remarried. No one is going to get married to the woman again." (LA Group 8)

> "Because in China, in my culture, if women get divorced, it means they are not a good one (i.e., a good woman). It means…it just gives some very bad impact on the rest of your life [*sic*]." (LA Group 6)

While making a good marriage was considered important, participants also mentioned the additional pressure on females to get married while young. This was emphasized by participants from traditional families whose parents believed that daughters had an eventual "expiry date" and that they had to marry before then. This was an interesting finding, suggesting a normative belief in traditional families that a female's value may deteriorate over time. This has important implications for low acculturated females in Western societies who may feel a dual pressure to marry at an acceptable time whilst also pursuing their education and careers.

> "When the daughters reach the age of maybe 25, then if they haven't reached a certain career level or relationship status with their boyfriend then they start, parents start pressuring them to get married. But the boys...they don't bring it up because they know that they can always get married whenever. But the girls, they know that when the pass a certain

> stage, nobody will be interested in them. I think they'll be stricter on the girl because...after a certain age, they think that girls are less desirable." (LA Group 8).

Overall, these findings emphasize the importance of daughters' chastity and reputation, both of which were also raised in the dialogue of highly acculturated individuals. However, parents were reportedly more protective of, and strict with, their low acculturated daughters since poor decisions (i.e., excessive dating, pregnancy before marriage, bad mate choice) reflected negatively upon the whole family. Another stark difference between these two groups is the importance of filial piety to low acculturated participants, suggesting that these individuals may be more likely than highly acculturated individuals to defer to their parents on dating matters.

Parental Attitudes Towards Specifically Intercultural Dating Relationships

There was a strong disparity in attitudes towards intercultural dating between low and highly acculturated individuals. According to one low acculturated individual's experience, the only potentially positive aspect of intercultural dating for parents was that biracial children strengthened a family's social status. Many Chinese participants recounted how biracial children with Caucasian partners were regarded with higher social standing. This seemed to have a positive influence on parents who in turn may be willing to accept intercultural relationships, especially with Caucasian mates for their offspring. She explained:

> "My dad would go for it. He would have no problem with me dating someone from another culture…and besides, he likes hybrids (i.e., biracial children). He wants me to have one because my dad is more open-minded and most hybrids are smart and good looking. He even said that if I have a baby that is hybrid, he can go out on the street with him, and people will envy him." (LA Group 7)

Similarly:

> "There's one positive thing that my parents will think. They'll think, "My daughter is so good. She can get a boyfriend from another culture." That makes them proud. (Moderator: What kind of culture would they be happy for you to be with?) I think a White guy. (Moderator: Why?) They just think White guys are richer and socially...they're higher status [*sic*]." (LA Group 1)

Overall, however, any positive aspects of intercultural dating were not widely discussed amongst low acculturated individuals. This suggests that these relationships are not commonplace in their cultural groups, other than in relation to the social mobility such relationships may bring. On the other hand, according to low acculturated individuals, there were many reasons why parents would disapprove of intercultural dating. For example, several participants noted that their traditional parents would not be able to communicate with or understand their culturally dissimilar partner. Familiarity with Chinese values and ideals was considered important for many traditional parents.

> "I like to date with someone of another culture. But as for my parents, they would be very weird if I were to date with someone from another culture. Because the English or the other language. Also in different cultures there are many differences. For example, the way we communicate and the way we meet others, and also our food and our clothing. I think they wouldn't agree with me if I date with others [*sic*]." (LA Group 6)

This participant seemed to suggest that non-Western parents would be more hesitant to allow their offspring to engage in an intercultural relationship because their ro-

mantic partner's values and behaviours would be foreign to them. Another example of this belief is demonstrated below.

> "I think my mom is a traditional Chinese (person). I think she would like me date with a Chinese rather than the people who come from other country because in her mind maybe she thinks if someday I married with other countries guys...because our culture is different...maybe I would have a gap with his family between our daily life and maybe the relationship would broken some day. So, I think she wouldn't want me date with people who come from other country." (LA Group 3)

Another participant claimed that she would never engage in an intercultural relationship as she believed her parents would never adapt to another set of ideas or behaviours that differed from their traditional Chinese culture. She did not mention whether she herself found intercultural relationships acceptable or not. However, she argued that she would not consider them due to her parents' inability to adapt, suggesting she was making a sacrifice to appease to her parents' wishes. She said:

> "First of all, I don't think I would date someone of another culture but not because I cannot accept their culture but because my parents are traditionally in Chinese culture. They only exposed to Chinese culture in their life so far and maybe not adapt to other culture so I should think about them so I may not choose to date with someone of other culture [*sic*]." (LA Group 2)

This participant seemed to connect the process of acculturation to Canada to losing her sense of Chinese identity. Interestingly, this was enough of a concern to repudiate intercultural relationships, as a way to retain her sense of self. Another three participants believed that the dissimilarity between their cultural values and ideals might lead to relationship dissolution in the future. This unwillingness to relinquish identity did not only apply to Chinese

individuals, as Muslim participants were also uncompromising towards interfaith relationships. This was a major trend among participants in the low acculturated groups, with traditional Chinese and Muslim participants being the least willing to engage in intercultural relationships. These findings suggest that participants who strongly uphold traditional values may be less flexible to accommodate other values. This is exemplified below:

> "My dad specifically told me not to date anyone from any other culture or bring anyone home. And he says that it's because most of the time they're gonna have a different religion, have different values, goals in life...he wants someone that understands where we come from and the set of values that we have and would follow them…(on intercultural relationships). It would interfere with my values and change the ways I see things for the worst not for the best. So, that's why he doesn't want me dating anyone." (LA Group 5)

This reluctance to engage in intercultural relationships was especially prominent in Muslim participants. For example, one young woman said:

> "Because I am Muslim too, I can't choose someone who is out of my religion. This is a discipline, and my mom and dad are at the same level of opinion and they absolutely will not allow me to do that. Because they are different culture. I think two different cultured people, like a Chinese and American is okay. But a Muslim and another culture is not. Because there are a lot of basic rules that other cultures don't have. And they won't allow me, and I won't allow myself to do it. Because I prefer to choose someone in the same religion because I think we all have the same point of view, we all have the same opinions, and we will have a better family to raise the child better. This is important [*sic*]." (LA Group 7)

For a Mongolian participant, intercultural relationships were a unique issue as her small ethnic community strongly valued retaining their cultural identity. This impacted potential intercultural relationships in two ways, as not only did Mongolians value cultural puri-

ty but their cultural exclusivity also created a lack of awareness of outside cultures. This, she explained, caused Mongolians to be wary of outsiders, as they did not understand them:

> "For Mongolians, since Mongolia is really little, really small, there's this little bubble of culture that they won't allow. It's basically, they have this immunity system from other cultures entering them. For reasons that, Mongolians they have to protect their bloodline and if your child is born with the Mongolian blue spot if you know, then that's how you're preserving your bloodline, keeping it pure. Another reason would be because it's really small, to this day we're not really exposed to different cultures so I feel as though they, even if they were exposed, they feel like they should not accept it. It's really, for major reasons like that, they would not allow their children to date someone from another culture." (LA Group 9)

Finally, family reputation was an important factor for one individual who perceived that to her parents, an intercultural relationship would diminish this:

> "The other thing I feel that parents would be strict about is somewhat related to their reputation. Because if their daughter or their son is caught marrying outside, everybody in the society would point fingers at them. And their whole lives, they built their reputation and they don't want it to go downhill so I think partially why my culture, my community doesn't really appreciate or accept other people from other cultures I because everybody wants to have a standing in society and they want their reputation to maintain." (LA Group 9).

Interestingly, there were relatively few remarks about specific kinds of racial or ethnic partnerships from low acculturated individuals. The exception came from the Mongolian participant who remarked that intercultural relationships were frowned upon in her community, especially with African partners, as these relationships were considered more taboo. According to her, relationships with Africans were considered inferior as they were a marginalized community in Mongolia. She explained:

> "I dated a guy who was out of our culture and my parents created something really big out of it. Like I said earlier, they don't live here, but they still try to take control of the situation. They were hysteric about it. I guess it also depends on the certain culture, if maybe was Eastern or Asian because this one was still African from Mongolia. For us, we look down on them as being lower than us and that's how they see. For me, it doesn't really have any significance but they see them as a lower class and a lower status so I don't need to be with that person. So they would definitely be strict on that debate [*sic*]." (Low Acculturated Group 10)

In summary, these findings demonstrate another strong contrast between low and highly acculturated individuals' perceptions of the parents' attitudes towards intercultural relationships. Mainly, low acculturated individuals believed their parents were relatively unwilling to accommodate a culturally dissimilar partner's different ideals and values. The most commonly reported negative aspect of intercultural relationships involved the lack of communication and understanding between themselves, their parents and a culturally dissimilar partner. The findings suggest that overall, low acculturated daughters accepted their parents' ideals for a traditional mate, and were reluctant to negotiate differences in language, religion, and other culturally determined factors. They typically also supported parents in their beliefs that such relationships cannot thrive in the long-term.

Degree of Acceptance of Parental Involvement in Low Acculturated Participants' Own Romantic Relationships

Acceptance of Parental Involvement

Parents as guides and objective observers. As expected from the findings reported above, low acculturated participants were considerably more accepting of parental involvement in their own lives and relationship decisions than high acculturated individuals. Many of these participants reasoned that parents had much more experience with relationships and

so had much wisdom to offer. Further, many participants felt that while parents provided a second perspective as a guide, their "objective position" would allow them to be free from biases. For example, the following participant reasoned that while parental advice was available, it would be up to her to consider it. This is illustrated below:

> "To me parents are generally quite important in my perspective to give advice in my relationship because they are the third person point of view. They're more objective. If they give some constructive advice, if they give advice and you don't really agree then you can reason with them, you can see if you can change your perspective, or they change theirs." (LA Group 5)

These findings suggest that for more collectivist daughters, parents are regarded as helpful resources, especially for those who are uncertain about relationships. Many participants reasoned that parents were a good influence because of their previous experiences in romantic relationships. These experiences enabled parents to determine what the best relationship decisions would be; hence, participants were willing to have them involved. This was especially important for the following participant who explained that she lacked actual relationship experience and so it was important to involve her parents who had more practical knowledge:

> "I think parents should have influence of [*sic*] their young adult's relationship because they are more experienced in the love side because they are married…so they know better than me how to deal with problems. I don't have any formal experiences of this." (LA Group 7)

Nine participants within the low acculturated groups shared this view. The participant quoted below specifically stated that parents act as guides for their children and that their purpose is to guide them in the right direction by highlighting what is "right" and "wrong".

> "I think parents should have influence over their young adult's romantic relationships because as we know parents are guides for children. They will guide in the right way and they will always think what is right and wrong for the child. Some parents are, they want to influence their decision on their children, and some parents are very understanding and want to know what their child wants. They just want the child to make the right decision. Parents having influence is very important because they are a good guideline to follow." (LA Group 7)

Transition to marriage. Low acculturated participants also reported that parental influence played a crucial role, not just in mate selection, but also in the outcomes of their romantic relationships. One individual explicitly stated that the type of person she would eventually marry would depend on her parents' influence. Moreover, depending on the advice that her parents gave, this influence would help her choose an individual that her parents would eventually approve of for marriage. Similarly, another participant stated:

> "I think maybe parents influences kind of important because right now guys I'm choosing, I have to consider if my parents will like them because we're getting to the age where we can be married. So, they're think of long term. I think what my mother told me and what my parents are doing or things they are facing can influence me and it is very important it can help me to make my decisions [*sic*]." (LA Group 9)

Another participant explained that, compared to other individuals, parents are ideal resources for relationship advice. She reasoned that parents understand their offsprings' emo-

tional status and often also have a shared sense of trust, which is important when discussing sensitive topics like romantic relationship issues.

> "Especially in this matter, it's extremely sensitive. You can't just talk randomly to someone else because they don't know how you're feeling and the closest people to you are your parents so you can feel free to talk to them about anything." (LA Group 7)

These positive reactions reflect the perceived importance of parental involvement for young adults who are transitioning from casual dating relationships to more significant romantic relationships. This parental involvement was seen as especially influential for young women with low acculturation to Western values. These daughters perceived that parental involvement would assist their maturity development and would help them make the right relationship choices. Other important reasons why the transition to marriage was considered easier with parental involvement were first, that it allowed parents to gain a better understanding of the romantic partner, and second, that it created "group unity", or family harmony. Many of these young women believed that in order for a relationship to transition to a more committed level (i.e., engagement or marriage), parental involvement was a necessity. For instance, one individual believed that romantic partners are only brought home once the relationship is significant enough for them to meet parents. She explained:

> "If you're in a relationship it's something serious. If you bring home a boyfriend that is a big step because it means that you have deemed this person good enough to meet your parents. I wouldn't bring home someone to my parents unless I thought that it was going to get to marriage [*sic*]." (LA Group 8)

These participants felt that involving parents in their romantic relationship was part of a smoother transition from dating to marriage. The respondents indicated that parental approval was not only desired but also necessary for their romantic relationships to progress.

Parental regard for offspring well-being. Three participants also argued that parental involvement was acceptable due to parents wanting their offspring's happiness. Many felt that parents' ultimate goal for offspring happiness would lead to increased involvement, which would then ensure the best possible mate for them. The first participant mentioned that while conflict may occur between offspring and parents, parents ultimately wanted the best for them.

> "I know half the time people disagree with what their parents say and they want to go against it but in the end, your parents are really just looking out for you. I know mine might not always agree with what I want to do and I won't always agree that they're right, but I know that in the end they're just trying to do what's best for me." (LA Group 5)

Another participant noted that culture influenced her parents' involvement in relationship decisions. Interestingly, she believed that parents were integral to romantic relationships and like other participants, believed that due to their experience, would ensure that their offspring made the right mate choice. She explained:

> "Until now China's culture the parent is most important part of the relationship. They always wish we can have a good relationship and they still think they are more mature and can help us to choose the best one [*sic*]." (LA Group 3)

These findings underscore the centrality of family to low acculturated young women of Chinese heritage. Many Chinese participants explained that their experiences with parental

involvement were unique due to the expectation that young adults follow a strict adherence to the traditional ways of life. One of the frequent explanations for this was the rigid belief in collectivistic values, and in particular, the importance of family. A typical example of this is illustrated below:

> "I think my parents should be involved in my relationship because I'm not just an individual. I am part of my family and in the future, I can't just live apart from my family. So, my parents have to accept my partner so that we can live together and also, his parents. So we can be together." (LA Group 1)

In another focus group, a participant reiterated a similar belief about the importance of family cohesion. She argued that parents should be able to discern the romantic partner's characteristics, as it would allow them to sense how well future in-laws would connect:

> "It depends because when it comes to the marriage, because you have a lot of things in your whole life, [*sic*] but marriage is much more fewer than that so when it comes to the marriage like you want to marry this guy then your parents must involved in these relationships. Chinese (people) [sic] really think highly of the concepts of the family and I think marriage is really between two families, not only you people and your parents. Actually, they don't know anything about the family of who you're dating but because of your choice, they will become relatives of him so they have to know what the guy is like, how is he and those things." (LA Group 2)

It was noted previously that highly acculturated individuals believed that respect for parents equated to allowing parental involvement in adult children's relationships. Strikingly, two low acculturated participants reached a similar conclusion. One participant argued that if young adults rebuffed parental involvement in romantic decisions, they did not respect their parents' authority. She said:

> "If you respect your parents in any way, then they have an influence on who you choose to spend the rest of your life with." (LA Group 8)

While such an extreme point of view may be uncommon for most young adults, she explained further that this idea stemmed from the belief that such high respect for elders was culturally appropriate.

> "It's just, they gave birth to you so they get a say. But I guess, it depends on the person. If I deem it fit for my parents to be an influence in my decisions then they shall have influence in my decisions. But I guess if you're rebellious and you don't want anything to do with your parents or you hate your parents then I guess they don't. But our culture is generally…we respect our elders, we respect our parents and their influence and their thoughts and opinions are very, very important to us." (LA Group 8)

Another example of this is illustrated below:

> "In China, if a girl marry to a boy, the boy should give lots of money to the girl's family. The girl's family said she should ask for more money otherwise they will not have the marriage. Our family just said '*no marriage*' and they don't have any marriage...and even the girl is pregnant...but I think if the parents don't like the person, then they're really against like participant two says. So I think it's really good to get the parents' permission [*sic*]." (LA Group 5)

Consequences of rejecting parental involvement. In addition to arguing the benefits of accepting parental involvement in their dating decisions, low acculturated participants also reported many potentially negative consequences to rejecting such involvement. For example, one participant explained that in China, parental approval was necessary to gain several

types of support (i.e., financial, emotional) and without such approval, it was quite common for parents to disinherit or disown their offspring. This is a striking example due to the necessity it places on parental permission for daughters' dating relationships. She stated:

> "If you don't get your parents' permission, your whole family will not support you at all. Maybe one or two singles will say you're right but they can do nothing because there is [*sic*] no money support, no place. In China there is also the threat thing, they say, '*If you go with him you will not be my daughter again'*...Their parents told the boy that, '*You cannot go with her. If you go, you cannot come back'.* It's really good if you get permission, if no, it's really a bad thing. (LA Group 5)

Other reported consequences of rejecting parental involvement ranged from parents pressuring offspring to break up with rejected partners, to refusing to attend future weddings. For example:

> "They will talk to me every day and convince me that this guy is not good. Maybe they won't allow me to see my boyfriend anymore. I would have to stay at home every day, with my parents…not going out…even with my other friends." (LA Group 9)

Participants emphasized the ability of parents to dissolve relationships that they felt were not appropriate, using tactics such as persuasion, ultimatums, and removing contact from the family. Some extreme consequences of parental rejection of intercultural relationships were exemplified in their dialogue. For example, one participant reported her parents threatening to take her out of school and back to their home country for disobeying their wishes. Their dialogue is shown below:

> "My ex was from a different culture and it took a really bad toll on me because my parents, they really rejected him, like, '*If you don't leave him, we're going to bring you back*

> *here, you're going to stop school…*' and then I was like, '*First of all, I didn't come here to just start school and then quit and then go back home*.' " (LA Group 10)

Several participants also reported that an intercultural relationship that was against their parents' wishes would have a negative impact on the closeness they shared with them.

> "If the parents say no, actually, you cannot marry the guy. I would think so because it's hard to say but I think most people want to just obey their parents because when you don't obey their idea, you reject them, it's really hard for you to live a life with the guy individually because you don't have any support from your family, maybe you even can't stay with them in the same city, so that's not a good thing so I don't think people will do these things." (LA Group 2)

Not surprisingly, the prospect of parental rejection of their romantic relationships was problematic for these individuals, and they saw the solution to this conflict to involve conforming to their parents' wishes, regardless of their own desires.

Contingent Parental Involvement in Low Acculturated Participants' Dating Relationships: "It Depends"

Low acculturated participants were similar to their high acculturated counterparts in the sense that they too desired *some* independence from their parents. However, the priority of this desire for low acculturated individuals was not as high as for their highly acculturated counterparts. Similarly, invoking a threshold to parental involvement was not as much of a concern for low acculturated individuals.

Developmental stage and age. One important rationale for invoking a boundary to parental involvement, however, derived from participants' beliefs that at some stage they needed to take on adult responsibilities. With respect to romantic relationship decisions, one

participant felt that age was an important factor which determined the acceptability of parents' involvement. For example, this participant believed that until an individual was in their late 20s, they would not be able to make the right relationship decisions. Interestingly, she highlighted the difference between positive involvement and control, explaining that parents should know what their offspring's limits are. She said:

> "I think there is a limit to how much parents should get involved but I think we're kids. We're not 28, we're not mature enough. So, when we make a wrong decision throughout our lives, our parents correct us. It [sic] shouldn't be that, '*You're talking to a guy? Let me talk to him on the phone'*. There's also a limit. So, as long as the parents know their limit, I think that they should." (LA Group 9)

Age and parental involvement was also a gendered issue among other participants. As mentioned earlier, low acculturated participants typically supported the belief that parents were stricter on their daughters' dating behaviour. However, this participant seemed to suggest that while all young adults deserve more independence upon reaching maturity, this privilege was also influenced by gender, as sons typically received more freedom regardless.

> "Because you're old enough to make their own choices and your own decisions. After all, the man, after a certain age they leave them alone, they don't bother them anymore so why shouldn't the girl be okay on her own?" (LA Group 8)

Other participants argued that "excessive" parental involvement in their dating relationships was undesirable. For example, some were adamant that parents should not be able to determine the outcome of any romantic relationship. Additionally, some participants were against ending a relationship due to their parents' wishes. For example:

> "I think an influence determining whether you end up with that person is not their choice though. I'm sorry, I'm thinking of like Bollywood movies when parents are like, '*You can't be with her,'* and then they lock her in the room. No, but influence, like I said, should be advice. They can't determine what's going to be the outcome of your relationship though." (LA Group 10)

This suggests that even low acculturated young adults may be dissuaded from allowing parents to become involved in their romantic relationships if they perceive negative consequences as a result of that involvement. However, it is evident that this was not an important theme for low acculturated individuals. While one participant did believe that parents needed to allow their young adult offspring the chance to mature into an adult, in comparison to the previous discourse on acceptance of parental involvement, this was an exception to the rule. Even so, four participants did report that they would firmly reject their parents' involvement in their dating decisions, as discussed below.

Rejection of Parental Involvement

Desire for independence. It is striking to note that, like the highly acculturated participants, the most common reason for this rejection involved a desire for independence. For example, one participant explicitly stated that she would actively reject parental input in order to become autonomous:

> "I would not accept or take their input. Because if it's unconsciously then you don't realize that you're following what they say. But if they say you have to do this, or you have to change this, it's not something I decided for myself. So I would not be comfortable with that." (LA Group 5)

Another participant justified the need for independence from parents, as she perceived that this would allowed her to learn from experience and undergo personal growth:

> "At the end of the day it's your relationship. Even if they do get involved, it's not going to help because you need to solve your own problems. You're an adult. It's not like you can depend on your parents anymore." (LA Group 2)

When participants were probed in another focus group session to explain how independence from parents contributed to learning opportunities, one participant explained:

> "Because as a young adult or teenager, I think it's left for them to start learning by themselves who is right for them and who they want to be with. If it's their mistake, they can learn from that and not be like, '*My parents were involved'*...or…'*This happened…they kept interfering'* and not put the blame on the parents but learn on their own." (LA Group 10)

This refusal of parental interference was considered especially important for personal growth to another participant, who believed that independence allowed young adults to take responsibility for their decisions. She claimed that without parental involvement, young adults would become fully accountable for all decisions made.

> "I think in the Chinese tradition, the parents will control the girl more than boys but it's a new rules socially and in the social life, it's not very same as the past years and so I think it depends on the personality of their young adults. If she or he more outgoing or have the more mature mind they will control." (LA Group 3)

Similarly, another participant argued that her romantic relationship was the only aspect of her life that she could control. Due to this belief, she felt that parental involvement was unnecessary and undesirable. She said:

> "No because it's more of a personal thing. Because if it's my boyfriend, someone I want in my life, I don't want my parents to have control over that. They still have control over me, but not control over that. It's one of the aspects of my life that I can control." (LA Group 5)

Within the same focus group, another participant argued that a parent choosing a potential mate for her was highly unreasonable. She argued:

> "I don't think they would be controlling much. But who I should date is more like…I wouldn't really, if I bring home one guy and they say yes or no then it's okay. But they bring one guy and say you should date this guy then it's not reasonable." (LA Group 5)

Need for respect. Interestingly, one participant reported that a lack of privacy was an issue that would prevent accepting parental involvement, as she believed that it would not allow her romantic partner to feel respected. She believed that it was respectful of her parents to allow her to make her own relationship decisions in accord with her partner. She said:

> "My answer is no because it's my privacy. I have to respect my partner. If my parents influence too much, it's not respectful to my boyfriend and they should respect me too. What they influence, [*sic*] it's talk about our relationships, our details, it's too much detail. My parents shouldn't involve too much." (LA Group 1)

As with highly acculturated individuals, she reported that to be too involved would indicate that her parents did not respect her or her partner's ability to make decisions on their own. This was an interesting findings, as her opinion was not shared by other low acculturated females.

Summary

Overall, these findings suggest that the principal rationale for low acculturated young adults' acceptance of parental involvement in their romantic relationships concerns the ongoing emotional and material support and guidance it ensures they will receive. For daughters who uphold these traditional values, holding parents in such high esteem is clearly a normative and functional aspect of their culture. They also reported a cultural expectation that parents would be included in most important decisions in a young adult's life.

Chapter 5: Study One Results, Part 3

Perceived Parental Attitudes Towards Daughters' Dating Relationships From the Perspective of Bicultural Young Women

The bicultural groups consisted of 32 participants who had ethnically originated from a collectivistic culture. 37.5% of this group comprised of individuals who identified as East/South East Asian (e.g., Chinese, Vietnamese, Malaysian, etc.). This was followed by 31.25% who identified as South Asian (e.g., Indian, Bangladeshi, Nepali, etc.). The most common religious denomination in the Bicultural groups was Atheism/Agnostic, which was 31.25%, followed by 21.9% who identified as Muslim. Overall, these bicultural individuals' family educational history mirrored that of their low and high acculturated counterparts, in that over 90% of their parents had completed a high level of education (i.e., higher than high school). Interestingly, 69% of the bicultural groups were first generation Canadian, indicating that most had immigrated to Canada. It is based on these observations that these participants were highly likely to consider themselves as bicultural, having both Eastern and Western values.

Negative Parental Attitudes Towards Daughters' Dating Relationships

As might be expected, bicultural participants reported mixed views about parental attitudes towards daughters' dating relationships. Like the highly acculturated participants, some argued that parents were relatively understanding and open about their daughters' dating choices; however, the extent of this was understood to depend on parents' own acculturation status. Overall, bicultural participants' views were closer to the views of the low acculturated participants with respect to their perceptions of negative parental attitudes towards

daughters' dating choices, for the reasons discussed below. It should be noted, however, that whereas the low acculturated participants tended to agree with their parents' views, the bicultural participants were more ambivalent – they understood their traditional parents' feelings but did not necessarily agree with or accept them.

Chastity and reputation concerns. Unsurprisingly, the need for chastity was perceived to be just as important for the parents of participants in the bicultural groups as it was for participants in the low and highly acculturated groups. Further, being seen as chaste was understood to be more important for daughters than for sons, and it functioned to maintain a daughter's (and family's) good reputation. For example, one participant described females as "losing" after sexual initiation and potentially, pregnancy.

> "My dad has even said, '*Girls lose.*' So if I break up with my boyfriend...I lose, but my boyfriend doesn't lose. For example, if we had sex, I would lose my virginity, but he's okay...he's a guy—he can just have sex with someone else, right? If I get pregnant, he could leave me and I'd be left with the baby. Having a baby should be seen as something that's happy, right? It's a miracle. But socially, it's seen as, *'Oh my God, you had sex before you got married.*' So, girls would lose because he—my boyfriend—would have no indication that he had sex, whereas I would have had a baby, right? So, my parents have said that girls lose." (BC Group 4).

Further, and as mentioned by the low acculturated females, divorce was also considered taboo for females within collectivistic communities:

> "(On why Afghan society sees divorce as taboo) Most Asian countries have that mentality, I think it's because the girl would be used." (BC Group 7)

Similarly, there were comments about how a female's value depreciated over time, with a female's value at its highest as a virgin before marriage. However, there were many factors that lowered her value, including pre-marital sex, number of partners (implying sexual promiscuity), and divorce. As with the low acculturated females, there was a perception that a daughter's reputation was linked to her family's honour. More importantly, a daughter with a bad reputation reflected negatively upon her parents' own skills.

> "They're going to assume that this is their daughter and they haven't controlled her enough or taught her well enough to not do that. They would just solely blame the parents." (BC Group 11)

For these collectivistic families, the reputation of one daughter was considered to affect her siblings and extended family, as well as her parents.

> "Let's say you have 5 daughter and one of the daughters go astray, everyone would assume that they're all like that. If one daughter goes astray, the whole family's honour gets ruined." (BC Group 5).

Protection of daughters within the home. Because they were living in a Western society, many traditional parents were reported to believe that the outside sphere was dangerous; accordingly, they had many rules for their daughters in terms of their dress, curfews and staying home. Similar to the high acculturated participants, bicultural participants believed that parents felt a sense of security when their daughters stayed within the inside, domestic sphere.

> "They get used to knowing where I am...knowing that I'm home. When I suddenly go out, they make it a big deal and ask a million questions. I went jogging the other morning and my dad was like, '*Where'd you go? I went into your room and you weren't there. Did you see the newspaper? The kidnappings...they found these girls like 5 years later!'*" (BC Group 2)

Parents were believed to regard their daughters as being more emotionally and physically vulnerable than sons, and more in need of protection. Interestingly, one participant's experience indicated that some parents may even equate staying at home with femininity. Straying outside the domestic sphere was seen as masculine behaviour.

> "Like women, like girls, or daughters especially are be expected to be more feminine and they're not supposed to be out all the time. My parents would always used to call me a tomboy...like a crazy girl...I want to go out too much. '*You're always outside, you should stay in and read a book*.'" (BC Group 9)

Gender role expectations. Bicultural participants also perceived that parents had different gender role expectations for their daughters. In particular, daughters were expected to take care of their own families in the future; hence, there were strong expectations that they would undertake domestic duties such as cooking, cleaning, and generally knowing how to run a household.

> "Growing up, my parents were obviously more strict on their daughters because you're pretty much raising them so they grow up and then go on their own. But with a guy, they grow up and they go and get married to a woman who has already been raised to clean and cook and whatever. Parents are more strict trying to get you to become the perfect girl." (BC Group 10)

Interestingly, these experiences with conforming to gendered expectations were typically made in relation to how brothers or male cousins were not expected to help out as much. This was an important comparison for these young adults to make, as it suggested that while young males may learn how to care for a household in the future, it was even more important for a young female to grasp these skills immediately before marriage. For example:

> "I think being Indian there is, as the female, there's so much pressure to be perfect by a certain age so that you're ready to be married. It's OK, for example, if my brother does not know how to turn a barbecue on. He will figure out one day. But if I don't know how to turn it on, '*How are you gonna learn to cook when you get married? How are you gonna turn it on for your husband?*' And so, there is this sense of preparing you to be married always in the back of their head and that's why there's always more pressure on us females." (BC Group 4).

These expectations led some participants to feel that being a good daughter meant being "perfect", especially since daughters were frequently perceived as an "investment" by parents. It was explained that parents believed daughters had fewer opportunities for employment and financial security than sons; accordingly, parents were particularly concerned about daughters' educational goals and achievements:

> "I feel like my mom has higher expectations for us, education wise, than for my brother, because in our culture, men can always get employment. It's just harder for women. Just because of stigma (of women in the workplace) so I feel like there's more pressure on me and my sister to get better educated." (BC Group 3)

Further, the statement "what don't we do for you?" in the following quote suggests that participants understood the investment that parents had made in their education and the disappointment they felt if their daughters performed poorly:

> "If a guy gets a D, it's like, *'Okay...you can try better next time.'* Guys will be guys...guys are dumber than girls...that whole thing. But if a girl gets D or something, it's like everything breaks loose and it's just like, *'Why you couldn't you get that? You're smart, you're a girl. What don't we do for you?'*" (BC Group 5).

These comments demonstrate a potentially difficult quandary for bicultural daughters, who are expected to devote themselves to maintaining traditional 'feminine' qualities and home-related duties, while also achieving academically in a competitive, Western educational environment.

Arranged versus love marriages. Some participants spoke about the ways in which parents' own marital experiences influenced their attitudes towards daughters' dating relationships. For example, one participant argued that parents who had "love marriages" would be much more open to their daughters' dating choices:

> "It depends on how the parents got together, too. My parents had arranged marriage [*sic*] but other people in my family had love marriage, so they're open to the child bringing home someone. That's a big factor in how they see their influential roles on the relationship." (BC Group 5)

Other bicultural participants noted the difficulties of negotiating parental expectations for arranged versus love marriages. Traditional parents may find arranged marriages to be normative but these types of mate selection practices may be unacceptable for young adults who see their peers dating multiple partners before marriage. One participant explained:

> "I think if a family or young adult from South Asia brought home a girlfriend or boyfriend and said they wanted to marry them or dating them, the parents would fully oppose that, because the parents are still in that culture. Fully exposed to that culture [*sic*] where it's the parents duty to arrange the marriage and settle their children. Whereas here, it'd be okay. It depends on the family." (BC Group 5).

Parental Attitudes Towards Specifically Intercultural Dating Relationships

Amongst bicultural individuals there was a general consensus that overall, intercultural dating was "difficult" and that there were "too many barriers", which made it unappealing. Many of these barriers concerned the lack of shared values and the difficulties in trying to integrate a culturally dissimilar individual into their traditional family.

> "I was thinking about…when you get married, it's not the individual, it's the family so if they're both from the same background, the holidays and formality. If it was a Christian vs. an Afghan, their rituals are difference." (BC Group 7).

Further, some participants argued that the wider community would disapprove of the relationship and that parents would "lose face" as a result:

> "I think what it really boils down to is that they care about what other people think and they don't want to have a bad impression from their community." (BC Group 12)

Another participant elaborated this point:

> "It's a damage to your reputation. It looks like you can't control your child and your child is going crazy and dating white people. It's bad for your reputation. What will people say? It's a major concern for her." (BC Group 3)

A further important contributing factor to parents' unwillingness to accept intercultural dating concerned potential loss of cultural identity.

> "..as it is right now, I'm kind of Canadian and a South Asian. I've kind of lost part of my culture that they had. So if I were to date someone of another culture, then it would just be more of a melting pot and so I would lose a lot of, they would feel that I would lose a lot of my core values." (BC Group 5).

Participants also suggested that many parents were unwilling to adjust to new traditions and ways of life, even if they were not recent immigrants to Canada:

> "My parents immigrated here well into their 30s. They're pretty set in their ways. I do understand the fact that she's hesitant or unwilling to connect with a completely different culture, and it's a huge deal for your child to marry someone who you're comfortable with. (BC Group 3).

Just as low acculturated daughters argued that one of the biggest barriers to parental acceptance of intercultural dating was the inability of parents to communicate with a daughter's partner, so too did bicultural daughters worry about potential communication difficulties (although unlike low acculturated individuals, these participants did not have to worry about communicating with their partners themselves). Many participants noted that because of their traditional background, feeling like "part of a family" was an important value. Without effective communication between all family members, this was difficult to achieve:

> "Communication is one of the biggest things. In Asian cultures, marriage isn't about two people, it's about two families and bringing those families together, and when you can't communicate with your in-laws, that's a big concern because that whole larger community is very important because of raising children and being married is about combining these two groups together. So I think that's really the core problem about intercultural relationships." (BC Group 2).

Another participant explained how even for bilingual parents, speaking their 'mother tongue' was much more intimate, used in the private sphere of the home, whereas speaking English was only for the public sphere with members of other communities.

> "They do speak English fluently, but they're a lot more comfortable speaking in Murati, which is my mother tongue. I think for them, it's home, so they generally prefer to speak to people who speak Murati, whereas they feel that they speak in English only to people at work where they have to in terms of speaking to someone, like at a store." (BC Group 4).

Race or ethnic preferences. Like many of the low acculturated participants, there was general agreement in the bicultural groups that parents would prefer certain ethnicities over others, even though the participants themselves were comfortable with living in a multi-cultural environment:

> "I know people from all different ethnic backgrounds and I'm pretty close with a lot of them. My view is completely different from theirs, they're immigrants from China so they've only known Chinese people their whole life. They've just never met any nice people that are outside of their race. So I just know that they don't understand." (BC Group 9).

Similarly, there were comments that parents would consider Black (but also, potentially white) individuals to be poor mate choices.

> "My parents have said when I first considered boys, '*No black people and no white people*'. For black people, in Chinese culture, especially in Taiwan, the direct translation is

> black, but black, like dirty. They also have a lot of stereotypes like hip hop... and.. a lot of racism." (BC Group 4)

These comments suggest that race preferences are especially important for parents who hail from Eastern societies where multiculturalism is not as widely valued. While parents may be well-intentioned for their daughters, these comments indicate that young adults may feel embarrassed at their parents' conservative values. Often, these conservative values are explained as "traditional" or "different" from their own views, indicating that for bicultural individuals, who may have grown up in Canada, may be more likely to readily welcome intercultural relationships.

Positive aspects of intercultural dating. Interestingly, and unlike the low acculturated participants, bicultural participants did note some positive aspects of intercultural dating. Some of them explained that parents were open minded towards multiculturalism due to their many years in Canada, and/or because they had witnessed intercultural relationships occurring in their family:

> "I'm second generation so I was born in Canada. My parents have been living here for a long time and they've been exposed to Canadian culture and they're a lot more open minded compared to my other relatives that live back home. Definitely I would say that they're more lenient and they're definitely more open minded." (BC Group 11)

The impact of the acculturation process on increasing parental acceptance of culturally dissimilar individuals was seen as especially important for stigmatized communities. A typical comment was that Black people were stigmatized due to parents' lack of experience with their community. This lack of contact increased prejudicial ideas that Black people were irresponsible and dangerous, and thus, many immigrant parents were reluctant to accept them

as potential mates for their daughters. However, the acculturation process had positively impacted families whose daughters had black partners. One individual explained:

> "Especially since a lot of their friends would feel like black people are so bad, but they've never actually met a black person. They're basing these racist remarks on these and the media or whatever. But my sister's first boyfriend was black and they married and they had a kid. She's two and she's so cute, and my dad loves her. And my dad, after my sister had the child and married, well, her husband, we, as a family, have become more accepting of other cultures just because my brother-in-law's such a great guy and he's always been there for my sister." (BC Group 4)

Other participants referred to parents "getting used to" ethnic diversity in their family during the process of acculturation. Some noted that their parents had completely accepted that their children may become involved in an intercultural relationship.

> "Even in university, throughout university he's like, '*No boyfriends allowed*'. But after I finished my undergrad we had a discussion and he...kind of put his guard down. He was like, *'I wouldn't really care what kind of culture guy you dated. They can be Japanese, African-American. I don't care as long as they have a good personality, because that's what matters.*' " (BC Group 8)

Indeed, some participants argued that some immigrant parents actually expect intercultural dating. While this phenomenon is rare or non-existent in traditional societies, intercultural dating is less atypical in Canada, which may have promoted the normality of intercultural dating to traditional parents.

> "My parents are very open and they would be very understanding if I introduce Caucasian boyfriend to my parents only because I'm in Canada. I think it's kind of they are expecting me to bring home someone that's not Japanese and I think in Japan we don't have

> strong religious influence in our lives so even though the person is coming from different religion we would be very open to accept it [*sic*]." (BC Group 6).

Further, some participants believed that even language challenges could be surmounted:

> "Language is part of the culture and language is a barrier if they do not speak the same language that we do. This means that there's less involvement, there's less communication but they still will take the time. They still will get to know their values because we talked about how parents really just care about our happiness and if they have the same values as us. They will take the time, no matter how big the language barrier is. They will get that point across. They will get to know them on that level." (BC Group 1).

Overall, the dialogue of bicultural participants revealed perceptions that parental Westernization not only leads to general openness towards daughters' dating and love marriages but also, to increased acceptance of intercultural relationships. However, much of the dialogue in these groups suggested that overall, traditional parents find it difficult to accept the relationship-related norms and values of the host culture, and strive to ensure that daughters conform to those values. Ironically, these immigrant parents are also perceived to highly value academic success for their daughters and to seek compliance with both traditional and Westernized values in different contexts. Overall, most bicultural participants believed the disparity in values and ideals between potential partners and traditional parents were too difficult to negotiate.

Degree of Acceptance of Parental Involvement in Bicultural Participants' Own Romantic Relationships

Acceptance of Parental Involvement

Parents as guides and objective observers. Overall, bicultural individuals were heavily invested in the opinions of their parents and, like low acculturated individuals, many indicated that accepting parental involvement in their relationships would be a sign of respect. One individual claimed that parental involvement in her dating relationships was so acceptable that if her parents disapproved of the relationship, she would terminate it immediately. This was attributed to the strong trust she placed in her parents' decisions.

> "…If my parents said yes then I could pursue it. If they said no then I'm pretty sure the relationship would end there just because I trust my parents and their decisions. I feel that they know what's best with regards to that kind of stuff. They've been there." (BC Group 1)

As with the highly acculturated participants, many of those bicultural participants who claimed to accept parental involvement in their dating relationships did so because they regarded parents as a source of information and as guides for maturing young adults. For example, one bicultural participant noted:

> "Parents, I think especially based on their own experience, are great sources of knowledge. My parents have given advice but very generally. So, '*if you get married, do this*' and, '*don't wear that when you get married*.'" (BC Group 4)

Another important point concerned parents' ability to provide a clearer perspective on their daughters' relationships. For example, one participant explained that parents were able

to act as a third party due to their relationship experiences, and that these experiences would enable parents to provide valuable advice to their offspring.

> "It's good to have a third party because sometimes you can't see what other people see when you're in a relationship. Your parents have been there and they can give really good advice." (BC Group 1)

Another participant supported this by explaining:

> "I think that parents see more of the whole image whereas when we're in love, we just see that. Parents want us to see the bigger image and they want to pick some things for you to consider and make us really think whether that person is right for you or not because they've been through so much. The parents have so much knowledge." (BC Group 1)

Importance of parents and parental "blessings". The importance of family for individuals who identified as bicultural was strongly evident in their discussions. For example, this participant mentioned the guilt she would feel if she dated someone her parents would not approve of. She said:

> "If my parents said no, I'd feel really bad dating the guy. I'd just explain to him that it's important, the relationship between my partner and my parents is really important. I'd feel really bad if I did it. If they said no and I still dated him, the relationship wouldn't be the same if my parents didn't approve." (BC Group 1)

This individual argued that once her parents rejected her romantic relationship, it would alter the relationship dynamic between her and her partner. This has interesting connotations for the longevity and quality of romantic relationships for individuals who place such

high regard on their parents' opinions of them. Indeed, many bicultural individuals believed that parental acceptance was essential for daughters who were interested in marrying their dating partners.

> "..if it was something serious like marriage and I sort of, I would want them to be okay with it, so I would hold off in terms of the whole getting married, of course I wouldn't get married if they're not okay with it." (BC Group 8)

Some argued that one did not need to be in a serious romantic relationship for parental approval to be necessary; rather, parental rejection at any stage of a romantic relationship would be detrimental to its continuation:

> "I don't wait until we're in serious but I just bring them home and see what they say … I think for me, if they reject someone, that's the end of the relationship. It might not be the end right away but it's coming to an end. Just because I probably will agree with them." (BC Group 1)

Other bicultural participants, too, reported that while they may feel a romantic connection to their partner, if parental disapproval occurred during an important stage of their relationship, its influence would become paramount in determining its future outcome:

> "I definitely want them to approve to say that this person is okay. I don't think I can marry someone that they despise because at the end of the day, I still want my families to be together. If it's not working out then I don't think it would work out or continue." (Bicultural Group 11)

The desirability of parental approval of bicultural daughters' romantic relationships can be nicely summed up in the concept of receiving blessings. Several bicultural participants specifically mentioned the necessity of receiving blessings from parents in relation to their

dating choices. One individual believed that it was a cultural ideal to obtain blessings, as it reinforced the importance of family in making important decisions.

> "Not having a parental blessings is unheard of. I think parental blessings are really important, because families are really important in our culture. If it came to us or them, I would definitely choose my family." (BC Group 3)

Receiving parental blessings was considered especially important for participants who were interested in a relationship continuing on to marriage. One participant explained:

> "Say you're going to get married to them, they're going to have to meet them in the end. In my culture, the boyfriend actually needs a blessing before we can be together." (BC Group 1)

Relatedly, one participant argued that blessings were important in case of relationship failure. If a relationship terminated, the family would be able to take the burden on as a group since they had decided together that this relationship would develop into something more serious.

> "If you go out on your own without your parents' blessing, and it doesn't work out, they'll add that guilt factor to you, saying that we never agreed with it in the first place, so now it's your fault. You kind of take the burden on as a family." (BC Group 3)

Signs of parental acceptance. Participants in the bicultural focus groups also engaged in discussions about how to recognize signs of relationship acceptance from their parents. The majority of the dialogue focused on positive aspects that engaged romantic partners with the family, including: making conversation, inviting them to events, and family dinners.

In fact, family dinners generated the most comments among all acculturation groups, as this was considered to be the most important sign of acceptance of a romantic partner. Many participants explained that family dinners were not only a non-invasive way to get to know an offspring's mate, but also a good way for romantic partners to feel included within a family.

> "In my culture, once you invite someone from the opposite sex to dinner, it's a big step. It's almost saying you're part of this family and we accept you. This guy, we're kind of involved, I remember my parents were ok with him being there for dinner and they were just observing. It's more like, *"What are you doing in school?"* It's like basic questions, but the fact is that they interacted. Once my parents started talking to him, it's like they're OK with it." (BC Group 1)

When asked why inviting a partner over for dinner was considered special and momentous for a romantic relationship, one participant explained:

> "Food is an aspect of culture, so just inviting the partner to our house and enjoying the food. Asking how it's going...where the partner is in their life, education wise. She wants to see us happy and if the relationship is going far or if it's a short-term thing [*sic*]." (BC Group 3).

In the majority of comments made by participants about the importance of family dinners, the emphasis was on partners feeling more like a part of the family unit, as illustrated by the example below:

> "I know that acceptance would be obvious if – like we go out a lot like just for dinner, family events, community events and I know in Islam, acceptance is if they started going out with the guy as well or asking him to come along, asking his family to come along, so that would be a big thing, like involving his family and a really big indicator of acceptance would be if they started introducing him to my family so like a lot of the elders or the uncles that you need to show that respect to and if you feel like this is a really good

> respectable guy, you'd see your parents introducing them to family because they'd be proud and happy for that." (BC Group 6).

The importance of family unity was a major theme in the dialogue of bicultural participants who accepted parental involvement in their relationships. Specifically, they noted that parents had wisdom and experience to offer, and that familial acceptance, including parental blessings, were paramount if a daughter's relationship was to continue and succeed.

Contingent Parental Involvement in Bicultural Participants' Dating Relationships: "It depends"

Differences in values and ideals. Not all bicultural participants were so certain that parental involvement in their romantic relationships was desirable, and several noted that this issue was a source of frequent intergenerational conflict as participants frequently clashed with their parents' values and ideals for relationships. They reported conflict, in particular, over such issues as negotiating cross-sex friendships, curfews, expected levels of obedience to parents, and dating before marriage. They acknowledged that immigrant parents typically want to retain their home country values, with which they feel most comfortable. Accordingly, if they witness their daughters engaging in behaviours that are not common or tolerated in their home country (i.e., dating), they begin to exert more control.

> "I also think there's that added sort of pressure because we're here, and for me I'm the only one from my closest family that are outside, our entire family is outside of Pakistan. And I think they feel an extra pressure to maintain that culture and stuff just because they see that it's not all the same and that they have to try and make sure we're not sort of completely out of our culture and our values. So I think they're stricter to maintain those." (BC Group 8).

Parents were considered to be especially wary of cross-sex friendships. These were commonly regarded as immoral for young women, and as a threat to their virtue.

> "My parents were both born in Sri Lanka and they grew up there. They were told by their parents and their society that you always hang out with people of your own gender...if you see someone hanging out with someone from another gender it may indicate something...like you're a couple and that wasn't really supported at that time in their culture. That's what they know. That's what they spread or teach or move on to their children." (BC Group 10).

Many bicultural participants also discussed the contrast between the level of obedience their traditional parents expected and the level that they were willing to give.

> "My mother was brought up in a culture where she did follow her parents' instructions and she expects that from us. She feels like we don't really have direct relatives here, so there's no examples of our culture here, so she has less control in this environment versus Sri Lanka ... where we have more family involved [*sic*]." (BC Group 3).

Similarly, there was general agreement that traditional parents did not understand the importance of dating before marriage, since many had arranged marriages in their home country.

> "I know for a fact, my parents, when they were younger they never dated...they just had an arranged marriage. They really don't know what it takes for dating to occur. They really feel that once you date someone, automatically you're married to them. I don't think they see that transition of you figuring it out and seeing if that person is right for you and you have that time." (BC Group 4)

She continued:

> "When they (her parents) were married, he plays the role as the husband, she plays the role of the wife versus in today's society...you're husband and wife, but you're more partners together than you are a particular role. And to me, in the past, to be compatible wasn't such a big issue because you're the husband...you're at work all day, and you hang out with your male friends afterwards, and the wife...you stay at home, you socialize in your own closest circle. But that does not happen nowadays...I don't think my parents understand how important it is to be compatible with that individual 24/7 a day." (BC Group 4).

Given these potent sources of intergenerational conflict, many bicultural participants reported that they invoked a threshold to parental involvement in their relationships. One important reason for this was if they believed their parents held an unreasonable bias against their romantic partner. For example, one participant believed that if her parents were motivated by racial biases, she would rebuff their rejection of the relationship. She explained:

> "It would be hard, but I do value their opinion, unless it's something very trivial like race or something. If it's something small then it really shouldn't matter and I would fight them against that but overall I think the take away is that parents, I think they need to be very open." (BC Group 6)

This was a concern for another bicultural individual who indicated that her parents' unattainable standards would lead to conflict.

> "I would want to know their opinion and what they feel but at the same time I wouldn't want them to criticize things that, material things in terms of like money, jobs, appearance. I would value their criticisms or even their opinions if it was something that was authentic. Something real about the person and their personality and not like '*They don't earn enough. They're not light enough'.* That's an issue sometimes. It shouldn't be about the appearance [*sic*]…should be something real, something that I think is actually some-

> thing that is important to my values or to their values and then I would listen to that opinion." (BC Group 8)

Again, it is evident that while generally, bicultural participants valued their parents' input and opinions, many also felt the need to invoke a threshold if their parents' values and ideals did not match with theirs. This was especially evident for participants whose parents idealized traditional or conservative values (e.g., preferred particular racial and cultural backgrounds), which were in stark contrast to their own, more contemporary values:

> "I know their comfort level and I know that I wouldn't like my parents to feel uncomfortable with the person [*sic*] in a bicultural thing (i.e., relationship). I find myself bicultural but I know they're not. In that manner, if I were to date a guy from another culture, I definitely would put in a lot of thought in terms of whether or not the guy still meets that criteria that my parents would want from an Indian guy. If he does, then I would introduce them to the person. Even then if they wouldn't agree, then I don't know, I would kind of ask them why and if it's really culture in the end and not personality then I would tell them you need to reflect back on what your values are because it sounds like you're almost discriminating or you're being racist." (Bicultural Group 8)

Like some low acculturated participants, several bicultural participants rejected what they perceived to be *excessive* parental involvement. For example, one participant explained:

> "I would definitely respect what my parents had to say and definitely ask them why they rejected my person but ultimately it would be my decision. So in the end, if they were correct and I shouldn't have been in the relationship with that person then it would be my problem… Obviously, I'd learn from my mistake but I'd rather that than having to have not have ever tried the relationship at all and see what would have failed." (BC Group 6)

Gaining advice from parents was a key component to accepting some involvement. One participant admitted that parental involvement was necessary, as some young adults were still immature and unable to make good decisions.

> "I think their influence should be as like an advisor more than, '*you have to do this*' like an authority figure kind of thing. So I think, yes, but minimal." (BC Group 12)

When this participant was asked what kind of minimal involvement was okay, she said:

> "If I was going out with a guy who's not in school and who doesn't look like he's going anywhere in life, then I would want my parents to intervene and just be like, '*Do you think it's the best idea to be with a guy like that? Or maybe you should encourage him to get into school and better his future.'*" (BC Group 12)

For another bicultural individual, high parental involvement meant the risk of young adults rebelling against their parents' strict control. Deciding upon a threshold seemed to be a difficult task for her, as she also believed that some parental involvement was necessary.

> "I definitely think they should be involved. I think there's a fine line between being involved and being too involved. I don't think they should be able to say concretely *'No, like you can't date this person.'* Because I think that encourages some people to defy their family just out of rebellion. But at the same time I think that being older and being wiser, their opinion should be taken into account." (BC Group 2)

The idea of rebelling against highly involved parents was supported by another participant who valued her parents' advice without their being excessively involved. She said:

> "I don't think they should be involved in determining whether the relationship should end or continue. They should just give helpful advice and be supportive. If they see some-

thing that's not right, then I think they should get involved but in a tactful way, not just saying *'You need to end this now'* which I think would make me resentful and make me want to keep doing it." (BC Group 3)

This was further elaborated below:

"For me it really depends on what kind of involvement you need. Often, the involvement my parents do get is like negative involvement. So like, it's either nagging or like what Participant 2 said. It's like, *'Don't have sex. Don't hold hands. Don't kiss.'* Their advice is always...negative about him and *'You need to either improve him or consider my expectations and you need to make sure that he accomplished that in like 2 months.'* It's some unbelievable expectations...it's not gonna happen! But I do feel that if parents were to be involved, they should have more positive involvement. Like being supportive and... the first time when they met him, they should have been a lot more welcoming rather than hostile. It was very unwelcoming, it was just awkward. Either they should have positive involvement or don't be involved." (BC Group 4)

Stage of relationship. Another issue for bicultural participants that led them to invoke a threshold occurred when they believed that parents misjudged the significance of their offspring's romantic relationship. One participant seemed to desire parental involvement only after her relationship had become more serious. However, she also believed that conservative values highly impacted parents' level of involvement. She explained:

"I think you should be involved to a certain extent. I think they should be aware of the relationship. My parents are really conservative and our culture is really conservative and sometimes parents assume that relationships will lead to marriage. That's obviously not the case now. You end up dating someone, it doesn't mean you're going to marry that person. I think their involvement should come later on in the relationships if it's getting serious. If they're looking to settle down or get married but in the initial stages, they shouldn't really interfere." (BC Group 11)

Two other participants also noted that the intensity of parental involvement should depend upon the length and seriousness of the relationship:

> "On a very simple relationship, basic, no marriage involved, no engagement involved, I wouldn't expect too much involvement…but once I get married, in terms of parents being involved, I would like them to be involved in terms of having dinner once a week or whenever people have time. And perhaps doing things, events, sharing events together. (BC Group 8).

On the other hand, some participants noted the potential conflict here in that if their parents did become involved in their serious relationships and rejected them, they would find it much more difficult to give their partners up:

> "It depends on how well I've known that person. If I've only known them for a year, my parents' give me ground for rejecting him, then I'd consider what they're saying. But if I knew him for like 5 years, and the reasons for them rejecting him does not make sense then I would not take their rejection seriously." (BC Group 5)

This dialogue around relationship length/seriousness and parental involvement is revealing, as it allows a glimpse into the conflict experienced by some bicultural daughters over their desires to allow some parental involvement while also maintaining a sense of autonomy in their relationship choices. Indeed, many bicultural participants defined themselves as young adults whose responsibilities included the ability to make their own relationship decisions. Numerous times this was expressed in terms of parental involvement stunting their ability to grow as mature adults. One participant specifically mentioned the difficulty she would face if she had to choose between her partner and her parents. She explained:

> "You know that I would want to say that it wouldn't affect my relationship with that person. It wouldn't affect my feelings for that person, I would still care about that person exactly the same way. However, we're very family oriented. As a family, we do things all the time together and if my parents were to reject a relationship with anybody—regardless of who it was—I wouldn't stop caring about them. But it would definitely be in the back of my head that *'You might be one of the reasons that I'm not as close to my family as I was before'* and '*What could I have done to change that?*'" (BC, Group 4)

The most difficult aspect for this participant would involve rebuffing parental rejection and potentially renouncing her family. She added,

> "My family is so important to me. If my family wasn't as important to me, if I was distant from them regularly, then maybe not so much, but because I am, it would bother me." (BC, Group 4)

This is an important issue to highlight due to the consequences such conflict may have for daughters who are trying to navigate relationships with their partners and their own families. As noted in the Introduction, young adults who face parental rejection may be more susceptible to poorer mental and/or emotional wellbeing. This is supported in the following statement:

> "For me, I feel a lot more pressure if my parents rejected him all the time and also, it would always be a constant battle between choosing him or my parents. So, you obviously want to please both sides and you're kind of caught up—caught between the two. Also, it really makes a lot of your decisions in that relationship a lot more secretive—a lot more hidden—and it just causes you to make a lot more lies [*sic*] that you really didn't need to." (BC Group 4)

Sex and intimacy issues. While parental involvement was highly desired by some bicultural daughters, many also reported difficulties that inclined them to refrain from seeking

input regarding their romantic relationships. One commonly reported problem concerned communication difficulties, especially around issues of sex and intimacy. For example, one participant stated:

> "Talking about relationships, it's very awkward to talk about me and my boyfriend's relationship to them. For example, they ask, *'Do you hold hands in public?'* I have to say no, because if I say yes, there will be this whole tirade of *'Don't do that. You can't show affection in public.'* So, I feel like I can't be open with my parents and, in that way, I can't get advice from them because I can't ask them those questions." (BC Group 4)

This participant sought more open communication with her parents, but a perceived lack of intergenerational understanding led her to withhold relationship information. Another participant in the same focus group agreed that parental involvement was challenging due to the "awkward" nature of such sensitive topics (e.g., sex, intimacy, public displays of affection).

> "My parents are also very awkward in terms of romantic stuff, like sex. Even if I were to watch a romantic movie, my mom would be like, *'Oh, that's all you want to watch?'* Just something like romantic movies [*sic*]…with my parents it's very tough for them to discuss romance in general. They don't even hug in public. My dad walks two meters ahead or two meters behind my mom. In public, they don't even walk together." (BC Group 4)

This participant explained that the lack of open communication between herself and her parents was connected to the lack of public displays of affection between her parents. She indicated a critical tone in her experiences with discussing intimacy around her parents, as it seemed that they discouraged any signs of affection. She supported this by explaining:

> "…and the fact that they can't even discuss their own relationship. My mom, up until last year, she said, *'After having your sister, I never had sex with your dad again.'* They

> didn't have sex and only until after she was like, *'Well, obviously I have sex. He's my husband.'* But they don't even acknowledge that, right? So I think it'll be really hard for them to discuss my relationship if they can't even discuss theirs. So parents should be, but my parents shouldn't." (BC Group 4)

Another participant in this group also discussed the influence of arranged and love marriages on parental involvement. She noted the pressure on young adults to either allow parents to arrange their marriage or to marry the first partner they became serious with.

> "In Indian culture (or) customs there is no such thing as dating as we talked about, everything is fixed, arranged marriage or some kind of marriage and I feel that my parents still believe in that, those kinds of customs [*sic*]. If you are to be [*sic*] dating someone, you should make sure that, down the road, like one year down the road that it is fixed and you know that what you want to do with this guy and you can't just figure it out over time." (BC Group 4)

The following participant further explains the importance of this statement on perceived parental involvement on romantic relationships:

> "I really do feel that Indian culture does come in that interference. You can't really date someone freely. You have to make sure it's hidden from the rest of the world. You cannot display your affection as openly as you would want to, and also, your parents could say whatever they want and there's no line (i.e., boundaries) as to what they should say and they can say whatever they want. You have to listen and get used to it and ignore it over time so I've had fights (with them) numerous times." (BC Group 4)

Clearly, the perceived cultural boundaries between themselves and their parents contributed to the difficulties bicultural daughters faced in determining how much parental involvement was acceptable in their dating decisions. Many participants highlighted the difficulty of having to negotiate between their parents and partners, noting that dating without parental approval would cause internal conflict: do they create a future with their partner or obey their parents' wishes? Some noted feeling confused, angry, and conflicted over having

to make such challenging choices. Participants also noted the difficulty for them in making good relationship choices without being allowed prior experience in dating (at least, with their parents' awareness). This issue seemed to be unique to bicultural individuals whose parents may impose strict, traditional ideals on their daughters who are developing in a non-traditional cultural setting.

Rejection of Parental Involvement

Divergent values. Unsurprisingly, many bicultural participants believed that parents should not become involved their dating decisions because of their strongly divergent values. One participant explained:

> "I don't think they should. I'm really close to my parents and they're looking out for my best interest but I don't think they know what I want in a person. When they're looking for a suitable match, they're just looking for what are things are positive in our culture. What our culture perceives as the perfect male." (BC Group 11)

She seemed to implicitly suggest that desirable mate characteristics within her parents' cultural background were unwanted by her in a mate. Other participants agreed that traditional parents' lack of understanding of young adults' romantic relationships should preclude their involvement. This lack of understanding was especially profound for an individual whose parents had an arranged marriage.

> "I know for a fact, my parents, when they were younger they never dated, so they just had an arranged marriage. They really don't know what it takes for dating to occur. They really feel that once you date someone, automatically you're married to them. I don't think they see that transition of you figuring it out and seeing if that person is right for you and you have that time. It's not like, '*Tomorrow get married because you're seeing him.*'…I just feel that they don't really understand what it is like to be at this age…But in

> terms of what I do with my relationship and what I want to do with it in the future really is up to me. I think it should be up to me rather than them. [*sic*]" (BC Group 4).

The relationship that two participants had with their parents was an especially important justification for rebuffing their involvement. Both individuals felt that their parents were culturally unaware of the "dating process". The first participant felt that her parents should not be involved as they would not understand what to do. She explicitly stated that they would cause harm to her romantic relationship as they would attempt to dissolve it and thus, she preferred to rebuff their involvement.

> "I also don't think they should be involved. My parents, if they become involved, they just won't know what to do. With the way their personalities are, they'll probably do more harm than good. Just because it's not in the culture and if they were involved, I don't know what they would do. They'd probably just get you to get out of the relationship." (BC Group 12)

Another participant similarly noted that parental involvement was non-existent in her romantic relationships due her parents' beliefs about the horrors of "love marriages." She reported that her parents rejected overt signs of intimacy because they were associated with love marriages and further, it was love marriages that led to divorce:

> "When it's on cinema, it's like '*That's so cute'*, but in real life, it's like '*Oh, hell no!*' Most peoples' love marriage that my parents knew of, ended up in divorce or… the guy went to jail or something. Most of their ideas of love marriage is really horrible…acceptance of …if I do [*sic*] bring home a guy, would probably be very slim." (BC Group 5)

The second participant seemed to lack trust in her parents' ability to choose a mate for her as their relationship experience did not match her own hopes and values. Indeed, the dif-

ference in cultural values between these two generations was clearly demonstrated in the following dialogues:

> "I know people whose parents wanted them to get an arranged marriage and because they wanted to settle down, and it contradicted the lifestyle that you were brought up on. The relationships and ideas nowadays is like...having an arranged marriage is kind of crazy. Most people would consider not meeting your husband until you see them at the altar.. that's insane because you'd have to live with them for the rest of your life." (BC Group 2)

She noted a lack of trust in her parents' judgement as her cultural lens was more Westernized than her parents' lens. This conflicting intergenerational perspective was justification enough for this participant to rebuff her parents' input in relationship matters.

Desire for independence. Many of the bicultural participants who rejected parental involvement did so for the same reason as highly acculturated participants: i.e., their overriding need for independence and autonomy. For example, one participant explained that she needed to be accountable for her own mate choice:

> "I don't know about influence (from parents) because at the end of the day, it's the person I'm going to be stuck living with. I want to be doing the decisions at the end of the day." (BC Group 11)

Another participant explicitly rebuffed parental control as she renounced the traditional expectations that some Asian parents hold for their offspring.

> "I think it's just my personality. I don't want to listen to my parents anymore. I know it's hard but I just don't like how Asian parents expect their kids to follow their orders." (BC Group 3)

Similarly:

> "I value my relationship with my mother and if that relationship with my partner means enough to me, I feel that she should know about it. She should not have any say in whether the relationship should continue or not. But I feel like I'd be comfortable with myself and in my relationship with my partner if my mom knew about it." (BC Group 3)

Further, some bicultural participants argued that romantic relationships were opportunities for learning and that parental involvement hampered this:

> "I just think they should never be involved because it's my life and they shouldn't interfere, at all, that's just how I feel. In my last relationship, they told me not to continue, even though it failed but I told them that I never regretted it. If I take their opinion, I'd regret it later so I'd rather experience this myself and, you know, getting their advice." (BC Group 3)

One bicultural individual did consider that age might be an important factor in determining the acceptability of parental involvement. However, when it came to controlling or influencing the relationship in any way, this participant believed parents were over stepping their boundaries.

> "I think at this age, like the undergrad age…I think as long as the romantic partner is mature and it's a safe relationship, it's consensual and that person as good character I don't see any reason for parents to be getting involved. I think parents have to know their boundaries and how to know how to approach certain issues." (BC Group 6).

Summary

Clearly, some bicultural participants had decided, despite feelings of ambivalence about parental input, that it was more important to maintain complete independence in relation to their dating choices than to allow any degree of parental involvement. They did not perceive that their parents' relationship experience was useful or even relevant (especially in regard to arranged marriages) and they saw their parents' lack of understanding of the world in which they lived as a serious barrier to communication. Like the participants in the other acculturation groups, these bicultural daughters believed that independence and autonomy in relationship decisions provided them with opportunities for learning and were appropriate to the culture in which they were living.

Chapter 6: Study One Results, Part 4

Responding to Parental Rejection of Dating Relationships:

Negotiation Strategies

Participants were asked how their dating relationships would be affected following parental disapproval or rejection of their partners. In response to this question, various negotiation strategies were described by participants and coded into thematic categories (see Table 7). A working definition of *negotiation strategies* was that they described plans of action that young women might use in response to parental rejection of their dating relationships. While many participants believed they would automatically behave in a certain way following rejection, there were some participants who believed they would try one negotiation strategy first before moving onto another. This usually occurred by choosing a strategy such as adjusting partner to match parents' values in order to entice parents' approval, followed by either rebuffing parental disapproval or finally, relationship dissolution.

Study One's findings revealed five major negotiation strategies, some of which were more frequently reported by participants in particular acculturation groups than others. The first major category, *relationship dissolution,* describing participants' decisions to break up with their partners following parental rejection of their dating relationships. The second major category comprised the opposite strategy: *rebuffing parental disapproval.* This category described participants' decisions to ignore or reject their parents' views and sometimes even involved severing relationships with their parents. The third major category, *adjusting parents to match partner's values*, described participants' attempts to help their parents perceive positive aspects of their partner and to change their views about the relationship. The fourth major category, *adjusting partner to match parents' values,* described participants' attempts to change aspects of their partner in order to please their parents; e.g., asking partners to

change their appearance or gain more suitable employment. Finally, the fifth category was unique only to highly acculturated individuals, *no experience in parental disapproval*, which described the lack of parental rejection or highly permissive parenting that highly acculturated young women experienced.

Of course, participants were not always firmly committed to one strategy over another; sometimes, similar to the "it depends" category described in earlier chapters, participants described how they would have to reflect and consider before deciding whether to retain or dissolve their romantic relationship, depending on the perceived significance of the problems identified by the parents. Some participants also argued that they would never experience parental rejection of their relationships, so would never need to engage in negotiation. The remainder of this chapter will present the most interesting and salient findings from the three acculturation groups with respect to their expected negotiation strategies following perceived (or potential) parental rejection of their dating relationships.

Highly Acculturated Individuals

Rebuffing parental disapproval. As might be expected, given the commitment to autonomy and independence of highly acculturated individuals described in previous chapters, rebuffing parental disapproval was the most commonly used strategy in response to parental rejection of dating relationships. Almost half of the highly acculturated individuals believed that they would rebuff parental disapproval of their romantic relationship; often as a way to "prove" their parents wrong. Further, many highly acculturated participants were uncompromising when it came to relationship decisions:

> "If such circumstance ever happened, either my dad or mom or both rejecting a romantic relationship, being the stubbornness [*sic*] that I am, I'll prove them wrong . But then at the back of my mind as I still continue to be in a relationship with the person I'll still

> have their rejection in mind while the relationship's still on going. One for because I'm stubborn and two, just to prove them wrong." (HA Group 10)

Often, participants suggested that parents would not be able to give a strong enough explanation as to why the relationship should end. The following quote suggests that independent young women may perceive parents to be on the "outside" of the relationship, and therefore incapable of discerning positive qualities in their mate.

> "I mean they can say what they want but I'm not going to break up with someone because they think that they're not worthwhile." (HA Group 3)

Their dialogue also indicated a sense of confidence in their ability to make good decisions for themselves. Additionally, another participant suggested that as long as she viewed her partner optimistically, she would rebuff her parents' rejection. She explained:

> "If I really liked that person, I don't think the relationship would change with that person. If anything, my relationship with my parents would change." (HA Group 8)

Many participants explained that "small" reasons (i.e., excusable or justifiable behaviour or traits) that parents might provide would not be sufficient to cause relationship dissolution. Often, participants suggested that parents did not understand the dynamics of their romantic relationships and so, without an insurmountable justification, the relationship would continue:

> "If they told me to break up with him, I probably wouldn't listen. But I would listen to the reasons why they think I should. So I don't think they should have the influence to tell you what to do, but I think they should be able to give you advice. (Moderator: What kind of advice?) If it was a small reason and it's not something I just found out, I knew of it before they found out, I think I would be fine with it. It wouldn't be enough to end the relationship, I would just be like*, 'Mom, dad…I'm fine with it. I've known this person more than you, so you've just got to live with it*.'" (HA Group 4)

Clearly, autonomy in decision-making regarding romantic relationships was an important value for highly acculturated individuals. This did not mean, however, that they were unaware of the potential consequences of rebuffing. One participant, for example, described the consequences for her mother, who had chosen to maintain her relationship in the face of parental disapproval:

> "With my mom, they sort of cut her off some things...if we're going out to big family events, they wouldn't tell her about it so she won't be there. In a sense, they're shaming her for being in that relationship. Like, *'We don't want you to be seen with the rest of our family.'* " (HA Group 9)

This participant's dialogue indicated that rejected offspring (i.e., the black sheep) are meant to feel shame as a consequence of their poor relationship decisions. This finding is interesting, as it offers a glimpse of the consequences that may occur following defiance of parental rejection. Overall, however, this did not seem to be a common feature of highly acculturated individuals' experiences.

Relationship dissolution. Unexpectedly, "breaking up" following parental rejection of their romantic relationship was a relatively common reported strategy among some highly acculturated individuals, in the interests of maintaining a positive familial relationship. These individuals stated that family harmony was of the utmost importance to them, and that they

wanted their romantic partners to seamlessly fit into the family after marriage. Clearly, if mate rejection happens to a daughter who highly values family togetherness, she will feel conflicted about choosing to maintain her relationship as it implies a lack of care for her own family.

> "I want ultimately when I end up with someone for the rest of my life. I want my family and I and my husband to be able to share moments together and if they don't like whoever I'm with that's just not going to happen." (HA Group 3)

> "I think it would a strain between me and my parents if they really didn't like the person I was dating. I think I'd really have to consider, is it worth having a worse relationship with my parents, to date this person? I think if I saw it was really affecting my relationship with my parents, I would probably consider breaking up with them." (HA Group 4)

For one young participant who lacked experience with romantic relationships, the importance of parental support was strongly emphasized in order to help her navigate such new experiences:

> "With me, I feel like the overall picture, at the end of the day if it's my family and my significant other, I would choose my family. Especially for me because I haven't dated, I feel like my family is my support group…At the end of the day, especially since I have such a strong relationship with them, I'm gonna listen to them over my romantic partner." (HA Group 6).

Adjusting parents to match partner's values. Some highly acculturated participants claimed that a lack of understanding between parents and romantic partners may be resolved by encouraging parents to learn more about the partner. This negotiation strategy would allow participants to retain a rejected relationship with the hope that parents may re-evaluate

their original negative opinions. One participant explained that she would guide her parents to make a more informed decision if they rejected her relationship. She said:

> "If it was just a case of not knowing someone well enough that they just decided that they didn't like them because they don't know enough about them then there's things you could do to help them get to know them better and then let them make more of an informed decision on that…" (HA Group 3)

Other highly acculturated participants acknowledged that parents might be initially rejecting of their daughters' relationships due to the belief that young males were not "good enough" for them. During many of the discussions, participants noted a frequent tactic they used to help parents adjust was to introduce partners during dinner time. This tactic seemed to allow young adults to bring their partners into a non-hostile environment where parents could observe their daughter's interactions with her partner and determine their partner's positive qualities. Mainly, the aim of this negotiation strategy was to allow parents to witness the positive qualities of their offspring's mate that they may have not considered previously.

> "It would make me really sad (following rejection)...but I would still see that person and I would still give them chances and I would just work with them to show my parents that they're wrong and show them that we're actually good together." (HA Group 7)

No experience of parental disapproval. An interesting feature of highly acculturated participants concerned several participants who claimed to have had no experiences with parental disapproval, and/or could not imagine such disapproval. This dialogue was raised exclusively in the context of intercultural relationships:

> "I went to school my parents knew that this was a school that had a lot of Chinese people at it and they were just like, *'You're going to end up married to a Chinese guy'*...I think

> they were just open minded. They wouldn't really mind who ever I ended up with, I think as long as I was happy." (HA Group 1)

Clearly, although intercultural dating relationships may have been surprising for both participants' families, many highly acculturated daughters were confident that their parents believed their happiness was much more important than their choice of mate.

> "(They) kind of looked twice and were like, '*What the?*' (Note: this is a common slang in Canada used to indicate surprise) but they never told me no [*sic*]. They put the same precautions in that they would think any young kid who is dating, like, '*You can't take him up to your room*' or '*You can't go out until three a.m*' and eventually he proved to be a good guy. But in terms of race, he's White and I'm not. My father's White and my mother's not so that was never an issue, that never came up...so, they kept an eye on me and when he proved to be a good guy, the rest of it didn't matter." (HA Group 2)

Low Acculturated Individuals

Rebuffing parental disapproval. In comparison to other negotiation strategies, rebuffing parental disapproval was the least used by low acculturated individuals. Rebuffing parental disapproval was mainly endorsed by those few low acculturated individuals who believed that they understood their partners fully and that they were quite able to make the final choice in choosing a romantic partner.

> "I personally think that it will depend on you because you're the only one who knows if whether or not your relationship with this person is what your parents think it is, if it's a good relationship or a bad one. In a sense, your parents don't really know what goes on in your relationship because it's a relationship between the two people. If you really love this person and you're happy with it, then why would you let someone affect your relationship just because your parents don't like them?" (LA Group 10)

Although rebuffing parents was not a common strategy for low acculturated individuals, like highly acculturated individuals, they did note the difficulties that might be encountered in having to choose parents over partner, and the conflicting demands of both decisions. Some did argue that they could try to convince their parents; ultimately, however, their dialogue suggested that relationship dissolution was inevitable if parents were adamant and the rejection was insurmountable.

> "When the parents object, you don't have much future for the relationship, so I guess I would probably break up soon. Also, because normally if they have such strong objections they should have good reasons. And after if they tell me the shortcomings of the guys then normally I would take one of those shortcomings and the relationship will turn sour. So...just break up. Also, I think that you only have one set of parents but there are so many sets of guys...so you should keep the family relationship." (LA Group 5)

As for the highly acculturated participants, a major concern for low acculturated participants was that defying parental wishes would create family discord. However, although many participants believed that such discord was inevitable, others suggested that it depended on how serious the relationship was. In particular, these participants believed that long-term relationships which were heading towards marriage, were more important to maintain, even if it meant breakdown of familial relationships.

> "If my parents reject my relationship, I guess it depends on the degree of how involved I am in my relationship. If I really like the guy and I think it's the right person for me, I would try to go against my parents, but I'd also have to think of the long term of my relationship. If the relationship is gonna continue, there's gonna be reach the point when we get married, I have to weigh how important to me is being in a good standing relationship with my family. Because it's something that's gonna last a long time and I'm gonna have

> to deal with both sides...then it really depends on the level how involved and how much I like the person I'm with." (LA Group 5).

Relationship dissolution. Overall, the overwhelming majority of low acculturated participants reported that they would break up with their partner following parental rejection of their romantic relationship. In particular, low acculturated individuals claimed that maintaining family harmony was paramount and used this as a rationalization for breaking up with rejected partners. Participants also believed that familial rejection predicted poor future family relations and therefore, to maintain a good standing with one's family, relationship dissolution was inevitable. This negotiation strategy was even claimed to be "beneficial".

> "At first I may not listen to my parents and still want to continue the relationship but now I will just obey their decisions but I won't break up with the guy immediately. I will try to find a chance to talk with him and I think if he really understands me he will just support my decision because if he is mature enough, he will know that if we didn't earn the families support we won't be happiness in our future, so finally we will break up [*sic*]." (LA Group 2)

Some low acculturated individuals did report wanting to "hold out" on the relationship in the hope that their parents would come around. However, uniquely to this acculturation group, the dialogue suggested a strong need for young women to obey their parents' wishes. One participant explained:

> "I think if my parents don't like my boyfriend and they talk a lot about what he *inaudible* but if I very love him I may suggest they can look long time to know how is he or how is the person and if they insist what they think I might listen to them because if we're together...if they don't like each other, it's a unbenefit to us [*sic*]." (LA Group 3)

An important aspect of low acculturated participants' tolerance of parental rejection of their relationships stemmed from their important beliefs around filial piety. As noted in a previous chapter, the majority of low acculturated individuals believed that their relationship with their parents was more important than their relationship with anyone else. This is evident in the dialogue of the next participant, who argued that young adults had the responsibility to respect their parents' wishes. Indeed, the key terms "responsibility", "obligation" and "duty" were frequently found in the low acculturated participants' dialogue. Many individuals had a strong sense of obligation towards their parents and thus, it was common for them to believe that rejected partners were easily replaceable in comparison to parents.

> "Just because the cultural, maybe I would just end the relationship because they are my parents, they are my family. They are the ones that stayed with me for 20 years. We have the responsibility to respect them. If it's just the cultural, maybe I would just persuade them, and tell them that this one is a good man and I can be myself when I stay with him. But if they still reject then I would just end it." (LA Group 6)

> "I would consider parents opinion because it's more important to me. I cannot ruin my relationship with my parents. Basically...my parents...if they...reject my partner that means my partner has a very bad aspect that I don't know….But if my parents reject him, then I will leave him, because you can only have parents one time, but boyfriends you can find more than one [*sic*]." (LA Group 7)

Adjusting parents to match partner's values. As noted above, the vast majority of low acculturated participants agreed that if a choice must be made between family and partner, family must win. However, they did not always give up without an attempt to change their parents' minds. Indeed, and in contrast to highly acculturated individuals, 'adjusting' parents to rejected partners was a relatively common negotiation strategy for low acculturated individuals. Several reported that it was important to try and persuade parents to notice the

good qualities in their rejected partners. Many also believed that this persuasion included helping parents to understand what they found appealing about their mate:

> "If I take my partner to my parents [*sic*], that must mean I love him very much. I want my parents accept him. I will try my best to persuade them. I will tell my partner the truth, *'My parents reject you.'* We together will try our best to persuade my parents." (LA Group 1).

This kind of persuasion was considered essential for low acculturated participants who greatly valued family harmony.

> "For me it's really important that my parents agree to who I'm with because I need their blessing at the end of the day because they've raised me up for so long and for all of a sudden to leave that relationship for someone else is not fair. I would try a lot to make them understand why I would want to be with that person and I would talk to them." (LA Group 10)

This participant's dialogue suggested that young, low acculturated women who feel conflicted about choosing between traditional parents and partner may attempt to utilize this negotiation strategy to ensure the continuation of both relationships. This is a functional negotiation strategy, allowing young adults to maintain a rejected relationship while they attempt to persuade dissatisfied parents to change their views about the relationship. However, the extent to which this strategy would be successful was a debatable point. In particular, participants noted the importance of differentiating between characteristics that could be overlooked by parents and offspring and those that could not. Participants explained that parents were more likely to accept partners who had "small" issues (i.e., poor physical appearance, large age gap) than "large" issues (i.e., unpleasant personality, poor manners, lack of respect).

> "I think a big problem may be my boyfriend have a bad personality and I never find but they find [*sic*]. I think the bad personality is just a big problem. And the small problem just like the age. It's not suitable but I think it's not a big problem or if he is tall or not very tall or something like this but finally I will persuade them because I think although I very like him [*sic*] but I think I should have a happy life between him and my parents." (LA Group 3)

This negotiation strategy was especially productive for low acculturated individuals who valued their parents' knowledge and experience, but who also believed their partners would be acceptable once parents recognized their positive aspects. It also seemed to be the most constructive due to the weight given not only to the daughter's emotional connection to her romantic partner, but also to the wisdom of her parents:

> "Family plays a very important role in our life. We can't just ignore their advice. If they reject him, there must be some reason why. So as for me I would figure out why. And if the reason is reasonable I would follow their advice. But if I think the reason why they reject is because they don't know who is my boyfriend and how he is. I would try to persuade my parents and give them more time to communicate and let them figure out that he's a good man and he's the one I want." (LA Group 6)

Bicultural Individuals

It was clear from the dialogue of the bicultural participants that they had given considerable thought to the potential problems of balancing autonomy and family obligation in the context of dating and marriage. Much of their conversation concerned issues of power and control, and the difficulties for traditional parents who may use indirect influence attempts in order not to be seen as intruding, or "crossing the line" with their more Westernized daughters. According to these young women, one major signal of parental disapproval would be for them to point out faults in the daughter's partner, so indirectly indicating rejection of

their relationship.

> "They'd pick an attribute and say, *'This is bad. This is bad. His job isn't good. His major* (in college or university) *isn't good. Look at him...he's fat.'* " (BC Group 1)

Another method of parental persuasion was to offer "better" options to their offspring.

> "I feel that it's a sign of rejection because of what people ask, like, '*Are you seeing anyone? Do you want me to give you some names?*' Something related to like Shaadi.com but the Murati version of it. And I say, '*No, I'm not interested right now.*' But like, my parents are like, '*No, you should consider this. This person is dating a doctor or whoever…*' And I just like, '*You do know my boyfriend exists right?*' " (BC Group 4)

Some parents were also considered liable to resort to emotional blackmail in an effort to dissolve a daughter's relationship:

> "They would have that weird choice of words. They start talking about how I raised you so I would think I know what's best for you. They start to try to have more control over you. They try to suddenly manipulate with you by making you doubt yourself, instead of having a direct approach by having a talk with you." (BC Group 2)

However, several bicultural participants reported that parents could also confront, lecture, and give explicit ultimatums to their daughters or even threaten to disown them if they did not follow their parents' wishes:

> "I have a cousin who is dating a Tamil guy and they've been together for many years. There came a point where she was speaking to her dad about them getting married and eventually he gave her an ultimatum that said, '*Either you choose him or you choose*

> *us.*'…and choosing him would mean that he would disown her and she wouldn't be part of the family, and wouldn't be financially supported either." (BC Group 12)

Such dialogue reflects the control that many immigrant parents may have (or seek to have) over their bicultural daughters' mate choices.

Rebuffing parental disapproval. As with highly acculturated participants, an equally popular negotiation strategy for young, bicultural women was to rebuff parental disapproval and continue their dating relationship against their family's wishes. Many focused on the need for independence as young adults, and although they spoke of the importance of gaining input from their parents, they also desired the freedom to make relationship decisions independent of them. One participant talked about the importance of making decisions independently, as it allowed young adults to grow and learn from the experience. She explained:

> "I would definitely respect what my parents had to say and definitely ask them why they rejected my person but ultimately it would be my decision. In the end, if they were correct and I shouldn't have been in the relationship with that person then it would be my problem and obviously I'd learn from my mistake. But I'd rather that than having to have not have ever tried the relationship at all and see what would have failed." (BC Group 6)

Relationship dissolution. "Break up" narratives of bicultural individuals were similar to those offered by low and highly acculturated individuals. Most focused on the benefits that relationship dissolution would bring to the family. Many participants maintained that parents knew best for their daughters and if they had pointed out negative qualities in rejected partners, that rejection was valid. Similarly to low acculturated participants, parents' experience in relationship matters was discussed as a good reason to follow their advice. However, maintaining family harmony was still the primary reason for breaking up with rejected partners:

> "I don't think I can marry someone that they despise because at the end of the day. I still want my families to be together. If it's not working out then I don't think it would work out or continue." (BC Group 11)

Some even argued that opposing their parents' wishes meant undervaluing them:

> "I think my mother thinks that based on our relationship, it's a little bit distant; more distant than I'd like it to be. So I think that she thinks I would choose somebody over her. But that's not the case. I would probably end it eventually if my mother was *that* opposed to it...I do value my mother a lot. So I wouldn't want to make her unhappy like that." (BC Group 3)

Both of these quotes provide a sense of what young bicultural adults may have to negotiate in order to appease two conflicting, but equally important relationships. For many of these participants, appeasing parents was the instinctive choice. In one focus group, a group of South Asian sisters explained the importance of having their relationships blessed by their parents. One sister talked about the stigma of choosing partners over parents:

> "Not having parental blessings is unheard of. I think parental blessing are really important, because families are really important in our culture. If it came to us or them, I would definitely choose my family." (BC Group 3)

It was suggested that "blessings" from parents acted as a symbolic support net for young adults. For these collectivistic families, in times of difficulty, having parents that supported your relationship could ensure that any emotional difficulties is shared, thereby, lessening its emotional toll.

> "If you go out on your own without your parents' blessing, and it doesn't work out, they'll add that guilt factor to you, saying that we never agreed with it in the first place, so now it's your fault. You kind of take the burden on as a family." (BC Group 3)

She added:

> "We don't have any relatives here. Pretty much at the end of the day, all we have is our mom. You don't just throw that away. Parental blessing is very important to me [*sic*]." (BC Group 3)

Adjusting parents to match partner's values. Similar to participants from the other acculturation groups, many bicultural individuals adopted a compromise strategy in the face of parental rejection, and attempted to show their parents their partner's good qualities. Indeed, some argued that it was also respectful to their parents to do this. Exposing their parents to their partner in a positive manner was a way of not only gaining a parent's perspective on the relationship but also of including them on relationship decisions. For bicultural individuals who may identify with both their traditional home culture and their contemporary host culture, this appeared to be a way to acknowledge their parents while maintaining their independence. Two participants explained how this could negotiation strategy could work:

> "I would try to persuade them since I guess, for me personally I do appreciate, or I mean I do look up to parents too. I wouldn't completely reject their perspective even though they don't approve of my decision, I would at least try to work it out with them too." (BC Group 9).

> "I think I would try to get them to understand that person, get them to see why I approve of this person...why I want them to be involved and approve. Because I think if I've chosen that person for something serious like marriage, I think I've already put a lot effort and thought a lot about it. And if I don't think that they have anything to raise in terms of objections, it's anything serious that I would think about, I think I would just try and convince them and stick with it and try to get them to see what it is." (BC Group 8)

Similarly to their low acculturated counterparts, this negotiation strategy ensured that young adults attempted to first convince parents of the positive values in a rejected partner. However, relationship dissolution was deemed to be inevitable if parental rejection was insurmountable:

> "I would probably ask why if they rejected…what's the reasoning? I would say that it might cause some stress and problems between me and the partner and me and my parents just because of their feedback. Probably argue back stating his good points. It would cause tension between us and then probably I would think back about their points, why they rejected him and maybe if they were true I'd probably break it off...if what they said was right." (BC Group 8)

These findings suggest that bicultural females may utilize the "adjusting parents" negotiation strategy if they are hopeful of retaining a rejected relationship. This negotiation strategy allows them the flexibility of continuing their relationships while believing that their parents may revise their initial opinions.

Adjusting partner to match parents' values. A very interesting strategy reported mostly by bicultural participants was to focus on adjusting their partners to match their parents' desires. Certainly, their eagerness to please their parents is not surprising, and living within a collectivistic household encourages family harmony as a particularly important value. For this reason, it may be seen as more feasible to try and change one's partner than to change one's parents. For example, when one participant was asked how her relationship would be affected following parental rejection, she implied a desire to know specifically what her parents did not like about her boyfriend so that he could "fix" it.

> "Maybe if the question was worded, if your parents rejected a specific attribute…then, I'd be like, '*Could you change that attribute because my parents would accept you?'*" (BC Group 1)

This participant's goal was to understand the specifically rejected criteria and then implement the kind of strategic change that would win her parents' acceptance. However, another participant noted that there could be negative relationship consequences of trying to change a partner as a function of the constant attention being paid to his undesired qualities:

> "I also find that when parents reject your relationship, they bring up a lot of negative things about your boyfriend, for example, and you actually see those qualities which you never really saw before...and I think that brings up things that we'll fight over. Like, '*You need to please my parents too! You need to make sure that you see to every single thing on this list so that they're happy when they leave.*' And I feel that if they were just accepting of who he was and didn't reject parts of him, it would've been a lot easier on the relationship." (BC Group 4)

Despite this risk, many bicultural participants reported the importance of changing partners in line with parents' wishes. Further, it was frequently suggested that a partner's willingness to change for their future in-laws showed agreeableness and a positive desire for family togetherness. Interestingly, the most commonly cited change for partners involved a change in religious beliefs. This may simply be a function of the fact that racial identity is non-negotiable.

> "They had my brother in law initiated into the religion. It doesn't even help that he initiated, he just thought it was a way for our family to accept him...But I know for sure my boyfriend would want to do that….I think that's also one thing that my boyfriend has to accept...their religion – and not just accept it but also be a part of it and be active in terms of the ceremonies that are involved with being a Buddhist." (BC Group 4)

Summary

Overall, the findings reported in this chapter daughters of at every level of acculturation seek to maintain family harmony and to win their parents' approval of their dating partners. However, they also desire some level of independence or autonomy in their lives. Hence, participants in different acculturation groups emphasized the use of different negotiation strategies in pursuit of their goals, depending on the strength of those goals. Highly acculturated participants were the most likely to rebuff parental rejection of their dating relationships, but were also conflicted about the implications for family harmony. Low acculturated participants were the most likely to accede to their parents' wishes and dissolve their dating relationships, though this also was associated with some conflict and stress. Both low and highly acculturated participants noted that they might attempt the compromise strategy of attempting to change their parents' minds by pointing out their rejected partners' positive qualities. Bicultural individuals, as would be expected, experienced the most stress and conflict about potentially having to choose between their parents or their partners. Several of them endorsed relationship dissolution, but several also endorsed rebuffing parental rejection of their relationships. While many endorsed the compromise strategy described above of trying to change parents' minds, many also tried the reverse tactic of changing their partners to better fit their parents' expectations. Finally, some bicultural participants attempted to have the best of both worlds by maintaining their relationship in secret from their parents.

Overall, the results provide a glimpse of life in Canada (or any other highly Westernized nation) for young women from immigrant families. For many of the low and bicultural participants, all of whose families are first generation Canadians, staying close to the family unit provides a sense of added support and protection in a new environment. In order to maintain familial harmony, daughters may go out of their way to please their parents and retain their approval. As they become increasingly acculturated within their Westernized cultures,

however, immigrant daughters are clearly at risk of feeling ever more conflicted between choosing to obey their parents' wishes or following their own desires.

Chapter 7: Study One Discussion

The purpose of Study One was to explore how young adult females of differing levels of acculturation status would react to perceived parental involvement and subsequent rejection of their romantic relationships, including intercultural relationships, and to examine their reported negotiation strategies in the context of parental rejection. Although all the participants came from immigrant backgrounds, the impact of having immigrant parents is clearly multifaceted and seems to involve many different levels of influence (i.e., social, cultural, religious, gender based). The purpose of the exploratory approach was to better understand not only the challenges that young women from different immigrant backgrounds experience, but also their perceptions about the reasons for parental involvement in, and potentially rejection of, their romantic relationships.

Acceptability of Parental Involvement in Adult Children's Dating Decisions

The intergenerational conflict caused by differing parent-offspring relationship choices has long been highlighted in the literature. Much of the evidence has found that a discrepancy between parents and offspring's desire in an ideal mate leads to intergenerational conflict (see Apostolou, 2008a, 2008b, 2011; Buunk, Park, & Dubbs, 2008; Dubbs & Buunk, 2010; Perilloux, Fleischman, & Buss, 2011). This is constant with the parent-offspring conflict theory, which explains that conflict between parents and offspring, occur over clashes on an offspring's mating preferences (Trivers, 1974).

During the acculturation process, both parents and offspring may undergo periods of increased stress and conflict, as the difference in language, attitudes and values may be highly dissimilar between each generation which could ultimately affect family functioning (Farver, Narang, & Bhadha, 2002), especially if parents are non-supportive (Kim, Chen, Li, Huang, & Moon, 2009). For example, there is much evidence to suggest that large discrepan-

cy in acculturation levels between parents and offspring can also be a risk factor for increased depression and poorer academic performance (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996; Costigan & Dokis, 2006a). These discrepancies in a family's overall values and ideals may lead to parents and offspring feeling alienated from one another (Qin, 2006). Indeed, family conflict may act as an overall mediator of the relationship between differences in acculturation status and offspring maladjustment (Telzer, 2010).

Study One's findings revealed large differences between low, bicultural and highly acculturated individuals in their acceptance of parental involvement in dating decisions. Low acculturated individuals were very willing to allow parents to become involved as parents had more experience and family harmony was important to upkeep. Moderately acculturated (i.e., bicultural) individuals were highly ambivalent in allowing parental involvement, as many believed it was unavoidable but not highly desirable. There was a need for compromise as the desires and ideals of both parents and young adults was negotiated.

For traditionalists (i.e., those whose beliefs oppose modernism or liberalism), dating is seen as a preface to marriage, usually as a way for individuals and their families to find an appropriate mate together (Tang & Zuo, 2000). Bicultural individuals may find this process conflicting as this may not be the primary goal in contemporary society, which is more influenced by popular media and the American dating culture, where there is no pressure to marry once engaged in a romantic relationship. Further, in comparison to their bicultural peers, newly immigrated young adults may be more accepting of their parents' views on dating and sex, which may be "fixed" upon conservative values (Kibria, 1997).

Bicultural individuals may be more ambivalent about allowing parents to become more involved in a societal context in which they have little to no experience. Indeed, bicultural individuals mentioned that traditional parents may not be the right individuals to give young adults advice or guidance in their romantic relationships due to their inexperience with

them. The results also revealed that bicultural females faced an increased amount of tension and conflict when attempting to negotiate between their own and their parents' needs and desires. This was mainly due to the perception that they had different values from those of their parents. Highly acculturated individuals had less conflict to negotiate with their parents, with some females preferring to rebuff their parents' values altogether. However, rebuffing negative parental involvement was not an option for many low acculturated and bicultural individuals, as family harmony was deemed more essential than personal autonomy.

The findings in Study One is in line with other research that has found parents may guard daughters more than sons (Apostolou, 2007; Perilloux, Fleischman, & Buss, 2008). Parents have also found to be more restrictive with daughters' romantic relationships and in turn, give more autonomy to their sons in regards to their romantic relationships (Block, 1983; Kan, McHale, & Crouter, 2008). Further, this is in line with research showing that daughter guarding is more prominently featured in collectivist cultures, with individuals reporting higher degrees of parental involvement (Buunk & Solano, 2012).

Cultural diversity: A problem for immigrant parents. The findings of this study suggest that the majority of young women who feared parental rejection of their romantic relationships believed that cultural dissimilarity of potential partners was a particular problem. The main concern for participants was that parents would not be able to cope with culturally dissimilar individuals because they perceived them to hold contrasting values and ideals. This was especially prominent for more traditional, lower acculturated families. Other research on mate preferences has also found that parents may prefer certain qualities for their offspring's mate, which may be in conflict with what the offspring finds desirable (Apostolou, 2011). These desired qualities have been found to be shared amongst many different cultures (Buss, 1989) and although certain desired qualities are shared across most societies, it is still unclear as to why certain parents may view other cultures as less favourable than theirs.

Collectivistic societies are known to be much more uncompromising in distinguishing between in-group members and out-group members (Gelfand et al., 2004). According to Sagiv and Schwartz (1995), a consequence to making this distinction is that collectivistic individuals may be more wary or fearful of "outsiders" or foreigners. From an evolutionary standpoint, Fincher et al. (2008b) explains how this may be an effective strategy to inhibit the group's exposure to new pathogens. Interestingly, this is supported by much research that has found collectivist cultures to be highly correlated with higher pathogen prevalence (Fincher, Thornhill, Murray, & Schaller, 2008).

Study One's findings also suggest that many religiously devout parents may especially reject intercultural relationships. Interestingly, there is data to suggest that religious diversity is positively correlated with disease richness (Fincher & Thornhill, 2008a). Since religious association is a social marker for group membership, if parents feared contracting foreign pathogens from out-group members, they may shun interfaith relationships. There was also evidence found to suggest that under high disease salient conditions, negative attitudes towards immigrants were more prominent (Faulkner, Schaller, Park, & Duncan, 2004). Ultimately, these studies seem to suggest that from an evolutionary standpoint, parents' preference for a monocultural relationship may reflect an innate protective reaction against unfamiliar pathogens.

Moreover, according to Study One's findings, a common concern for low acculturated individuals was the fear that intercultural partners would lack understanding of their traditional partners. These cultural differences were suggested to be too difficult to negotiate and acted as a barrier. Intercultural relationships involve the reworking of the racial, cultural, gendered notions in individuals' lives (Pascoe, 1991), however, without the understanding from one's partner, the relationship may not survive. The findings also suggested that potential mates from certain ethnic backgrounds may be less desirable than others. Furthermore,

stereotyping and stigma may be detrimental to such relationships. Ethnic minority individuals may feel ostracized from their partner's social groups, which may be harmful to their overall wellbeing as a romantic couple. Luckily, there is evidence to suggest that romantic relationships with positive reciprocity of socioemotional support may survive negative events (Gaines, 2001).

The implications of such findings are significant for the maintenance of intercultural relationships. Recent studies have found that Chinese American young adults negotiate such conflicts by constructing their own dating culture, by retaining traditional values they admire from their heritage culture (e.g., emphasis on commitment) and rejecting contemporary values they disapproved of (e.g., casual outlook on sex) (Luo, 2008). However, although there is a vast amount of research on interracial marriages in America, especially in Asian-White interracial marriages, little focus has been given to the influence that immigrant parents play in the development, stability, and continuation of those relationships. There is also evidence that extreme social pressures on intercultural and interfaith relationships from parents exists in some cultures (Yahya & Boag, 2014), although the implications of such pressures in the immigrant context have yet to be explored. It is recommended that future research focus more explicitly on the experiences of immigrant women, especially of Asian heritage, as there is evidence that Asian women more often date and marry inter-culturally than Asian men (Chin, 2000).

The Importance of Communication within Immigrant Families

Relational dialectic theory suggests that communication in personal relationships occurs as a result of the concern for process or change in the relationship and the focus on patterns of contradictions (Baxter, 1988; Rawlins, 1988). Communication within dyadic rela-

tionships endures through the use of multiple viewpoints and so, many desires may contradict or oppose one another (Baxter, 1988). Thus, “metacommunication” involves discussion between participants in a relationship (i.e., in this instance, familial), which creates and establishes understanding in the distribution of the nature of their relationship between the communicators (Bateson, 1951). Therefore, metacommunication involves not only a dialogue between communicators but also, an overt discussion in order to regulate their relationship (Bochner & Krueger, 1979). Further, metacommunication studies have distinguished between “relational” and “episodic” metacommunication, with relational metacommunication existing from recurring personal encounters (Cissna, Cox, & Bochner, 1990).

During the process of acculturation, immigrant families can be expected to engage in increased episodes of relational metacommunication as young adult offspring begin to have contrasting ideals and values from that of their traditional parents. As previously mentioned, collectivistic parents may be accustomed to acting as the head of the household by having more power and authority over family decisions. With immigration and the introduction of unfamiliar rules, norms, and language, parents may become more reliant on their offspring instead. This may create an imbalance in the power dynamic that may destabilize parents, thus, redefining and reorganizing the familial relationship occurs. Cissna, Cox, and Bochner (1990) describe the importance of defining and reorganizing relationships in regards to its membership boundaries and its expectations.

Study One’s findings revealed that by managing both personal and parental desires, bicultural young adults manage the dialectic (i.e., interpersonal dialogue) through several mechanisms. These dialectic mechanisms are conducted in order to ensure the maintenance of positive relationship development in the family and one’s own intrapersonal happiness. The first mechanism for maintaining a positive relationship within the family is to ensure that parents’ opinions are heard and that traditional norms and expectations are preserved. Many

bicultural participants described the need to please parents and follow their recommendations in mate choice. The second mechanism in managing the bicultural dialectic involved an individual's efforts to gain autonomy, independence from parents and maintain positive and acceptable normative behaviour among peers. Many bicultural participants expressed the desire to date freely, however, they opposed the idea of involving traditional parents who did not hold the same ideals for romantic relationships. This created a conflict among bicultural individuals who mainly seemed to choose to hide their romantic relationships, avoid them altogether, or acquiesce to parents' wishes.

These negotiation strategies (discussed in chapter 6) are of large concern for immigrant familial development, as these findings suggest that if appropriate dialectic communication is not maintained, bicultural individuals may cease to engage in open discussions with parents. A lack of open and involved dialogue in immigrant families may cause further increase intergenerational conflict and may have lifelong negative impacts. This is significant as these two dialectic mechanisms are interactive with one another and must be negotiated simultaneously by bicultural individuals. Their relationship with their parents' traditional desires and values cannot be completely separated from their desires to acculturate fully to Western society. They may feel conflicted due to their maintained traditional beliefs and so, one need cannot be abandoned for the other.

Finally, these mechanisms have been supported by previous research which finds that the characteristics of all relational dialectics focuses on contradictions by opposing forces (i.e., parents versus offspring), that all relational dialectic is interconnected and finally, that change is generated by conflict (Rawlins, 1983). However, while much research has been conducted in the field of communication studies on the importance of metacommunication in maintaining positive relationships, there is little to no work on the importance it serves in immigrant families. It is recommended that future research focuses first, on the style of meta-

communication that occurs in immigrant families undergoing intergenerational conflict and second, on investigating strategies that may create more positive dialogue and communication between immigrant families. The importance of communication in immigrant families undergoing increased conflict must be explored if current research is to understand the repercussions such conflict has on young adults' romantic relationship decisions.

Strengths and Limitations of Current Study

It is important to note that this study is not without limitations. Study One examined young adult females' attitudes and experiences towards parental involvement and rejection of their romantic relationship decisions. However, these attitudes may not actually predict future behaviours following actual parental rejection. For example, while the discussion among participants included negotiation strategies, including relationship dissolution, not all individuals were speaking from personal experiences. As a result, it was not possible to ascertain whether hypothetical situations would continue on into later behaviours. In order to remedy this limitation, it is recommended that future studies either use participants who have had experiences with parental rejection or investigate the longitudinal effects of parental rejection on romantic relationship outcomes.

Assigning acculturation status labels to each participant was a major limitation in this present study. While this was conducted methodically, it is difficult to fully ascertain the acculturation history of each and every individual, especially when considering a sample group of such varied diversity. Additionally, for many Easternized individuals from African backgrounds, labelling themselves as "low acculturated" was conflicting, as many did not hold the same strongly traditional values and ideals as their Asian (i.e., Chinese, Indian, Thai) peers. Although family values are strongly upheld in African cultures, filial piety does not hold as strong as it does for Chinese participants. Furthermore, while many acculturation surveys exist, the majority are used to determine whether an individual is closely tied to their heritage or

host culture (e.g., Vancouver Index of Acculturation, VIA; Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000). These surveys do not completely capture the present study's varied sample as they are meant for immigrant participants only. For Caucasian and Black participants, many of whom are 3rd or 4th generation Canadians, their "heritage" culture is Canadian, which the VIA would incorrectly label as "low acculturated", although their heritage and host culture are one and the same. It is highly recommended that an acculturation scale be created which not only measures individuals at different levels of acculturation but also from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. For example, an individual from Mexico, who may be more heavily influenced by American culture, may not identify as "low acculturated" as an individual from Vietnam.

Further, Study One's focus group conversations included females between the ages of 18 to 29 years old. While this particular age range provides a needed perspective into the influence parents may have on young adults' romantic relationships, this study did not look into whether that influence equally impacts adolescents under 18 years old or adult children over 29 years old. Individuals within those age brackets are important to consider as "tweens" may begin dating as early as 12 and 13 years old. Moreover, it is becoming more common for adults to delay marrying until their mid-30s and so, parental involvement in their dating decisions can be expected past the age of 29 years old. Furthermore, while this study included a wide array of ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds, the different groups in each acculturation category consisted of individuals from major geographical areas. For example, the majority of low acculturated participants were Chinese and the majority of highly acculturated participants were Caucasians. This is problematic, as this does not reflect many other ethnic and culturally diverse voices in each acculturation group. The low acculturated focus groups lacked the perspectives of Filipinos, Vietnamese, Laos, Thai, and other East and Southeast Asians. The high acculturated focus groups lacked the perspectives of Native

Americans, Black-Canadians, or Caribbean heritage individuals. Finally, the bicultural focus groups consisted of an array of both first generation Canadians with immigrant parents and mixed race individuals. It would be interesting to further ascertain whether bicultural and bi-racial individuals experience parental rejection differently in future studies.

Conclusions

Despite these limitations, this study contributes to the growing body of research on the perceived acceptability of parental involvement and the negotiation of parental rejection by expanding the focus to include the perspectives of young adults at different stages of acculturation to Canadian society. Apostolou (2007) recommends that anthropological evidence must be used in conjunction to studies that investigate human behaviour in a cross-cultural context. The reliance on surveys and other quantitative measures is not sufficient to fully encompass the experiences of a vast variety of ethnically and culturally diverse experiences. Cross-cultural differences can be better understood if researchers are more receptive towards qualitatively derived evidence. Phenomena such as filial piety and strict obedience towards parents are best understood through qualitative research, as such behaviours are not always quantifiable or easily understood from the perspective of the researcher. Study One's findings demonstrate that cultural bias exists, even in a young adult population from an ethnically and culturally diverse city such as Toronto, Canada. With preconceived notions (e.g., extreme mate guarding/jealousy in South-Asian males), it is easy to misunderstand the cultural backbone of certain behaviours.

Several recommendations have been made throughout this chapter. It is mainly recommended that future studies focus more deeply on understanding the discourse between immigrant parents and their offspring, in order to better understand the causes and outcomes of intergenerational conflict. Moreover, research on the long-term consequences of relationship rejection by immigrant parents with first- and second-generation offspring is needed.

Expanding the existing body of research on the development, features, and implications of intergenerational conflict with specific reference to immigrant families is also essential. This is a substantial shortfall in the current body of research, as families with adolescents undergo more conflict following migration. Without better understanding the conflicts that beset immigrant families, researchers fail to protect these vulnerable individuals who are in search of a brighter future.

Chapter 8: Study Two

The major aim of Study One was to gain a better understanding of how young women from immigrant backgrounds perceive both the reality and the acceptability of parental involvement in their romantic relationships, and how they negotiate parental rejection of their romantic (including intercultural) relationships. Overall, the study's findings suggested that acculturation status plays an important role in how young women conceptualize the acceptability of parental involvement in their romantic relationships. Low acculturated young women tended to expect and accept parental involvement in their dating decisions; bicultural young women may have expected such involvement but were less welcoming of it; and highly acculturated young women tended neither to expect nor to accept parental involvement, perceiving it as a threat to their independence.

The majority of participants highlighted their experiences with parental involvement around the concept of 'daughter guarding'. In particular, respondents discussed their experiences of heightened parental monitoring and surveillance of their romantic relationships, in order to protect their sexual reputations. Further, many of these rules and regulations around dating were perceived to be gender-specific (i.e., more relevant to daughters than sons), relatively commonplace, and a regular feature of life for all participants, regardless of acculturation.

The results of Study One were also interesting in that respondents' acculturation status strongly influenced their views on specifically intercultural relationships. In particular, low acculturated women were generally opposed to dating individuals who had a different cultural background from that of their parents. Their main concern was that culturally dissimilar partners would never be able to understand their traditional parents, especially if there

was also a language barrier. These respondents also believed that their conservative parents would deem certain intercultural relationships completely unsuitable, especially those involving Black or Muslim men.

Finally, discrepancies among the different acculturation groups were evident with respect to the negotiation strategies participants reported they would use in response to parental rejection of their romantic relationships (see Chapter 6). The main concern for individuals, regardless of acculturation status, was to maintain family harmony and good relations with their parents and kin. However, if a choice had to be made between parents and partner, most low acculturated and many bicultural individuals claimed they would prefer to dissolve their romantic relationships than to rebuff their parents, who were regarded as more important and irreplaceable than romantic partners. On the other hand, highly acculturated individuals argued that parents had no right to provide an opinion on their romantic choices and so a common reported strategy in their groups was to rebuff their parents' rejection of their relationships.

While the findings of this first, exploratory study provided some interesting insights into the dating experiences and perceptions of young adult females, it was not without its limitations. The following overview will further explore several issues from Study One, and will provide a basis for a series of hypotheses and research questions about how young men and women might respond to hypothetical parental rejection of their romantic relationships in a variety of contexts.

What Contributes to Intergenerational Conflict?

Acculturation level. Previous research has demonstrated that wider acculturation differences between parents and offspring are associated with higher levels of intergenerational conflict (Lee et al., 2000; Kwak, 2003; Tardif & Geva, 2006), along with lower parental sup-

port (Dinh & Nguyen, 2006). Narrower acculturation differences, on the other hand, are associated with higher self-esteem in offspring and lower intergenerational conflict (Farver, Narang, & Bhadha, 2002). This suggests that when there is a close match between parental and offspring acculturation (e.g., for low acculturated individuals with traditional parents), intergenerational conflict should be relatively minor. One might expect that highly acculturated individuals with relatively non-traditional parents should also report lower levels of intergenerational conflict.

The issue is more complex for bicultural individuals, however, who are typically living with traditional parents. Some research suggests that a positive association between biculturalism and adjustment may be present, especially in comparison to the adjustment of individuals with only one cultural heritage (see Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2013 for a full review), and that an integrative acculturation strategy (i.e., biculturalism) leads to the best psychological and sociocultural adjustment (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006). However, the findings reported in Chapters 5 and 6 also demonstrated that bicultural individuals were more likely to report intergenerational (at least, relationship-related) conflict than their low or highly acculturated peers. These findings underscore the difficulties that bicultural individuals may encounter growing up in contrasting, yet parallel, cultures where they must keep up with their peers (who advocate individualistic ideals), yet maintain their parents' traditional (collectivistic) values and ideals (Segal, 1991; Singh, 1997; Rahman & Witenstein, 2013).

The first aim of Study Two was to further explore this issue with a sample of young men and women of different acculturation statuses, in the specific context of dating-related intergenerational conflict. Based on Study One's findings and the evidence suggesting that wider acculturation differences are associated with higher intergenerational conflict (Lee et al., 2000; Kwak, 2003; Tardif & Geva, 2006), it was expected that, compared to their lower

and higher acculturated counterparts, bicultural individuals would report the highest levels of intergenerational conflict on dating and marriage issues (Hypothesis 1a).

Gender. There is a wide consensus among psychologists, sociologists, and other social scientists that a double standard exists between the monitoring and control of daughters and sons in immigrant families (see Suárez-Orozco & Qin, 2006 for a review). Males tend to be given more autonomy and independence in their social lives (Ghuman, 1997; Kallivayalil, 2004; Apostolou, 2007; Apostolou, 2010a), and Asian American males been found to score lower than females on dating and marriage issues on the Intergenerational Conflict Inventory (ICI; Chung, 2001). Similarly, other researchers have found that males experience higher intergenerational conflict on non-familial issues, whereas females experience higher conflict on family-related issues (Masood, Okazaki, & Takeuchi, 2009).

As mentioned previously in Chapter 7, a major limitation of Study One involved the lack of input from young males about their perceptions of, and responses to, parental involvement in, and potentially rejection of, their romantic relationships. In Study One, many female participants recounted negative experiences with their parents around dating and marriage issues. These negative experiences ranged from the pressures to date the "right" males (i.e., rich, good career, certain ethnic background), retaining their virginity until marriage, maintaining "proper" decorum as young women, to marrying by an appropriate age.

Certainly, from an evolutionary perspective, it can be expected that daughter-guarding will play an important role in parental supervision of daughters' mating decisions; however, there is some literature that suggests that sons may also experience intergenerational conflict around dating and marital issues. For example, Chinese cultural notions of filial piety are widely supported, with sons being expected to obey parents and traditionally, to provide primary caregiving for elderly parents (Ng, Phillips, & Lee, 2002; Chappell & Kusch, 2007). In China, the patriarchal system of valuing sons over daughters, who are seen as *shibun* (goods

of lost value), is responsible for tasking sons with the care of parents, while daughters become responsible for their in-laws' family after marriage (Chappell & Kusch, 2007). This provides an incentive for Chinese parents to value their sons' marital decisions. On the other hand, immigrant sons may be unwilling or unable to take care of parents to the extent that parents wish, especially within immigrant families. Thus, some level of intergenerational conflict between parents and sons may also be expected around dating and marital issues.

In light of the literature cited above, it was hypothesized in the current study that compared to males, females would report higher intergenerational conflict on dating and marriage issues (Hypothesis 1b).

Attitudes Towards Parental Rejection of Dating Relationships

The role of cultural identity. As demonstrated in the findings from Study One (see chapters 3-5), parental involvement in, and/or approval of, daughters' dating relationships tended to be perceived positively if seen as culturally appropriate. These findings are reflected in the cross-cultural literature comparing Easternized with Westernized parenting practices. In Easternized societies, higher parental involvement is regarded as normal, with parents expecting to play a large role in their children's mate choices (Buunk, Park, & Duncan, 2010). In China, parents are expected to influence offspring marital marriage decisions (Pimentel, 2000), while for Korean adolescents, parental control has been positively correlated with perceived parental warmth (Rohner & Pettengill, 1985). Thus, individuals from Easternized societies may not view parental rejection of their dating choices as unexpected or unacceptable (Osgood, 1951).

However, the literature suggests that parental control is not as readily accepted by young Westernized adults. For instance, perceptions of maternal control and maternal acceptance were positively correlated among Mexican American mothers, but negatively corre-

lated among European-American mothers (Hill, Bush, & Roosa, 2003). This is synonymous with Chinese parenting styles, where control and strict parenting are associated with increased care (Chao, 1994). Similarly, the general consensus amongst American students, compared to Chinese students, was that parents' opinions regarding mate choice was unwelcome and that parental rejection would not deter them from marrying an individual of their choice (Xie, Dzindolet, & Meredith, 1999). These findings are in line with the findings from Study One, where highly acculturated young women strongly desired autonomy in their dating decisions and regarded it as more important than gaining parental acceptance of their relationships.

In light of the cited literature and Study One's findings, it was expected in the current study that Easternized individuals would report the most positive attitudes towards parental rejection of their relationships, compared to their Westernized and bicultural peers (Hypothesis 2a) and that Westernized individuals would report the most negative attitudes towards parental rejection of their relationships, compared to their Easternized and bicultural peers (Hypothesis 2b).

Research question: The role of gender. It could be argued that, because daughters' mate choices are typically more constrained than sons' mate choices, males will respond more negatively than females to perceived parental rejection of their dating relationships. However, there is no research on whether males view parental rejection any more positively or negatively than females. Accordingly, no specific gender-related hypothesis with respect to responses to rejection was proposed.

Dating Dissimilar Others: Does Type of Dissimilarity Matter?

One of the most intriguing aspects of Study One's findings related to young women's perceptions of parental acceptance or rejection of dating relationships with dissimilar (e.g.,

ethnically, religiously, culturally, linguistically) others. However, although certain cultural differences were discussed as major barriers to gaining parental approval (e.g., race, disparities in language), these differences were not systematically investigated. According to current research, favourable attitudes towards interracial relationships do exist within Western cultures (Statistics Canada, 2011); however, White individuals are still much less likely to engage in such relationships than non-White individuals (Herman & Campbell, 2012). This contrast is especially stark when comparing dating relationships and marriage. Studies suggest that the criteria for marriage are much more stringent than for dating, heterogamous partners, with White individuals more willing to date than to marry or have children with an interracial partner (Blackwell & Lichter, 2000; Fiebert, Nugent, Hershberger, & Kasdan, 2004).

While these attitudes were evident in the findings from Study One, there is a lack of research on the question of whether interracial relationships singularly receive the most negativity from people's support networks. This is an interesting question, especially as there is strong evidence to suggest that interfaith relationships are just as likely to be rejected by people's support networks as interracial relationships (Yahya & Boag, 2014b). Such extreme hostilities exist towards certain interfaith relationships, such as the ones between Israeli and Palestinian youths, that social services and neighbourhood patrols are created in order to prevent such "undesirable relationships" from forming (Hakak, 2016). In addition, as mentioned previously, general attitudes towards interfaith relationships tend to be negative and uninterested. Muslim partners, specifically, tend to be least favoured as many Western individuals believe Islam is too strict and demanding, especially in its treatment of women (Yahya & Boag, 2014a). Interestingly, these findings were also reflected in the results of Study One, suggesting that such attitudes towards Muslims were widespread, regardless of participants' acculturation status.

Interracial and interfaith partnerships are certainly not the only types of 'partner-different' relationships that exist. "Interlingual" relationships (i.e., relationships which differ in primary language spoken) are interesting enough to be considered within the realm of intercultural relationships. While it could be argued that a difference in language spoken between partners does not qualify as a cross-cultural difference, with immigration, it is common to find families where several languages are spoken. Low acculturated parents may prefer to communicate in their mother tongue, whereas more highly acculturated children, who may be bilingual, may choose to communicate solely in English or in their mother tongue with English words mixed in (i.e., "Spanglish"). If these young adults begin dating individuals who speak English but not their parents' mother tongue, this may be considered an intercultural relationship as differences in language may indicate differences in understanding one another's culture. Unsurprisingly, the research on the importance of English language acquisition in immigrant families is vast. It has been suggested that it is important for the acculturation process to a new culture (Ying, 2001) and for higher academic performance in immigrant students (Salamonson, Everett, Koch, Andrew, & Davidson, 2008). Higher English language acquisition is also associated with lower acculturative stress (Kuo & Roysircar, 2004) and lower rates of depression (Dao, Lee, & Chang, 2007). Further, language brokering, which occurs when immigrant youth interpret and translate between culturally and linguistically different individuals (Tse, 1996), allows immigrant families to work towards acculturating to their new host culture together. Nevertheless, while there is a considerable amount of research on language acquisition and acculturation impact, there is little to no research on linguistically different relationships and the experiences of those engaged in them.

A further aim of the current study, then, was to explore participants' views about the perceived acceptability of these different types of "intercultural" dating relationships, along with their perceptions of their parents' views. In particular, the study sought to explore

whether certain types of intercultural relationships would be perceived as more preferable than others, both to participants and to their parents.

Responses to Parental Rejection of Intercultural Dating Relationships

Acculturation level. Chapter six described the kinds of negotiation strategies young women from different acculturation backgrounds reported they would use in response to parental rejection of their dating relationships. However, as noted above, this study was limited in the extent to which it explicitly explored negotiation strategies in response to different kinds of dissimilar relationships. Certainly, the study's findings suggested that low acculturated and bicultural young women perceived their immigrant parents to be less accepting of heterogamous relationships (i.e., relationships between individuals from different cultures). However, while Study One's findings demonstrated that low acculturated individuals may be more likely to dissolve their romantic relationships following parental rejection and that highly acculturated individuals may be more likely to rebuff parents following rejection, it did not explore whether these preferred negotiation strategies applied in the different kinds of dissimilar relationship situations described earlier.

Given the lack of research on the negotiation of rejected intercultural relationships, specific hypotheses for each type of relationship (i.e., interfaith, interracial, interlingual, or intercultural) were not proposed. Instead, Study Two aimed to experimentally test Study One's findings on the impact of acculturation level on preferred negotiation strategy following perceived parental rejection across relationship types. Overall, it was expected that low acculturated individuals would be more likely to report "breaking up" than highly acculturated individuals, who in turn would be more likely to report "rebuffing parents" following perceived parental rejection of their dating relationships (Hypothesis 3a).

Gender and negotiation. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, gender differences were not explored in Study One. However, the design of Study Two allowed for an exploration of potential gender differences in negotiation strategies following perceived parental rejection of dating relationships. As noted previously, daughters tend to be more stringently controlled with respect to mating choices than males, and this includes potential interfaith relationships. For example, in Islam, males are allowed to marry partners of any ethnic or religious background, provided that their desired partners are chaste and willing to convert. Females, however, are forbidden from marrying non-Muslim males, even if they are willing to convert (Leeman, 2009; Peek, 2006). Similarly, males are twice as likely as females to be married to someone from another religion (Clark, 2006). Muslim families also express disapproval of their daughters marrying outside of their faith (Al-Yousuf, 2006) and interestingly, are more permissive of sons dating before marriage (Hanassab, 1998).

These findings are also in line with evolutionary theory, whereby parents typically have more control over their daughters' than their sons' mating decisions (Apostolou, 2007). Parents also invoke dating rules that allow them to have more control over daughters (Madsen, 2008). Further, Study one's findings suggested that participants understood that parents were strict about their dating decisions because of their 'value' and the threat to losing that value by making the wrong partner choice.

Given the lack of research on how sons and daughters negotiate with parents over rejected dating relationships with dissimilar others, specific hypotheses for each type of relationship (i.e., interfaith, interracial, interlingual, or intercultural) were not proposed in this study. However, based on the literature regarding mating constraints on females, it was expected that compared to males, females would be more likely to endorse the "break up" negotiation strategy following parental rejection of their dating relationships (Hypothesis 3b).

Summary of Aims and Hypotheses

The first aim of Study Two was to examine the impact of participant acculturation level (high, low, or bicultural) and gender on perceptions of intergenerational conflict. Specifically, it was hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1a: compared to their lower and higher acculturated counterparts, bicultural individuals would report the highest levels of intergenerational conflict on dating and marriage issues.

Hypothesis 1b: compared to males, females would report higher intergenerational conflict on dating and marriage issues.

The second aim of the study was to explore the extent to which cultural identity (Easternized, Westernized or bicultural) would mitigate or amplify the impact of parental rejection of hypothetical offspring dating relationships. Specifically, it was hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 2a. Easternized individuals would report the most positive attitudes towards parental rejection of their relationships, compared to their Westernized and bicultural peers.

Hypothesis 2b. Westernized individuals would report the most negative attitudes towards parental rejection of their relationships, compared to their Easternized and bicultural peers.

The third aim of Study Two was to investigate the extent to which acculturation level and gender would impact participants' preferred negotiation strategy following parental rejection of their dating relationships. Specifically, it was hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 3a: low acculturated individuals would be more likely to report "breaking up" than highly acculturated individuals, who in turn would be more likely to report "rebuffing parents" following perceived parental rejection of their dating relationships;

Hypothesis 3b: compared to males, females would be more likely to endorse the "break up" negotiation strategy following parental rejection of their dating relationships.

The final aim of Study Two was to explore whether different types of intercultural relationships would be perceived as more or less preferable, both to participants and to their parents. No hypotheses were proposed in relation to these exploratory research questions.

Method

Sample

This study was conducted online through Qualtrics survey software. This allowed for multiple sources of participants from a wide variety of cultures and ethnicities. 282 young adults between the ages of 18 and 30 years participated in the study (50% male, 50% female). The average age for males was 25.04 years (*SD* = 3.66) and for females was 24.26 years (*SD = 3.275*). There were 35 participants residing in Canada (12.41%), 62 participants residing in Australia (21.99%), and 185 participants residing in America (65.6%) (see Appendix B for more demographic information).

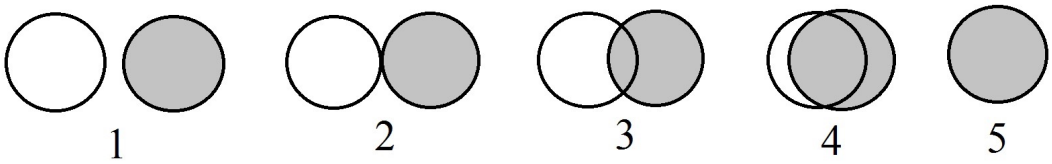
The sample was recruited from several sources. The Australian sample was recruited from Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia and from the surrounding community. Advertisements were placed in the surrounding community and on campus billboards. The Canadian sample was recruited from Toronto, Ontario. The American sample was recruited through the use of Qualtrics panels. Recruitment for the Canadian and Australian sample was carried out primarily through the use of Facebook and word of mouth. Research assistants advertised the study by posting a short message detailing the study and including a link to the

online questionnaire on their Facebook pages. The study's advertisement required participants to be between the ages of 18 to 30 years old.

Measures

When participants first logged into the online questionnaire, they were asked to provide demographic information about themselves and their family's background. They answered questions about their gender, age, ethnicity, nationality, and religious affiliation. Following this, they were asked to provide their own and their parents' immigration history. They were asked where they were born, where their parents were born, where they lived currently, when they had immigrated to that country (native citizens indicated they were "born here" instead), and how long they had lived in that country. Finally, they were asked which generation they were, with options ranging from 1st generation to 5th generation. They were also able to state they did not know due to lack of information.

Acculturation status. A one-item "acculturation identity circles" question, adapted from the Inclusion of Other in the Self scale (IOS; Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992), was used to determine participants' self-ascribed Western acculturation status. This scale depicted five sets of circles, with each set of circles merging closer together (see below). Participants were told that the white circle represented them, whereas the grey circle represented the Westernized culture in which they currently lived (i.e., Canada, Australia, or America). They were asked to choose the set that best represented their identity, from very separate (i.e., low acculturated – set 1) from Western culture to wholly acculturated to Western culture (i.e., set 5). The middle set of circles represented individuals who felt their acculturation was halfway between their home and host cultures (i.e., bicultural).



In order to create three acculturation levels, transforming circles 1 and 2 into a single combined variable created the "low acculturated" variable. Circles 4 and 5 were similarly transformed into a single combined variable, which was labelled "high acculturated". Circle 3 remained untouched and was labelled as "moderately acculturated/bicultural".

Cultural identity. A one-item question was used to determine participants' self-ascribed cultural identity. Specifically, participants were given a list of countries divided into either "Eastern" (e.g., Bangladesh, China, Egypt, Mexico, Vietnam, Afghanistan) or "Western" (e.g., USA, France, UK, Germany, Poland, Greece, Finland). Using the list as a reference, they were then asked to rate their own cultural identity along a 5 point Likert scale with anchors 1 = Very Easternized, 3 = Bicultural, and 5 = Very Westernized.

Intergenerational conflict. An amended version of the Intergenerational Conflict Inventory (ICI; Chung, 2001) was used in order to measure the level of intergenerational conflict participants reported in their families (see Appendix B). The ICI was originally intended for the use of Asian-American young adults, however, it was amended in order to ensure that all participants were able to complete the inventory. Only the dating and marital sub-scale questions (5 items) were used from the ICI, which measured intergenerational conflict in terms of dating and marital expectations. Sample dating and marriage conflict items included, "When to begin dating," and "Race of the person I date or marry". Participants were instructed to indicate on 5 point Likert scales the degree to which each item caused conflict between them and their parents. Items were scored 1 = no conflict over this issue to 5 = a lot of conflict over this issue. The dating and marriage sub-scale items were summed and averaged to

determine the dating and marriage conflict score, with higher scores indicating higher intergenerational conflict. The ICI dating and conflict sub-scale had a high level of internal consistency, as determined by a Cronbach's alpha of 0.905.

Rejection vignettes. In order to explore Study Two's aims and hypotheses, an experimental vignette methodology was utilized, in which four types of self-partner discrepancies (i.e., religious, racial, cultural, and linguistic) in adult children's romantic relationships were presented to participants in an online study. Each vignette described a scenario in which participants were dating another individual who was religiously, racially, or culturally different to themselves or did not speak the same language as their parents. At the end of each vignette, the scenario indicated that parental rejection of each relationship had occurred, with the participants' parents reportedly being unhappy with the relationship. The vignettes are provided in full below:

Vignette 1 – Religious differences

> Imagine that you are in a romantic relationship. A year ago, you began dating your partner, a 22 year old student in college. You're very happy together and have even discussed getting married one day. You decide to bring your partner home for dinner one day in order to introduce them to your parents. During dinner your parents learn that your partner's parents are Muslim but that they don't practice very often. You feel embarrassed because you forgot to mention this to your parents, who are practicing Catholics. When you begin casually discussing marriage, your partner mentions that their parents would prefer a Muslim ceremony in a mosque. However, your father tells everyone that he would like the ceremony to be in his church. Later that night, your parents tell you that they aren't happy with the relationship because they don't want to lose their child to another religion.

Vignette 2 – Ethnic differences

> Imagine that you are in a romantic relationship. Lately, the relationship has become serious and you've decided to take the next step and introduce your partner to your parents. During the holidays, you ask your parents if you can bring your partner to the annual holiday family reunion. You notice your father's hesitation but you decide to ask your partner anyway. You later overhear your parents discussing how they're shocked that your partner is Black. They point out that they don't have a problem with different ethnicities but they aren't quite as liberal. They also point out that there aren't any interracial relationships in your family and that your relationship is quite

novel and strange to them. Your parents later tell you that while it's okay for you and your partner to date, they would be very disappointed if you wanted to get married.

Vignette 3 – Cultural differences

Imagine that you are in a romantic relationship. You grew up in Australia but your partner grew up in another country very different from yours. You have a lot in common with your partner, such as similar taste in books and movies. Your partner wasn't raised to celebrate Chinese New Year, like you were. Instead, they celebrate Hanukkah which has very different traditions from your family. You realize that whenever your partner interacts with your family, they feel awkward with your parents and your parents don't attempt to learn any of your partner's cultural practices. Your partner doesn't eat the spicy food that your parents serve for dinner and it upsets them. Once, your partner forgot to bring red pockets to your Chinese New Year party and your parents comment that it was disrespectful to your Chinese heritage. Your parents reject your relationship, stating that you and your partner are just too different culturally. They believe your partner is disrespectful to your culture and want you to end the relationship.

Vignette 4 – Language differences

Imagine that you are in a romantic relationship. You met your current partner at university where you were both studying. Your parents are very proud of you because they have left China in order to give you better opportunities. Your relationship has progressed to something serious and you bring your partner over to your house to meet your parents. Since your parents immigrated at a later age, they feel uncomfortable speaking English and aren't fluent. However, your partner only speaks English and cannot understand them. Your parents later tell you that dating someone who speaks the same language as them would be easier because your partner would be able to understand them and their values. Your parents explain to you that in their culture, a child's future spouse should try to get along with the parents of whomever they're marrying. They highlight the importance of respecting elders in their culture and want you to continue having those values. They disapprove of your relationship because of the severe language barriers and state that your partner can never fully come to understand them.

Following each vignette, six items were presented, measuring participants' imagined feelings and responses to the particular type of parental rejection on 5 point Likert scales (1 = very unlikely, 5 = very likely).

Felt acceptance. Three positive items measured "felt acceptance" (FA) or positive attitudes towards parental rejection. Sample positive items included, "I would feel supported by my parents," and "I would feel like my parents are looking out for me". These items were

summed into a total 'felt acceptance' score. High levels of 'felt acceptance' reliability were obtained for each vignette ("religion" vignette: Cronbach's alpha = .781; "ethnicity" vignette: Cronbach's alpha = .866; "culture" vignette: Cronbach's alpha = .815; and "language" vignette: Cronbach's alpha = .778.)

Felt rejection. Three negative items measured "felt rejection" (FR) or negative attitudes towards parental rejection. Sample negative items included, "I would feel like my parents are treating me and my relationship harshly," and "I would feel unloved/rejected by my parents". These items were summed into a total 'felt rejection' score. High levels of 'felt rejection' reliability were obtained for each vignette ("religion" vignette: Cronbach's alpha = .763; "ethnicity" vignette: Cronbach's alpha = .706; "culture" vignette: Cronbach's alpha = .737; and "language" vignette: Cronbach's alpha = .716.)

Negotiation strategies. A five-item negotiation measure was created in order to determine which behaviour participants believed they would enact following each rejection scenario. These items were based on the negotiation strategies derived from Study One's findings (see Chapter 6; i.e., break up, hide relationship, change partner, change parents, rebuff parents). Each item was scored using a five point Likert scale with 1 = very unlikely to 5 = very likely. Sample items included, "I would break up with my partner because I owe it to my parents to listen to them (break up)," and "I would still date my partner but hide the relationship from my parents (hide relationship)," and "I would tell my partner to become more integrated with my culture (change partner)", "I would reason with my parents so that they see my way and continue the relationship (change parents)," and "I would ignore my parents and pursue the relationship (rebuff parents)."

Importance of partner similarity. Following each vignette, participants were asked to rate how important it was for them to be similar to the depicted dating partner, using a 5 point Likert scale, with 1 indicating it was "Very Unimportant" to 5 indicating "Very Im-

portant". Each question corresponded with the vignette, for example, following the "religion" vignette, the question asked "How important is religion to you when considering a romantic partner for yourself?" A total 'similarity' score was calculated across vignettes (Cronbach's alpha = .719).

Parents' perceived attitudes about the importance of partner similarity. Parents' perceived attitudes on the importance of dating partner similarity were also measured following each vignette. Participants were asked to report how important partner similarity was *to their parents* when considering a romantic partner for their offspring (i.e., the participant). The items were rated on a 5 point Likert scale, with 1 indicating "Very Unimportant" to 5 indicating "Very Important". Similarly to the previous question, each item corresponded with the vignette it followed. For example, following the "ethnicity" vignette, the question was phrased, "How important is ethnicity to your parents when considering a romantic partner for yourself?" A total 'parental similarity' score was also calculated across vignettes (Cronbach's alpha = 0.766).

Data Analysis

The results are presented in several sections, according to the hypotheses presented in the introduction. In order to test the hypotheses with acculturation level and cultural identity as the independent variables, several Kruskal-Wallis H tests were employed through IBM SPSS. The Kruskal-Wallis H test is a rank-based nonparametric test used to determine if there are statistically significant differences in an independent variable with more than three groups and where the dependent variable is ordinal or continuous (Conover, 1999; Kruskal & Wallis, 1952). It is sometimes called a "one-way ANOVA on ranks". Following significant results determined by the Kruskal-Wallis H test, pairwise comparisons using Dunn's (1964) procedure with a Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons are conducted as post hoc

tests on group differences that are statistically significant. The data set was not combed through for missing data as the Kruskal Wallis H test excludes cases with missing data on a test-by-test basis automatically. This does not affect the analysis as equal sample sizes are not a requirement for non-parametric tests. Additionally, tests for skewness or normality was not conducted as these are not requirements for non-parametric tests. Finally, gender differences were tested by means of independent-samples t-tests.

Results

Participants' Acculturation Levels, Gender, and Perceived Intergenerational Conflict

Hypothesis 1a proposed that, compared to their lower and higher acculturated counterparts, bicultural individuals would report the highest levels of intergenerational conflict on dating and marriage issues. A Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted to test for differences in IGC scores among the different acculturation groups: "low" ($N = 40$), "bicultural" ($N = 91$), and "high" ($N = 151$). Distributions of IGC scores were similar for all three groups, as determined by visual inspection of a boxplot. Median IGC scores were statistically significant among the different acculturation levels (h = 13.652, $p = .001$). As can be seen in Table 8, the hypothesis was partially supported. A post hoc analysis revealed that dating and marriage-related intergenerational conflict was significantly higher in the bicultural group than in the highly acculturated group.

Hypothesis 1b proposed that compared to males, females would obtain higher dating and marriage-related intergenerational conflict scores. Contrary to the hypothesis, an independent-samples t-test found that overall, males obtained higher ($M = 2.62$, $SD = 1.16$) dating and marriage IGC scores than females ($M = 2.31$, $SD = 1.18$), $t(280) = 2.278$, $p = .023$).

Table 8

Perceived Intergenerational Conflict According to Acculturation Level

			Acculturation Level		
	Kruskal-Wallis H test statistic (h)	Asymptotic significance (*p*)	"Low" group median (*n* = 40)	"Bicultural" group median (*n* = 91)	"High" group median (*n* = 151)
IGC score	13.652	0.001	3.00[1]	3.00[a,1]	2.00[b]

Note. [a,b] values in a row with dissimilar superscripts are significantly different at $p < .05$.

Note. [1] While the low and bicultural groups have identical median scores, their mean scores are different, though not significantly so. The "bicultural" group's mean ($M = 2.77$) is higher than that of the "low" group's mean ($M = 2.635$), rendering only the "bicultural" group significantly different from the "high" group's IGC scores.

Attitudes Towards Parental Rejection According to Cultural Identity

Hypothesis 2a proposed that Easternized individuals would report the most positive attitudes towards parental rejection of their relationships, compared to their Westernized and bicultural peers, while Hypothesis 2b proposed that Westernized individuals would report the most negative attitudes towards parental rejection of their relationships, compared to their Easternized and bicultural peers.

A Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted to determine if there were differences in positive attitudes (felt acceptance - FA) scores among the different cultural identity groups. Distributions of FA scores were similar for all groups, as determined by visual inspection of a box plot. As noted previously, a "total felt acceptance" score was calculated by averaging the FA scores from each of the four scenarios (i.e., religion, ethnicity, culture, and language). The median total FA score was statistically significant for the different cultural identities, h = 28.946, $p < .000$. Additionally, pairwise comparisons using Dunn's (1964) procedure with a Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons were conducted as post hoc tests on group differences that were statistically significant. Hypothesis 2a was supported with the post hoc analysis revealing the Easternized group to be significantly more accepting of parental rejection than the Westernized group, and the bicultural group was also significantly more accepting of parental rejection than the Westernized group (see Table 9).

Table 9

Perceived "Felt Acceptance" According to Cultural Identity

Intercultural Relationship Type	Kruskal-Wallis H test statistic (h)	Asymptotic significance (*p*)	Cultural Identity		
			"Eastern-ized" group median (*n* = 74)	"Bicultural" group median (*n* = 88)	"Western-ized" group median (*n* = 118)
1. Religion	13.394	0.001	3.33[a]	3.00[a]	2.67[b]
2. Ethnicity	24.248	<.000	2.83[a]	2.67[a]	2.00[b]
3. Culture	23.062	<.000	3.00[a]	2.67[a]	2.17[b]
4. Language	16.234	<.000	3.00[a 1]	3.00[b1]	2.33[c]
Total felt acceptance	28.946	<.000	3.04[a]	2.83[a]	2.25[b]

Note. [a, b] values in a row with dissimilar superscripts are significantly different at $p < .001$.

Note. [1] While the "Easternized" and "Bicultural" groups have identical median scores for language, the Easternized group's mean ($M = 3.06$) is significantly higher than the Bicultural group's mean ($M = 2.80$), which in turn is significantly different from the Westernized group's mean ($M = 2.52$).

To investigate hypothesis 2b, a Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted to determine if there were differences in felt rejection (FR) scores among the different cultural identity groups: “Easternized” (N = 74), “Bicultural” (N = 88), and “Westernized” (N = 118). Distributions of FR scores were similar for all groups, as determined by visual inspection of a box plot. As noted previously, a “total” felt rejection score was attained by averaging the four relationship types’ individual FR scores (i.e., religion, ethnicity, culture, and language). Contrary to hypothesis 2b, the median total FR score was not statistically significant across the different cultural identity groups, h = 3.083, p = .214. However, pairwise comparisons using Dunn’s (1964) procedure with a Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons revealed statistically significant differences in FR scores for the “ethnicity” scenario between the bicultural and the Westernized groups, with the Westernized group reporting higher rejection, h = 8.147, p = .017. No other statistically significant differences in felt rejection in response to the vignettes for the different cultural identity groups were found (see Table 10).

Table 10

Perceived "Felt Rejection" According to Cultural Identity

Intercultural Relationship Type	Kruskal Wallis H test statistic (h)	Asymptotic significance (*p*)	Cultural Identity		
			"Easternized" group median (*n* = 74)	"Bicultural" group median (*n* = 88)	"Westernized" group median (*n* = 118)
1. Religion	0.747	0.688	3.33	3.33	3.33
2. Ethnicity	8.147	0.017	3.67[1]	3.67[a,1]	4.00[b]
3. Culture	1.502	0.472	3.67	3.33	3.67
4. Language	2.046	0.360	3.17	3.00	3.33
Total felt rejection	3.083	0.214	3.42	3.33	3.59

Note. [a,b,c] values in a row with dissimilar superscripts are significantly different at $p < .05$.

Note. [1] While the "Easternized" and the "Bicultural" groups have identical median scores, their mean scores are (non-significantly) different (Easternized $M = 3.50$, Bicultural $M = 3.51$, Westernized $M = 3.83$).

Finally, an independent samples t-test found that across scenarios, males (M = 2.81, SD = .87) were significantly more positive about parental rejection than females (M = 2.46, SD = .71), $t(280) = 3.75$, p <.000. However, while across scenarios there was no significant difference between males and females in how negatively they felt about parental rejection, there was a statistically significant difference between males and females in their negative attitudes towards parental rejection in the "ethnicity" vignette. Specifically, females (M = 3.80, SD = .90) felt more negative about this than males (M = 3.48, SD = .95), $t(280) = -2.813$, $p = .005$.

Negotiation Type According to Acculturation Level

Hypothesis 3a proposed that low acculturated individuals would be more likely to report "breaking up" than highly acculturated individuals, who in turn would be more likely to report "rebuffing parents" following perceived parental rejection of their dating relationships. Multiple Kruskal-Wallis H tests were conducted in order to determine if there were significant differences in negotiation type (NT) scores among the different acculturation groups. Distributions of NT scores were similar for all groups, as determined by visual inspection of a box plot. Median NT scores for "hiding relationship", h = 6.978, p = .031 and "breaking up", h = 13.168, p = .001, were significantly different among the different acculturation levels. In partial support of the hypotheses, post hoc analysis revealed statistically significant differences in "break up" scores between the low acculturated and bicultural participants (more likely to break up) and the highly acculturated participants (less likely to break up); and between the low acculturated and bicultural participants (more likely to hide their relationship) and the highly acculturated participants (less likely) (see Table 11).

Table 11

Negotiation Type According to Acculturation Levels

Negotiation Type	Kruskal-Wallis H test statistic (h)	Asymptotic significance (*p*)	Acculturation Group		
			"low" group median (*n* = 40)	"bicultural" group median (*n* = 91)	"high" group median (*n* = 151)
1. Hide relationship	6.978	0.031	2.75[a]	2.50[a]	2.00[b]
2. Adjust partner	7.091	0.029	2.75	2.50	2.50
3. Adjust parents	4.065	0.131	3.50	4.00	4.00
4. Rebuff parents	0.696	0.706	3.25	3.25	3.75
5. Break up	13.168	0.001	2.00[a]	2.00[a]	1.50[b]

Note. [a,b] values in a row with dissimilar superscripts are significantly different at $p < .05$.

Negotiation Type According to Gender

Hypothesis 3b proposed that compared to males, females would be more likely to endorse the "break up" negotiation strategy following parental rejection of their dating relationships. Differences in negotiation type (NT) scores between males and females were assessed using several independent samples t-tests. The t-test demonstrated that the hypothesis was not supported, with male "break up" scores ($M = 2.19$, $SD = 1.06$) significantly higher than female scores ($M = 1.64$, $SD = 0.77$), $t(280) = 4.94$, $p < .000$. Interestingly, males also had higher "hide relationship" scores ($M = 2.65$, $SD = 1.00$) than females ($M = 2.08$, $SD = 0.94$), $t(280) = 4.95$, $p < .000$, and finally, males also had higher "adjust partner" scores ($M = 2.65$, $SD = 0.78$) compared to females ($M = 2.45$, $SD = 0.63$), $t(280) = 2.41$, $p = .017$. There were no significant gender differences in the negotiation strategies of "adjusting parents" or "rebuffing parents" (see Table 12).

Table 12

Negotiation Type According to Gender

Negotiation type	*t* score	*p* value	Male		Female	
			Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Break up	4.94	<.000	2.19[a]	1.06	1.64[b]	0.77
2. Hide relationship	4.95	<.000	2.65[a]	1.00	2.08[b]	0.94
3. Adjust partner	2.41	0.017	2.65[a]	0.78	2.55[b]	0.63
4. Adjust parents	-1.06	0.291	3.78	0.80	3.89	0.80
5. Rebuff parents	0.176	0.860	3.44	1.02	3.42	1.07

Note. [a,b] values in a row with dissimilar superscripts are significantly different at $p < .05$.

Importance of Partner Similarity to Participants and Parents

Self. Participants were asked to rate how important partner similarity was to themselves and to their parents in response to each of the vignettes. Multiple Kruskal-Wallis H tests were conducted in order to determine if there were significant differences in perceived importance of partner similarity (across each intercultural relationship type) among the different acculturation groups for both participants and their parents. Distributions of partner similarity scores were similar for all groups, as determined by visual inspection of a box plot. For participants, median partner similarity scores for the "ethnicity" relationship were significantly different among the different acculturation levels (h = 8.176, p = .017). Post hoc analysis revealed statistically significant differences in median scores for "ethnicity" between the Bicultural group and the High Acculturated group, but not between any other group combinations (see Table 13).

Table 13

Importance of Partner Similarity to Self by Participants' Acculturation Levels

Partner Type	Kruskal-Wallis H test statistic (h)	Asymptotic significance (*p*)	Acculturation Group		
			"low" group median (*n* = 40)	"bicultural" group median (*n* = 91)	"high" group median (*n* = 151)
Similarity in religion	0.591	0.744	3.00	3.00	3.00
Similarity in ethnicity	8.176	0.017	2.00	2.00[a,1]	2.00[b,1]
Similarity in culture	2.177	0.337	3.00	3.00	3.00
Similarity in language	0.087	0.957	3.00	3.00	3.00

Note. [a,b] values in a row with dissimilar superscripts are significantly different at $p < .05$.

Note. [1] While the "Bicultural" and the "High Acculturation" groups have identical median scores, their mean scores are significantly different (Bicultural $M = 2.55$, High Acculturated $M = 2.13$).

Perceived Parents' Importance ratings. Interestingly, perceived parents' scores of importance of partner similarity mirrored their self-ratings. Distributions of partner similarity scores were similar for all groups, as determined by visual inspection of a box plot. Median partner similarity scores for the "ethnicity" relationship were significantly different among the different acculturation levels (h = 7.978, p = .019). Post hoc analysis revealed statistically significant differences between the Bicultural group and the High acculturated group, but not between any other group combinations (see Table 14).

Table 14

Perceived Importance of Partner Similarity for Participants' Parents

Partner Type	Kruskal-Wallis H test statistic (h)	Asymptotic significance (*p*)	Acculturation Group		
			"low" group median (*n* = 40)	"bicultural" group median (*n* = 91)	"high" group median (*n* = 151)
Similarity in religion	1.899	0.389	3.00	4.00	3.00
Similarity in ethnicity	7.978	0.019	3.00	3.00[a,1]	3.00[b,1]
Similarity in culture	2.643	0.267	3.00	3.00	3.00
Similarity in language	2.511	0.285	3.00	3.00	4.00

Note. [a,b] values in a row with dissimilar superscripts are significantly different at $p < .05$.

Note. [1] While the "Bicultural" and the "High Acculturation" groups have identical median scores, their mean scores are significantly different (Bicultural $M = 3.16$, High Acculturated $M = 2.72$).

Discussion

Overview of Findings

The aims of Study Two were to investigate, first, the relationship between dating and marriage-related intergenerational conflict according to acculturation level and gender; second, to examine the impact of acculturation level, cultural identity, and gender on attitudes towards, and responses to, hypothetical parental rejection of sons' and daughters' dating relationships where partners differed in religion, ethnicity, culture, and language; and finally, to assess the importance of partner-similarity on these four partner characteristics for both self and parents.

Overall, it was hypothesized that bicultural individuals would report the highest degree of dating and marriage-related conflict, compared to high and low acculturated individuals, and this hypothesis was partially confirmed. Specifically, bicultural individuals reported significantly higher intergenerational conflict than highly acculturated individuals on dating and marriage issues; however, bicultural and low acculturated individuals did not differ in their conflict ratings. It was also hypothesized that cultural identity would impact respondents' attitudes following parental rejection of an undesired romantic relationship. In support of these hypotheses, it was found that Westernized individuals reported stronger negative feelings about parental rejection than Easternized and bicultural individuals, who in turn reported stronger positive feelings following perceived relationship rejection than Westernized individuals.

Unsurprisingly, the results also revealed that acculturation level had a significant impact on negotiation strategies in response to perceived relationship rejection. Specifically, it was found that low acculturated and bicultural individuals were more likely to report that they would "break up" following parental rejection, compared to highly acculturated partici-

pants. The results also revealed that low acculturated and bicultural participants were more likely to report hiding their relationship than highly acculturated participants.

With respect to gender, several interesting differences emerged in the current study. Specifically, and contrary to what was hypothesized, males reported higher intergenerational conflict on dating and marriage issues than females, but across scenarios, males reported significantly more forgiving attitudes than females about parental rejection of their dating relationships. There were no gender differences in negative attitudes toward parental rejection of dating relationships except in the "ethnicity" scenario, where females responded significantly more negative attitudes than males. Contrary to expectations, males were also more likely than females to report breaking up, hiding their relationships, or trying to adjust their partners, in response to parental rejection of their relationships.

Finally, the ranked findings demonstrated that having a partner of the same ethnicity was considered least important to participants and their parents, while having a partner who spoke the same language was considered most important to participants and their parents. These findings will now be discussed in light of theory and previous research, including the findings of Study One.

Intergenerational Conflict

Overall, the findings suggest, in line with previous research and the results of Study One, that the expected transition from adolescence to adulthood involving increased autonomy and independence from parents (Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1980) is especially difficult for young, bicultural and low acculturated individuals in immigrant families. In particular, the findings reflect a tension between the norms to obey one's traditional parents, and acculturating to the norms of the host culture. Clearly, if traditional parents are strongly against acculturation, ongoing and long-term conflict can be expected.

There is extensive research suggesting that such ongoing intergenerational conflict has detrimental impacts on the mental health of immigrant family members, and especially on Asian American adolescents (Lee & Lui, 2001; Ying & Han, 2007). Additionally, the longitudinal effects of intergenerational conflict have been found to severely reduce self-esteem and to cause depressive symptoms in immigrant adolescents (Espiritu & Wolf, 2001; Ying & Han, 2006). This in turn may have severe consequences on later romantic relationship development. For example, a recent study found that family dysfunction was associated with lower romantic relationship success in adolescents, especially in problem solving abilities and consequential depression (Anderson, Johnson, Liu, Zheng, Hardy, & Lindstrom, 2014).

Relationship Decisions Based on Perceived Parental Influence

As Study Two's results have demonstrated, Easternized and Bicultural individuals were more likely to accept parental involvement in their relationship decisions compared to Westernized individuals. Moreover, they were also more likely to engage in relationship dissolution following perceived rejection. Previous work has focused on the influence that collectivistic values may have on the termination of rejected relationships. Obligation and duty towards one's family is a collectivistic ideal that is held by many Easternized and bicultural young adults. There is much research to support this, especially in foreign-born adolescents. For example, Mexican, Armenian, and Vietnamese adolescents from immigrant families endorsed family obligations values more highly than adolescents born in the U.S. from immigrant families (Phinney, Ong, & Madden, 2000). These "familism" ideals are related to the existing family role hierarchy in collectivistic societies. Since parents and elders hold more authority over offspring, an expectation is held that their ideas and wishes are tolerated and respected and furthermore, they are expected to be involved in all aspects of decision-making (Javillonar, 1979). According to Chinese dating culture, familial obligation has a large influ-

ence on marriage and dating, as it is seen as observing filial piety by allowing parents control over one's relationships (Honig & Hershatter, 1998). While filial piety is widely recognized as a Chinese value, a similar value has been established in Punjabi Sikhs, where adult offspring are expected to consult with parents on important matters like marriage and money (Gibson, 1988). Moreover, although Chinese society has become more contemporary with the enactment of laws forbidding parental control in marriage matters (i.e., the Marriage Contract law), it is still typical of young adults to allow parents to have control over their relationship decisions (Yan, 2003). Thus, while overt parental involvement has become less common as young adults typically choose their own partners in Western societies, Easternized and Bicultural individuals can be expected to allow parents to have more control over their relationship outcomes.

It is also likely, based upon the negotiation type results (i.e., low and bicultural individuals preferring the relationship dissolution strategy), that individuals of differing acculturation levels are influenced by the need to sacrifice their own desires to the wishes of their parents. These results are similar to the results of Study One that found that overall; Asian Americans (in the low acculturated focus groups) reported that they would sacrifice attaining their own personal goals in favour of supporting their family. These findings are also supported in research that has found that less acculturated individuals are significantly more likely than more highly acculturated individuals to sacrifice their own interests for their family (Suzuki & Greenfield, 2002). Asian American adolescents have reported greater feelings of obligation and duty to their family in comparison to European American adolescents (Hardway & Fuligni, 2006). Mexican-American young adults have also been found to report feeling obligated to avoid conflict with parents, especially in comparison to their White-American counterparts (Freeberg & Stein, 1996).

These are unsurprising findings as obligation towards one's family is a value highly upheld by Asian and Latin American adolescents, many of whom believe it was their duty to support, respect, and help their families (Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam, 1999). It would be interesting to assess, in future research, whether young adults rate their parents' desires higher than theirs, following perceived parental rejection of their relationships. Further, since Study Two's rejection vignettes were hypothetical, it would be interesting to qualitatively assess the impact of obligation and duty has on young adults' decisions towards rejection relationships.

Acceptability of Intercultural Relationships

A favourable outlook on interracial relationships is to be expected, as they become more common in Western societies (Statistics Canada, 2011). Study One's findings are in contrast to the findings of the current study where overall, ethnicity was seen as a less important issue than language. For example, many participants in Study One argued that relationships with Black males were not feasible, as traditional parents would find it unacceptable and would hold preconceived prejudiced ideas. On the other hand, for many Chinese participants, relationships with White males were considered an ideal, as they indicated a rise in social status in China. However, while the results of the current study indicate that ethnic similarity was not regarded as the most important requirement for participants or their parents, it would have been interesting to assess whether particular ethnicities would have impacted their responses. As mentioned previously, White individuals are less likely to engage in interracial relationships, compared to non-White individuals (Herman & Campbell, 2012) and are also much less likely to marry or have children with an interracial partner (Blackwell & Lichter, 2000; Fiebert, Nugent, Hershberger, & Kasdan, 2004). While the laws against interracial marriages are no longer upheld, negative attitudes towards such relationships still exist in Western societies. Overt prejudicial beliefs in North American society are largely de-

nounced, however, research suggests that the majority of Caucasian and other racial minorities still oppose engaging in interracial unions (Harris & Kalbfleisch, 2000).

Moreover, the preference for language similarity paralleled study one's findings which found that a common justification for avoiding intercultural relationships was a lack of language similarity in Chinese parents and potential Westernized partners. This is unsurprising, as low acculturated and bicultural individuals may prefer to communicate in their mother tongue. As mentioned previously, the importance of English language acquisition is paramount for the acculturation process in immigrant families (Ying, 2001). However, for families who undergo the lengthy process of learning a second language, accepting an interlingual relationship of their offspring may be too difficult to accept. Further, while immigrant parents may learn to communicate in English during the acculturation process, they may never become fully fluent, especially without an accent. As a result of that, immigrant parents may feel more comfortable communicating in their mother tongue, while bicultural offspring may choose to go between both languages (i.e., "Chinglish", "Spanglish"). For interlingual relationships, English-speaking individuals may never come fully understand of their partner's parents or vice versa. This is problematic for more traditional cultures, such as China, where longstanding cultural notions are not easily translated or explainable to Westerners. These cultural differences, exacerbated by language barriers, may create more difficulties that are difficult to negotiate in romantic relationships.

However, as discussed in the previous chapter, relational dialectic theory (Baxter, 1988; Rawlins, 1988) suggests that communication in dyadic relationships can change. Interesting areas for future research could focus on metacommunication strategies in immigrant families where young adults have engaged in an interlingual romantic relationship. It would be fascinating to understand the changes in understanding between immigrant parents and young adults when a new romantic partner is introduced and what strategies romantic part-

ners can utilize in order to understand and/or communicate with non-English speaking parents over time.

Gender

The unexpected gender differences somewhat contradict current research that suggests that although parents may be more likely to 'daughter-guard' than to monitor males' dating behaviour, suggesting that increased intergenerational conflict could be expected in families with daughters (Apostolou, 2007). However, the results of the current study are contrary to this, finding that males are more likely to report higher intergenerational conflict than females on marriage and dating issues. As discussed in an earlier chapter, research has found that parents typically allow sons more autonomy compared to daughters (Ghuman, 1997; Kallivayalil, 2004; Apostolou, 2007; Apostolou, 2010a), so it may be possible that males respond more strongly than females to the prospect of parental interference in their dating decisions. The average age for males in the current study was 25 years (*SD* = 3.66). This is typically when dating decisions are more consequential, as young adults prepare for marriage. Parents may become more involved with their offspring's dating decisions during this stage as they may believe their offspring's choices are more crucial. However, it has become common for young adults to marry at a later age, especially sons, who may not want to get married until they are much older. Daughters may be more accustomed to this period of increased interference, as parents generally have stricter dating rules in place to control daughters more often than sons (Kan, McHale, & Crouter, 2008), and so, this may be why sons, compared with daughters, reported higher intergenerational conflict with parents over divergent dating expectations.

Moreover, preconceived gender roles may have impacted males to have more positive attitudes towards parental rejection of their dating relationships, as there are more lenient so-

cietal expectations placed upon them. Parental investment theory (Buss & Schmitt, 1993; Gangestad & Simpson, 2000) argues that since males are less restricted in their reproductive capacities, they are more likely to be interested in sexual variety as there is little cost to mating frequently. Thus, males are able to date freely and frequently, without negative societal repercussions (e.g., pregnancy before marriage, damaged reputation, displaced family honour). Thus, parental rejection of their relationships might not affect males as strongly as females. However, it is unclear whether these positive attitudes would be evident in intra-cultural relationships as well. There is more research needed in order to further explore the gendered attitudes towards parental rejection.

However, it was interesting to find that males were more likely than females to invoke the relationship dissolution, hiding relationship and adjusting partner negotiation strategies following perceived rejection. Unfortunately, little to no research has focused on gender differences in response to parental rejection of offspring relationships. However, gender rules may impact how probable relationship dissolution may be as a negotiation strategy to parental rejection. For females, who are more commonly placed under stringent gender rules regarding romantic relationships, relationship dissolution may not be a viable option, as social norms may frown upon females who date too freely. Paradoxically, however, if parents spurn a son's romantic relationship, he may be relatively more comfortable dissolving it, with fewer emotional consequences, than a daughter might. This is to say, if parents reject their son's romantic relationship, males may have less to negotiate, as societal expectations do not attempt to control the number of relationships males engage in before marriage.

It is recommended that future research focus on investigating gender differences in negotiating parental rejection of relationships. It would be interesting to assess how males and females negotiate parental rejection, specifically if societal consequences, such as reputa-

tion concerns and gossip, implore the different genders to engage in different negotiation strategies.

Limitations and Strengths of the Current Study

One of the main limitations of the current study concerns the construct validity of the acculturation level measure. Current research suggests that acculturation is a multidimensional construct (Tsai, Chentsova-Dutton, & Wong, 2002), thus, other aspects other than adaptation to one's host culture should be assessed as well. While acculturation level was assessed methodically, Berry's (1997) types of acculturation (i.e., separation, marginalization, integration, and assimilation) were not assessed. This measure could have been useful, especially when considering such a varied sample group.

It is also important to note that each vignette provided participants with a hypothetical scenario. This measured their reactions to perceived parental rejection of a hypothetical romantic relationship and these attitudes may not accurately predict future behaviours following actual rejection. Additionally, it was unclear whether participants' reactions to perceived rejection would be maintained in other types of relationships, as intra-cultural vignettes were not given as an option for comparison. It would be interesting to assess whether young adults are equally impacted by parental rejection from both inter- and intra-cultural relationships.

Additionally, while this study targeted participants from a wide variety of ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds, differences in acculturation values could be expected between the Australian, Canadian, and American samples. For example, Americans are expected to assimilate to their "melting pot" culture, whereas Canadians value their "cultural mosaic" and may value integration. It would be interesting to assess whether individuals in different Westernized countries experience parental rejection of their relationships differently in future studies.

Conclusions

In spite of these limitations, the results of this study make a novel contribution to the limited literature on the impact of parental rejection on young adults' romantic relationship development. The present study is also the first to investigate young adults' predicted behaviours following perceived parental rejection of particular types of romantic relationships involving mixed race, religion, culture and language. Further, these findings increase our understanding of the ways in which factors such as acculturation level, gender, and cultural identity, may exacerbate or buffer parental rejection's influence. As young adults navigate the future of their romantic relationships, it becomes imperative to understand whether parental rejection acts as either a surmountable hurdle or an impassable barrier to their relationship outcomes.

Chapter 9: Study Three

What Do Parents Think?

The previous chapter reported the results of Study Two: an investigation of young adults' responses to perceived parental rejection of their dating relationships with dissimilar partners. The findings of this study demonstrated that their responses depended, in part, upon the young adults' acculturation level, cultural identity, and gender. Further, Study Two was unique in that it was the first to investigate perceived parental attitudes towards particular types of dissimilar dating relationships, including ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic dissimilarities. However, given that Study Two focused exclusively on the *perceptions* of parents' attitudes, it was considered important to investigate parents' actual attitudes to explore the extent to which the young adults were accurate in their portrayals.

Intergenerational Conflict

Study Two's results suggested that, while young adults may acculturate rapidly to their new host culture, traditional parents may be more likely to retain their more conservative beliefs from their home culture (Kwak, 2003). However, little research has been conducted on immigrant parents' attitudes towards offspring dating behaviours and the subsequent intergenerational conflict that may occur. Current research on the role of cultural background and acceptance of dating has found that immigrant parents from highly religious and traditional cultures forbid young adults from dating, whereas immigrant parents from cultures that are open to dating do not hold such strong opposition (Nesteruk & Gramescu, 2012). Further, some immigrant parents condone dating before marriage, as they expect their offspring to uphold the same behaviours of young adults from their home culture (Espiritu, 2000), where dating may be forbidden or secretly practised.

In Easternized societies, mating strategies tend to be vastly different to those found in Westernized societies. Typically, mate selection is a family affair (Hamon & Ingoldsby, 2003), as most marriages are arranged to some extent and individual needs and desires are considered secondary and unimportant in comparison to the family's desires (Medora, 2003). These expectations in Easternized families mean that certain behaviours, such as pre-marital sex, dating, living together and having children before marriage, are considered unacceptable and taboo (Sherif-Trask, 2003). For parents who have been socialized to uphold these mating rules, young adults dating openly in Westernized society may be difficult to understand and accept (Talbani & Hasanali, 2000). Interestingly, due to a lack of understanding of dating practices in the United States, South Asian parents often equate the practice of dating with sexual activity, which is against their cultural upbringing (Dasgupta, 1998).

Based on the previous two studies' findings and current research demonstrating that Easternized parents are typically opposed to their offspring dating before marriage (Nesteruk & Gramescu, 2012), it was hypothesized in the current study that compared to Bicultural and Westernized parents, Easternized parents would be the most likely to report higher intergenerational conflict on dating and marriage issues (Hypothesis 1).

Attitudes towards Parental Rejection

Study Two examined young adults' attitudes towards hypothetical parental rejection of cross-cultural relationship vignettes. Positive attitudes were attributed to cultural identity, as the results demonstrated that Easternized young adults believed parents were being supportive and caring by rejecting unsuitable romantic relationships. Study One also examined the cultural differences in communicating love and support in families. Parents typically are highly interested in the romantic relationships of their offspring (Apostolou, 2007). Gaining parents' acceptance, however, may be culturally dependent, as collectivistic cultures rely

more on mate choices that benefit the whole family (Buunk, Park, & Dubbs, 2008). Thus, it is common for individuals from countries like India or China to marry a partner arranged by their parents (Madathil & Benshof, 2008). However, parental involvement still exists in non-invasive ways for Westerners by ways of cajoling, threatening, or persuading young adults to make appropriate mates choices (Goode, 1959).

Nevertheless, what has not been as readily investigated is whether individuals perceive certain types of parental involvement as positive. Interestingly, Study One's findings suggest that parental rejection may be received as a type of positive parental involvement, as parents typically reject a romantic relationship due to its unsuitability. In addition to this, Study One found that acculturation status (i.e., low, Bicultural, and high acculturated) impacted how this involvement was negotiated (see chapter 6). Low acculturated and bicultural individuals were more likely to positively perceive parental rejection, as they believed that parents had more insight and more knowledge on what made relationships successful. Furthermore, these young adults believed that parental rejection was permitted since accepting parents' decisions was done out of consideration for the whole family.

As mentioned earlier, it is considerably common in Easternized societies for young adults to defer to parents on important decisions (Javillonar, 1979; Honig & Hershatter, 1998). Buunk (2015) found that compared to Dutch young adults, parental influence on mate choice was highly preferred by individuals from Morocco and Turkey. Parental rejection may be positively received, as it might suggest that parents care deeply for their offspring's future. Parental supportive behaviour in Western societies includes actions such as verbal and physical affection (i.e., saying I love you, hugging, kissing), giving advice and encouragement, and companionship (McNeely & Barber, 2010). However, these behaviours may not accurately reflect the way Easternized parents show support. In Bangladesh, expressing love and care towards an offspring is usually communicated through indirect actions, for example, by peel-

ing an orange and removing its seeds (Parmar & Rohner, 2008). Moreover, parental rejection may experienced differently depending upon the interpretation of the actions of caregivers, thus, what is considered rejection in one culture may not be considered such in another (Rohner, Khaleque, & Cournoyer, 2005).

As a result of Study Two's findings that Easternized young adults had the most positive attitudes towards perceived rejection, and the above mentioned findings, it was hypothesized in the current study that compared to Bicultural and Westernized parents, Easternized parents would hold the most favourable attitudes towards parental rejection scenarios (Hypothesis 2).

Importance of Partner Similarity for Offspring

The importance of similarity between young adults and their partners was explored in Study Two, from the perspective of the young adult and from parents' perceived perspectives. The results found that generally, according to young adults, speaking the same language was thought to be the most important relationship factor for them and their parents. Additionally, young adults considered having a partner with a similar ethnicity as least important for them and their parents. Study Two's results were interesting as they supported the viewpoints of Study One's participants. According to Study One's findings, intercultural relationships were generally considered unfavourably among low acculturated and bicultural individuals. A common response among these females indicated that language barriers and religious differences between romantic partners and immigrant parents were too dissimilar to negotiate. This was especially concerning for Chinese participants, as most of their parents did not speak English. Language differences were problematic, as Chinese individuals believed that a lack of communication meant a lack of understanding between the different generations. For individuals from culturally rich backgrounds, language may be another way to

express certain cultural values that are important to its speakers. For instance, *guan* (to govern) is a Chinese cultural notion that associates strict, authoritarian training of children with love and care (Chao, 1994). Chao remarks that such ideologies is widely understood in China as parents and teachers are expected to uphold high standards of control and governance (1994). Given that a connection between language and cultural understanding may exist, it is understandable that low acculturated individuals may perceive their traditional parents to be against cross-cultural relationships.

Parents' attitudes towards cross-cultural relationships are important to consider, as they may have an influence on how likely their offspring will engage in such relationships. Since parents are responsible for socializing their offspring, young adults from immigrant households may be influenced by their parents' ideas on dating, which may be highly conservative or traditionally reflective of their home culture (Kibria, 1997). For example, adolescents who believed their parents held negative racial attitudes were less likely to date an individual of a different race or bring them home to meet their parents (Edmonds & Killens, 2009). However, much of the research on parental involvement in dating focuses on the conflict between parents' desires and that of their offspring. Essentially, individuals tend to prefer mates who are genetically beneficial for them (i.e., good looks) but may not necessarily be as beneficial to their parents (Apostolou, 2008b), thus, creating intergenerational conflict (Apostlou, 2007; Apostolou, 2008a; Buunk, Park, & Dubbs, 2008; Trivers, 1974). When it comes to different types of cross-cultural relationships, it is not widely known certain preferences are held. Given what is known from Study Two's findings, this study asks, do parents generally prefer certain similarities between themselves and their offspring's partner and are these preferences in similarity different between cultural groups?

In summary, these research findings, along with the findings of Studies One and Two, demonstrate that parents' attitudes towards rejection and cross-cultural relationships are im-

portant to explore. In particular, it is important to understand how parents regard cross-cultural relationships, and whether certain types are considered more favourably than others. Moreover, while the previous two studies have demonstrated how certain sociocultural factors may determine how young adults perceive parental rejection, it is necessary to explore whether these findings accurately portray parents' actual attitudes. In order to investigate these issues, an experimental study was run that mirrored the design of Study 2, except that the participants were parents from a range of cultural backgrounds who responded to four, hypothetical vignettes from their own, parental perspectives.

Method

Sample

There were 182 parents who participated in the current study (46% male, 55% female). These parents were not related to the young adult participants sampled in Study Two. These parents had offspring between the ages of 1 to 54 years old (*M* = 12.71 years, *SD* = 11.09). The sample consisted of parents from a wide variety of cultural identities, with 66 individuals in the Easternized group (36.5%), 66 individuals in the Bicultural group (36.5%), and 49 individuals in the Westernized group (27.1%). One individual declined to answer and their data was excluded from subsequent analyses. The sample was primarily located in America (97.8%) with a few participants from Australia (1.7%) and Canada (0.6%).

The study was conducted through Qualtrics Survey Software, using their panel recruitment process. This process allowed for participants to be recruited from a wide variety of cultures. Recruitment for the Australian sample was supplemented by sending emails throughout the graduate student body at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia. Additional Canadian participants were recruited from Toronto, Ontario using Facebook and word of mouth.

Procedure

Participants were instructed to visit the Qualtrics online survey link and complete the questionnaire. When the questionnaire was first opened, participants were given a brief introduction of the study to read. They were then given a consent form to read over, followed by several demographic questions about themselves and their eldest child. They answered questions about their gender, ethnicity, nationality, religious affiliation, and the age of their eldest child. Following this, they were asked immigration related questions, such as where they were born, where they lived currently, when they had immigrated to that country (native citizens indicated they were "born here" instead), and how long they had lived in that country. Finally, they were asked which generation they belonged to, with options ranging from 1st generation to 5th generation. They were also able to state they did not know due to lack of information.

Measures

Cultural identity. The same one-item question used in Study Two was used to determine participants' self-ascribed cultural identity. Participants were given a list of countries divided into either "Eastern" (e.g., Bangladesh, China, Egypt, Mexico, Vietnam, Afghanistan) or "Western" (e.g., USA, France, UK, Germany, Poland, Greece, Finland) (see Appendix C). They were then asked to rate themselves based on those categories. The scale consisted of a five point Likert scale which were scored from 1 = Very Easternized, 3 = Bicultural, and 5 = Very Westernized.

Intergenerational conflict. Study three used the same amended dating and marriage conflict sub scale of the Intergenerational Conflict Inventory (ICI; Chung, 2001) as used in Study Two in order to measure the level of intergenerational conflict parents felt they had

with their children (see Appendix C). The ICI was originally intended for Asian American young adults, however, it was amended in order to ensure that all parents were able to complete the inventory. Each question asked parents to answer according to how much conflict they experienced with their child. The ICI dating and marriage sub scale measured the different amounts of conflict in dating and marriage issues (5 items). Sample items included, "When your child can begin dating," and "The race/ethnicity your child can date". Participants were instructed to indicate on five point Likert scales the degree to which each item caused conflict between them and their children. Items were scored 1 = No Conflict Over This Issue to 5 = A Lot Of Conflict Over This Issue. The five items were averaged to determine the total dating and marriage conflict score, with higher scores indicating higher intergenerational conflict. The ICI dating and marriage subscale's five items had a high level of internal consistency, as determined by a Cronbach's alpha of 0.916.

Rejection vignettes. In order to measure participants' attitudes about offspring dating, participants were given the same rejection vignettes as the young adult participants in Study 2, but rewritten to present a parental perspective. The four vignettes (provided in full below) each described a type of partner-dissimilar relationship (religious, racial, cultural, or linguistic).

Vignette 1 – Religious Differences

> A year ago, Samantha began dating Mohammed, a 22 year old student in college. Samantha and Mohammed are very happy together and have even discussed getting married. Samantha brings Mohammed home for dinner one day in order to introduce him to her parents. During dinner her parents learn that Mohammed's parents are Muslim but that they don't practice very often. She feels embarrassed because she forgot to mention this to her parents, who are practising Catholics. When Samantha begins casually discussing marriage, Mohammed mentions that his parents would prefer a Muslim ceremony in a mosque. However, Samantha's father tells everyone that he would like the ceremony to be in his church. Later that night, Samantha's parents tell her that they aren't happy with the relationship because they don't want to lose their child to another religion.

Vignette 2 – Ethnic Differences

Several months ago, Kiera started dating her partner, Jack. Lately, the relationship has become serious and Kiera has decided to take the next step and introduce Jack to her parents. During the holidays, she asks her parents if she can bring her partner to the annual holiday family reunion. She notices her father's hesitation but decides to ask Jack anyway. She later overhears her parents discussing how they're shocked that Jack is Black. They point out that they don't have a problem with different ethnicities but that they aren't quite as liberal. They also point out that there aren't any interracial relationships in their family and that Kiera's relationship is quite novel and strange to them. Her parents later tell her that while it's okay for them to date, they would be very disappointed if they wanted to get married.

Vignette 3 – Cultural Differences

Mike grew up in Australia but his partner, Kate, grew up in another country very different from his. He has a lot in common with Kate, such as similar taste in books and movies. Kate wasn't raised to celebrate Chinese New Year, like he was. Instead, she celebrates Hanukkah, which has very different traditions from his family. Mike realizes that whenever Kate interacts with his family, she felt awkward with his parents while his parents do not attempt to learn any of Kate's cultural practices. Kate also doesn't eat the spicy food that Mike's parents serve for dinner and it upsets them. Once, Kate forgot to bring red pockets to his Chinese New Year party and Mike's parents commented that it was disrespectful to their Chinese heritage. His parents reject your relationship, stating that Mike and Kate are just too different culturally. They believe Kate is disrespectful to their culture and want Mike to end the relationship.

Vignette 4 – Language Differences

Jessie met her partner, Peter at university where they were both studying. Her parents are very proud of her because they have left China in order to give her better opportunities. Their relationship has progressed to something serious and she brings Peter over to her house to meet her parents. Since Jessie's parents immigrated at a later age, they feel uncomfortable speaking English and aren't fluent. However, Peter only speaks English and cannot understand them. Jessie's parents later tell her that dating someone who speaks the same language as them would be easier because her partner would be able to understand them and their values. Her parents explain to her that in their culture, a child's future spouse should try to get along with the parents of whomever they're marrying. They highlight the importance of respecting elders in their culture and want Jessie to continue having those values. They disapprove of her relationship because of the severe language barriers and state that her partner can never fully come to understand them.

Positive attitudes towards rejection. Following each vignette, four items measured how positively the participants felt about the parental rejection. Positive attitudes indicated a feeling of support in relation to parents dismissing the relationship and believing that parents

had a right to reject the relationship. Sample positive attitude items included, “Samantha’s parents are looking out for her”, “Samantha’s parents know what’s best for their daughter”, and “Samantha’s parents only want the best for her future”. Each item was scored using a five point Likert scale with 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. Each positive item was summed and averaged by four in order to obtain the total positive attitude towards parental rejection score. Each vignette’s positive items had high levels of internal consistencies: “Religion” Cronbach’s alpha of .805, “Ethnicity” Cronbach’s alpha of .872, “Culture” Cronbach’s alpha of .865, “Language” Cronbach’s alpha of .864.

Importance of relationship similarity for offspring. Following each rejection vignette, participants were asked to consider how important it was for their offspring’s partner to be similar in religion, ethnicity, culture, or language spoken; e.g., “How important is religion to you when considering a romantic partner for your offspring?” and “How important is language to you when considering a romantic partner for your offspring?” Participants were instructed to use a four point ranking scale with 1 = Very Unimportant to 5 = Very Important. All four items had a high level of internal consistency, as determined by a Cronbach’s alpha of .794.

Data Analysis

The data were first explored descriptive statistics using IBM SPSS. Missing data was not removed from the data set as the Kruskal-Wallis H tests could exclude cases with missing data on a case-by-case basis. Skewness was also not tested as this was not a requirement for non-parametric tests. Several Kruskal-Wallis H tests were conducted to assess differences in intergenerational conflict scores, relationship preferences, and positive and negative reactions to parental rejection. The Kruskal-Wallis H test is often called a “one-way ANOVA on ranks”, as it is a rank-based nonparametric test used to determine whether significant differences exist in an independent variable with three or more groups and the dependent variable

is ordinal or continuous (Conover, 1999; Kruskal & Wallis, 1952). Following this, a post-hoc test was conducted by investigating pairwise comparisons using Dunn's (1964) procedure with a Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons. Post-hoc tests were conducted on group differences that were statistically significant. Kruskal-Wallis H tests were conducted to test hypothesis 1 and two, which were between groups that differed in cultural identity: "Easternized" (n = 66), "Bicultural" (n = 66), and "Westernized" (n = 49). In order to measure how important relationship similarity was, a Kruskal-Wallis H test was first conducted in order to assess differences in cultural group. Subsequently, these descriptive statistics were ranked from lowest to highest, with lowest mean indicating a score of "least importance" and the highest mean indicating a score of "most importance".

Results

Cultural Identity and Intergenerational Conflict Scores

Hypothesis 1 predicted that of the three cultural identity groups, Easternized parents would report the highest scores on dating and marriage-related intergenerational conflict. The first Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted in order to investigate this hypothesis. Visual inspection determined that the distribution of IGC scores was similar for all groups. Median IGC scores were statistically significantly different between different cultural identity groups, h = 20.734, $p < .000$. The hypothesis was supported as the post hoc analysis revealed statistically significant differences in median IGC scores between the Westernized (1.60) and Easternized (3.00) groups, and between the Bicultural (2.23) and the Easternized groups (3.00), but not between Westernized and Bicultural groups. Overall, the Easternized group obtained significantly higher intergenerational conflict scores than the Westernized and Bicultural groups (see Table 15).

Cultural Identity and Positive Attitudes Towards Relationship Rejection

Hypothesis 2 proposed that Easternized parents would be more likely than Westernized parents to hold positive attitudes towards parental rejection of young adults' relationships with dissimilar others. This was also tested using a Kruskal-Wallis H test. Visual inspection of the box plot determined that the distributions of positive attitudes were similar across all cultural identities. The analysis found that across vignettes, *total* positive attitudes were statistically significantly different between each cultural identity group, h = 9.252, $p < .01$. The post hoc analysis revealed that median scores between the Bicultural (2.97) and the Easternized (3.31) groups and between the Bicultural (2.97) and the Westernized (3.31) groups were statistically significant, but that the Westernized group did not differ statistically from the Easternized groups.

The analyses also revealed statistically significant differences between each cultural identity group in relation to the ethnicity vignette, h = 12.202, $p < 0.002$. The post-hoc analysis revealed significant differences in median scores between the Bicultural (2.87) and the Easternized (3.50) groups, and between the Bicultural (2.86) and the Westernized (3.50) groups, but not any other group combinations. Overall, the hypothesis was not supported as both the Easternized and the Westernized groups were significantly more positive about parental rejection than the bicultural group; and in particular, were significantly more positive about parental rejection in response to the vignette depicting a relationship between ethnically dissimilar partners. See Table 16 for a full list of group median scores for each rejection vignette.

Table 15

Parents' Intergenerational Conflict Scores According to Cultural Identity

			Cultural Identity		
	Kruskal-Wallis h test statistic (h)	Asymptotic p value (*p*)	Easternized group median (n = 66)	Bicultural group median (n = 66)	Westernized group median (n = 49)
IGC Scores on dating and marriage	20.734	.000	3.00[a]	2.23[b]	1.60[b]

Note. [a, b] Dissimilar superscript values indicate a statistically significant difference in group medians scores.

Table 16

Parents' Positive Attitudes Towards Rejection According to Cultural Identity

			Cultural Identity		
	Kruskal-Wallis h test statistic (h)	Asymptotic p value (*p*)	Easternized group median (n = 66)	Bicultural group median (n = 66)	Westernized group median (n = 49)
Religion vignette	3.451	.178	3.50	3.50	3.75
Ethnicity vignette	12.202	.002[2]	3.50[b]	2.87[a]	3.50[b]
Culture vignette	7.046	.03[1]	3.25	2.87	3.25
Language vignette	3.630	.163	3.25	3.00	3.50
Total "felt acceptance"/positive attitudes	9.252	.01[2]	3.31[b]	2.97[a]	3.31[b]

Note. [a, b,] Dissimilar superscript values indicate a statistically significant difference in group medians scores at $p < .05$.

Note. [1] While the Asymptotic p value was valued at under 0.05, post-hoc analysis revealed that none of the group differences were large enough to be statistically significant, $p > .05$.

Note. [2] While both the "Easternized" and the "Bicultural" groups have identical median scores, their mean scores are different. The Westernized group's mean in the ethnicity vignette score ($M = 3.7398$) is higher than the Easternized group's mean ($M = 3.5530$). In addition, the Westernized group's mean in the total felt acceptance score ($M = 3.3712$) is higher than that of the Easternized group's mean ($M = 3.3437$).

Cultural Identity and Preference for Similarity

Preference for partner similarity across each cultural identity group was also tested using several Kruskal-Wallis H tests. Visual inspection of the box plot determined that the distributions of partner similarity in each vignette were similar across all cultural identities. Median partner similarity scores for the "ethnicity" relationship were significantly different among the different cultural identity groups (h = 7.036, p = .030). Post-hoc analysis revealed statistically significant differences between the Bicultural group and the Westernized group, but not between any other group combinations (see Table 17).

Relationships ranked. Parents were asked to rate the importance of similarity between their offspring's partner and themselves. This item was scored from 1 = Very Unimportant to 5 = Very Important. The results (see Table 18) demonstrated that Easternized parents believed that religious similarity was most important (M = 3.35, SD = 1.283) and ethnic similarity was the least important (M = 3.06, SD = 1.311) in their offspring's partner. The Bicultural parents also believed that religious similarity was most important (M = 3.15, SD = 1.126) and ethnic similarity was the least important (M = 2.59, SD = 1.277) in their offspring's partner. Finally, Westernized parents reported that religious similarity was most important (M = 3.45, SD = 1.226). However, they believed that both ethnic (M = 3.24, SD = 1.422) and cultural similarity (M = 3.24, SD = 1.164) was the least important in their offspring's partner. Altogether, all parents believed that a similarity in religion was most important for their offspring's partner to have (M = 3.30, SD = 1.212) and parents believed an offspring's partner who spoke the same language was least important (M = 2.94, SD = 1.351).

Table 17

Preference for Partner Similarity According to Cultural Identity

Intercultural Relationship Type	Kruskal-Wallis H test statistic (h)	Asymptotic significance (*p*)	Cultural Identity		
			Easternized group median (*n* = 66)	Bicultural group median (*n* = 66)	Westernized group median (*n* = 49)
Similarity in religion	2.089	0.352	4.00	3.00	4.00
Similarity in ethnicity	7.036	0.03	3.00[1]	3.00[a, 1]	4.00[b]
Similarity in culture	4.415	0.110	3.00	3.00	3.00
Similarity in language	3.708	0.157	3.00	3.00	4.00

Note. [a, b] values in a row with dissimilar superscripts are significantly different at $p < .05$.

Note. [1] While the Easternized and Bicultural groups have identical median scores, the Easternized group's mean ($M = 2.59$) is statistically significantly higher than the Bicultural group's mean ($M = 3.06$). The Westernized group's mean is highest of all ($M = 3.24$).

Table 18

Parents' Ranked Preference For Partner Similarity

	Easternized Group (n = 66)		Bicultural Group (n = 66)		Westernized Group (n = 49)		All Groups	
Relationship type	Mean (*M*)	Standard Deviation (*SD*)	Mean (*M*)	Standard Deviation (*SD*)	Mean (*M*)	Standard Deviation (*SD*)	Mean (*M*)	Standard Deviation (*SD*)
Similarity in religion	3.35	1.283	3.15	1.126	3.45	1.226	3.30	1.212
Similarity in ethnicity	3.06	1.311	2.56	1.277	3.24	1.422	2.94	1.351
Similarity in culture	3.20	1.218	2.82	1.108	3.24	1.164	3.07	1.174
Similarity in language	3.14	1.321	2.94	1.214	3.39	1.115	3.13	1.235

Discussion

The aim of Study Three was to empirically test whether cultural identity impacted parents' experiences with their offspring's romantic relationships. As Studies One and Two focused on young adults' experiences with and reactions to parental rejection, this study investigated whether parents' attitudes were parallel to young adults' perceptions of them.

Intergenerational Conflict

The results revealed that, in line with hypothesis one, Easternized parents reported higher intergenerational conflict on dating and marriage issues than Westernized or bicultural parents. This is not surprising, as the literature suggests that higher intergenerational conflict exists in immigrant families (Chung, 2001; Kwak, 2003). However, this is concerning, as high rates of intergenerational conflict have been found to be associated with negative consequences, such as higher depression and lower self-esteem in adolescents (Espiritu & Wolf, 2001), and with depressive symptomology (Ying & Han, 2007). Interestingly, these results have mainly been found in South Asian and East Asian families (Ying & Han, 2007; Juang, Syed, & Takagi, 2007). These findings are important because continuous intergenerational conflict can lead to alienation and helplessness in within immigrant communities. These factors, in turn, may be especially detrimental for immigrants from highly collectivistic cultures, and may lead to detrimental consequences, such as acculturation stress (Meyer, Dhindsa, & Zane, 2012).

Parents' Attitudes to Relationship Rejection

The second hypothesis was not supported as the results found that Westernized, as opposed to Easternized or bicultural, parents had more favourable attitudes towards implied intercultural relationship rejection. Interestingly, this finding is contradictory to both Study

Two's findings on cultural identity's impact on favourable attitudes towards parental rejection and the current literature on the cultural differences in parental involvement. To illustrate, much of the research focusing on the differences in parenting styles supports that Easternized parents are typically more involved in their offspring's decisions (Chao, 1997). As outlined in Study Two's discussion, the current literature suggests that higher parental involvement is not as readily accepted or enacted by Westernized individuals. Typically, higher parental involvement is viewed as intrusive and is generally not welcomed. For example, Mexican parents were more likely to positively associate maternal control with maternal acceptance, in contrast to American parents, who were more likely to negatively correlate such action (Hill, Bush, & Roosa, 2003). These patterns are usually witnessed cross-culturally since Easternized parents are more likely to believe that it is their right to be involved in their offspring's mating decisions. This is done out of respect to the traditional family hierarchy where offspring are expected to defer to parents for such important decisions (Javillonar, 1979; Honig & Hershatter, 1998). Thus, parental rejection is usually viewed in a more positive light by Easternized parents, as it may indicate a stricter form of parental involvement and care.

Future research should focus on "parental ethnotheories", which are described as the implicit assumptions on the "correct" way to raise children in different cultures (Harkness & Super, 2006). These ethnotheories may range from universal to specific, as parents worldwide may share certain beliefs, while other beliefs may be specifically held in a particular culture (Harkness & Super, 2006, p. 80). While IPARTheory has demonstrated the negative consequences of parental rejection on adolescent outcomes worldwide (see Rohner & Khaleque, 2002), the acceptability of parental rejection in offspring mate choice may be differentially interpreted by Easternized parents who may view it as an extension of parental involvement. However, it remains unclear from Study three's results whether these positive

attitudes towards relationship rejection are affected by cultural identity. It is important to note that while Study One and Two examined the attitudes towards parental involvement and rejection from the perspectives of young adults, the discrepancies in attitudes in parents occurred unexpectedly. Specifically, Study One and two demonstrated that both cultural identity and acculturation level had an impact on how parental involvement is negotiated. Low acculturated and Bicultural individuals were more likely to invite parents to be more involved in their dating decisions, whereas high acculturated individuals were more adamantly opposed to such actions. In contrast, Study Three predicted that Easternized parents would hold the most favourable attitudes towards parental rejection, as high parental involvement was an acceptable cultural value. However, the results found that both Easternized and Westernized parents were likely to have positive attitudes towards rejection (i.e., negative parental involvement), with Westernized parents scoring the highest. Taken together, the results from all three studies suggest that parents and offspring may not always see eye to eye on certain behaviours, especially when it concerns mate selection. While certain young adults may be more or less likely to accept parental involvement, even negative rejection, cultural identity may not affect parents' decisions as strongly. Parents may be concerned for their children's welfare, especially in decisions as important as mate selection, regardless of their cultural values. Moreover, although the current literature suggests that Easternized parents are more likely to be involved in their child's mating decisions, cultural identity may not be limited to explaining how parents view rejection of their offspring's romantic relationships. Finally, the discrepancies in these findings suggest that perhaps future research should focus on further exploring parents' general attitudes towards relationship rejection.

Preference for Relationship Similarity

Similar to Study Two, the present study investigated how preferences for relationship similarity were rated. Due to the exploratory nature of investigating the preference for relationship similarity, no hypotheses were proposed. Interestingly, the results found that all parents, regardless of cultural identity, rated religious similarity as the most important trait in their offspring's partner. These results are divergent to Study Two's findings, which indicated that young adults believed that their and their parents' preferences would be similar. Particularly, young adults perceived that relationships similar in language spoken were most preferred and relationships similar in ethnicity were least preferred.

The preference for religious similarity in an offspring's partner is supported by current literature. In a study with Muslim, Christian, and Jewish young adults, the findings revealed that strong traditional beliefs hindered one's acceptability of interfaith relationships (Yahya & Boag, 2014a). Specifically, young adults were hesitant to engage in interfaith relationships with Muslims, as they believed that the Christian and Judaism faith were far too contradictory to Islam. These findings were similar to the attitudes held by high acculturated individuals in Study One as many of those young adults believed that too many differences in values existed and so; interfaith relationships were to be avoided. Study One demonstrated that current attitudes towards Muslims were negative, as parents typically believed that followers were too "intense" about their religion and would force their beliefs on their romantic partner. Additionally, the preferences for religious similarity may have been influenced by the location of Study Three's participants, as the majority resided in the United States. This may have had a major impact on their ratings for relationship similarity preferences, as current race relations are tense following 9/11. Current attitudes towards Muslims may have increased the unwillingness to engage in relationships with individuals of certain faiths (Nasir, 2009), especially if this clashes with their own faiths. In support, parents may be unwilling to allow their offspring from engaging in interfaith relationships with Muslims if they believe

the negative stereotypes about Muslim people (i.e., forcing women to wear burkas/hijabs, dominating wives, strict adherence to Islamic beliefs). Furthermore, such a strong tenet to Islam may deter many individuals from committing to interfaith relationships, out of fear of ostracism and disownment from their community (Haddad, Smith, & Moore, 2006).

These fears may have been more problematic for the Westernized parents within this study, as many considered themselves Christians or Atheists, whose values may be thought to be strikingly different from Muslims. However, these fears do not account for the Easternized and Bicultural parents' preference for religious similarity. Traditional parents with stronger cultural identity have been found to prefer similar partners (Brown, McNatt, & Cooper, 2003). The theory of homogamy, which will be discussed more fully in a later chapter, suggests that individuals are inclined to engage in romantic relationships with those who are culturally and demographically similar to them (Hollingshead, 1950). Proponents of this theory explain that individuals are more inclined to choose similar partners due to the similarity in life experiences, shared views on opinions, and ability to continue long established cultural and religious practices (Lamanna & Riedmann, 2005). The need for cultural similarity may be more pronounced in parents from an Easternized background, as they are typically more religious. Given that both Easternized and Bicultural parents have immigrated to a Western society, choosing partners for their offspring with similar life experiences may be paramount to a smoother and more positive acculturation transition. They may desire for their offspring to continue their long established religious practices in a foreign country and so, preference for religious similarity in their offspring's partner can be expected.

Limitations and Strengths of Current Study

Similar to the previous study, the main limitation of Study Three is the construct validity of the cultural identity measure. Dividing parents into Easternized, Bicultural, or West-

ernized groups may not entirely capture their attitudes towards rejection. While the results and previous research suggests that Easternized parents are more likely to approve of perceived parental rejection, it is important to address that this may not accurately predict their future behaviour. Future studies could benefit from interviews and longitudinal studies which investigate the experiences of families with offspring in current intercultural relationships. This would provide a fascinating insight into the attitudes of those parents who are currently experiencing such events. Furthermore, another limitation concerns the demographic shortcomings. While this study was strengthened through its use of a large range of ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds sampled, participants were not restricted by the age of their children. The study required participants to be a parent of at least one child, however, did not impose a limit on how young or old that child could be in order to qualify. The sample comprised of parents who had children between the ages of 1 to 54 years old (M = 12.71 years, SD = 11.09) which may have been problematic for parents whose children were not of dating age (i.e., too young to date, or had already gotten married). Furthermore, as this study is one of the few studies that explore parents' attitudes towards rejection of their offspring's intercultural relationship, future cross-cultural research is needed to validate the results. As there may be many factors that influence parents' attitudes towards rejection, other than cultural identity, there exists a need to further investigate using qualitative measures (e.g., interviews, case studies, ethnography), especially with a focus on the impact such attitudes towards rejection has on intercultural relationships outcomes.

Conclusions

In spite of these limitations, this study further contributes to the existing body of research on parents' impact on intercultural relationships. The implications of this study are significant as they demonstrate that young adults' perceptions of parental attitudes may not

be completely accurate. It is evident, however, that intergenerational conflict in higher in immigrant families, especially when parents consider themselves as Easternized. Their cultural identity also has an influence on their attitudes towards rejection and so, while low acculturated individuals may have similar views towards rejection as their parents, it is the Bicultural individuals with Easternized parents whose intercultural relationships may bear the negative ramifications. These findings are especially important as they facilitates greater cultural understanding of parental rejection, especially the needs and conflicts existing within immigrant families. Neglecting the needs of immigrant families may result in greater mental health issues in their offspring and in higher community and familial isolation. This isolation is especially devastating for collectivistic families, where the overall strength rests on the strength of each member of the family working together. It is recommended that future research focus on understanding how to meet the challenges and issues within immigrant families.

Chapter 10: General Discussion

Thesis Aims and Overview

This thesis contributes to the growing research on parental involvement in young adults' relationship decisions and is the first to comprehensively explore the factors that impact how young adults view and negotiate parental involvement, specifically rejection, in romantic relationships. The literature to date on parent-child relationships lacked a cross-cultural perspective, specifically in regard to the importance of cultural context (Harkness & Super, 2002) in the acceptability of parental involvement and rejection of children's romantic partners. The IPARTheory (Rohner & Khaleque, 2010) partly compensates for this, as it views parent-child relationships within a variety of different populations, allowing it to be applied universally. However, many of the studies in IPARTheory research focus on non-Western cultures by conducting studies within these cultures, and there is a lack of focus on immigrant families. In order to investigate how different individuals viewed and negotiated parental involvement in their dating decisions, the aims of this thesis were three-fold. First, the impact of acculturation to Canadian society on how parental involvement in the romantic relationships of young, adult women was perceived and negotiated was examined. Second, specific sociocultural factors, such as acculturation level, cultural identity, and gender, were examined in order to understand how young adults reacted to parental rejection of their inter-cultural relationships. Finally, parents' own attitudes towards parental involvement and rejection, within the context of their own cultural identity, were examined.

In order to address these aims, this thesis utilized a mixed methods approach. Due to the limited research on how young adults view and negotiate rejected romantic relationships, Study One was exploratory in nature. It was considered important to understand the many levels of influence (i.e., parental, social, cultural, religious, gendered) on how rejection is re-

ceived and negotiated. The themes that emerged from Study One built a platform from which the questions raised in Study Two and Three could be examined. In particular, Study One demonstrated that certain sociocultural factors, such as acculturation level, gender, and cultural identity shape how young women view parental involvement in, and potential rejection of, their romantic relationships. Study Two then investigated those sociocultural factors in the context of parental rejection of specifically intercultural relationships with young women and men. Finally, Study Three investigated whether parents' views on rejection matched those of young adults from similar cultural backgrounds.

The aim of this final chapter is to outline the findings discussed in this thesis and discuss the significance of each study's results. It will also include a discussion on the merits of contextualizing parental involvement and rejection on romantic relationship decisions through the lens of cultural identity, gender, and acculturation factors. The discussion will end with a discussion of the strengths and limitations of this thesis, and some concluding thoughts.

Summary of Studies One, Two, and Three

Three studies were conducted in order to address the gaps in the current literature on parental involvement in romantic relationship decisions. Due to this largely unexamined topic, the first study in this thesis was exploratory. However, Studies Two and Three's questions and aims were shaped by the results of each of the previous studies. This allowed for each study to address remaining questions from the previous study and build upon the general aims of this thesis.

Study One used a qualitative approach in order to investigate the experiences of young females and their perceptions of parents becoming involved in their relationship decisions. A major aim of the first study was to better understand how acculturation affects young

adult females' perceptions and negotiation of parental involvement, including parental rejection. The findings indicated that acculturation status had a significant impact on the perceptions of young adult females. Specifically, parental involvement was deemed to be more appropriate in the low acculturation and bicultural groups, since gaining parental acceptance of a romantic relationship was considered necessary before marriage. In contrast, for high acculturated individuals, parental involvement was not perceived as necessary; in fact, it was perceived as intrusive and unreasonable for independent adults on the way to maturity. While there were some parental values, such as the importance of female chastity, that all participants had experienced, many other thematic areas were differently experienced depending on the cultural identities of participants.

Individuals in each acculturation group responded to negative parental involvement in different ways. "Rebuffing parents" was considered an appropriate negotiation strategy for high acculturated individuals, as their independence was protected and maintained. In contrast, low acculturated females preferred to dissolve their relationships if they perceived insurmountable parental rejection. Bicultural individuals were the most ambivalent about how to negotiate such rejection, noting that parental involvement to some degree was inevitable in their lives and relationships.

In order to further explore the findings of Study One, Study Two investigated young adults' reactions to hypothetical scenarios in which parents rejected an adult child's romantic relationship. The main limitation in Study One was the lack of focus on different types of intercultural relationships and the perspectives of young men. Thus, the rejection vignettes utilized in Study Two comprised different types of intercultural relationships (i.e., religion, race, language, and culture) and explored men's, as well as women's, responses. Study Two's results demonstrated that the highest levels of intergenerational conflict were reported by bicultural individuals. Further, and in line with Study One, positive attitudes towards parental re-

jection were highest amongst low acculturated individuals, while negative attitudes were highest among high acculturated individuals. However, a unique gender difference was found, with males being more likely than females to endorse romantic relationship dissolution following parental rejection and also to report more negative attitudes towards parental rejection.

Both Studies One and Two investigated young adults' perceptions of parents' views on specifically intercultural relationships. In Study One, participants believed that parents would have negative attitudes towards intercultural relationships, especially ones that differed in language and religion. These findings were supported by Study Two's results, which also found that participants preferred relationships which were similar in language. Study Three sought to investigate whether parents' actual attitudes were accurately supported by young adults' perceptions. Study Three's findings confirmed that parents' attitudes towards rejected intercultural relationships were impacted by different cultural identities. Specifically, Easternized parents more strongly endorsed parental rejection and indicated higher levels of intergenerational conflict than Westernized and bicultural parents. Additionally, all parents, regardless of cultural identity, were more likely to believe that similarity in religion was most important and similarity in language spoken was least important, in their children's mating decisions. The theoretical significance of these findings will now be discussed below.

Family Values and Parental Involvement in Children's Relationships

Understanding intergenerational differences in family values was paramount to this thesis, as current research suggests that cross-cultural factors impact how frequently parents will become involved in their offspring's mating decisions. Usually, families from collectivistic cultures endorse higher parental involvement in their offspring's mate choices (Buunk, Park, & Duncan, 2010). However, the main limitation within parental involvement

research is that such research focuses on parents, without investigating whether cross-cultural influences impact young adults' perceptions of their parents' involvement. The current research suggests that young adult immigrants from collectivistic cultures are more accepting of their parents' influence in mate choice, in comparison to their European counterparts (Zling & Kline, 2013; Buunk, 2015). However, although research suggests that acculturated individuals with an East Asian background report greater parental influence on mate choice (Buunk et al., 2010), the extent to which this applies to bicultural individuals is unclear.

The findings of this thesis demonstrated that, as expected, young, low acculturated women believed that parental involvement in their romantic relationship decisions was necessary and desirable, and that acceptance from parents was a requirement that needed to be met before such relationships could progress to marriage. This sentiment was supported by many of the bicultural participants, who also preferred that romantic partners gained parents' approval, since feeling like a family unit was important. However, the findings from Study One also suggested that bicultural individuals might be more ambivalent about parental involvement, as many believed that it was intrusive and contrary to their Canadian values. Further, although the highly acculturated individuals tended to agree with this position, bicultural individuals also recognized that they may have to accept at least a level of parental involvement, and that such involvement was deemed "unavoidable" in their background culture.

Overall, the findings from Study One demonstrate that differences in values may influence how young adults perceive and negotiate parental involvement. In particular, a striking example of the differences in familism values was found between the low acculturated and the highly acculturated young women. While the highly acculturated young women preferred independence, the low acculturated young women were adamant in allowing their parents to have a say, even to the extent of dissolving their romantic relationship if parents found

it unsuitable. As discussed earlier, for these Easternized young adults, allowing parents to be involved is a way of demonstrating filial piety, whereby younger individuals must respect, obey, and take care of their elders (Keum, 2003). Thus, filial piety regulates the intergenerational relationships between parents and offspring (Keum, 2003). In this way, sacrifice and care are understood as interchangeable, with actions taken, instead of words, to connote love and affection (Kim, 1995).

Confucian ideology also rigidly defines the role of women in Eastern societies and stresses the importance of governing the roles that husbands and wives hold (Keum, 2003; Kim, 1998). Traditionally, due to patriarchal values, women are expected to obey their fathers prior to marriage, followed by obedience to their husbands after marriage (Kim, 1998; Pak, 2006). Consequently, women are defined by their relationship to the men in their lives (Keum, 2003; Kim, 1998), which makes divorce, where women are seen as single entities without a family to anchor her, shameful and more stigmatizing than in Western culture. Since women's reputation and identity are seen as part of the family, divorce and other "ill repute" behaviour is negatively looked upon because of the disgrace it can bring to the entire family (Park, Murgatroyd, Raynock, & Spillet, 1998).

The attitudes of low acculturated and bicultural young women in Study One, especially from Chinese backgrounds, supported these values. As reported in earlier chapters, many of the young women discussed the stigma surrounding divorce. Positive attitudes towards parental involvement were underpinned by their fear of become stigmatized, something they believed parental acceptance of their relationships would help shield them from. Interestingly, these findings might also help to explain why Study Two's males were more likely than females to report dissolving their relationships following parental rejection. Perhaps they were less restricted by the stigma of "excessive" dating that females must consider, so are

less restricted in their dating choices.

Clearly, there is an important need for more research on these issues. In particular, we need to better understand how young people cope in the face of chronic parental rejection of their dating partners. Do young adults stay close to their families following parental rejection? How do parents react when their young adult children decide to continue engaging in a rejected relationship? Additionally, despite our understanding of collectivistic parenting, too few studies have examined close relationship-related aspects of the lives of bicultural adult offspring, who must negotiate between their own contemporary values and the traditional values of their parents. How do bicultural individuals make these decisions and what are the emotional costs involved? Considering that a large segment of the Asian American population consists of bicultural/biracial individuals, according to the U.S. Census (15%, 2.6 million people; Hoeffel, Roastogi, Kim, & Shahid, 2012), it is imperative that future research addresses how these bicultural young adults within traditional families navigate their choices in a blended family context.

Intercultural Romantic Relationships

An important aspect of this thesis was to address gaps in our understanding of intercultural romantic relationships. As mentioned earlier, these relationships are important to consider within a cross-cultural context, as they become more commonplace in Western societies (Le, 2008). Study One demonstrated that attitudes towards intercultural relationships may be dependent upon one's acculturation status. For instance, low acculturated and bicultural females were less likely to desire intercultural partners, as they believed parents would be opposed to heterogamous relationships. Although bicultural participants were more open to intercultural relationships, due to longer acculturation into Canadian society, many believed they would still avoid such relationships due to their "complicated nature". Study One

also demonstrated that the majority of individuals, regardless of acculturation status, preferred partners similar in religion and culture to themselves. These findings suggest that certain existing sociocultural factors work against heterogamous relationships, such as religious teachings which forbid interfaith relationships (Leeman, 2009; Cila and Lalonde, 2013; Marshal & Markstrom-Adams, 1995).

Parents' attitudes were considered an important factor in the acceptability of intercultural relationships. For example, the most common explanation for low acculturated individuals avoiding intercultural relationships was that their parents would never come to fully understand their partners. Since parental involvement was paramount to relationship continuation, these relationships were deemed unacceptable. Further, participants frequently commented that their parents would reject intercultural relationships because they preferred future sons-in-law who could uphold their cultural identity. Other research supports these findings. For example, Buunk et al. (2012) found that parental influence strongly predicted opposition towards out-group mating, while there is a body of research that has found parents typically desire that the future spouse of their children should come from similar ethnic and religious groups, and the same - or higher - social class (see Apostolou, 2007; Buunk et al., 2008; Dubbs & Buunk, 2010; Sprecher & Chandak, 1992).

In line with IPARTheory, the findings demonstrated potential parental rejection was enough to negatively impact young adults' romantic relationship outcomes, with many choosing to sacrifice their desires for the sake of parental acceptance. However, the findings of Study Three demonstrated that immigrant parents might not perceive parental rejection so negatively; rather, they may regard it as positive and useful for their offspring. In particular, for Easternized parents, parental involvement and even rejection of their children's relationships may demonstrate that parents care deeply about their offspring's future welfare. Participants in Study One similarly noted that parental rejection was often associated with parents

wanting the best for their child. Accordingly, while this thesis has demonstrated that parental rejection may be received differently depending upon an individual's acculturation status, it is interesting to note that young adults from low acculturated/Easternized backgrounds may actually welcome rejection as a positive form of parental involvement. The findings of this thesis also underscore the potential importance of language acquisition on intercultural partner acceptance, particularly for the young adults themselves. Again, however, this necessitates what might be a difficult balancing act. For example, although Oh, Koeske, and Sales (2002) found that language-associated acculturation (i.e., speaking English over Korean) was not directly related to depression, they found that a sense of cultural identity and participation in traditional cultural practices were negatively associated with depression. These results suggest that a balance between acculturation and retention of the native culture (including language) may be paramount to healthy adaptation.

Future research should explore the extent to which some individuals may welcome parental rejection as a positive form of involvement, whereas some individuals may be see it as strongly negative. As noted earlier, bicultural individuals may be the most challenged by such parental involvement; acknowledging it as inevitable and signalling love, but finding it intrusive and in conflict with Western values. Deconstructing parental rejection is practical for two reasons. On the one hand, identifying the *impact* of positive and negative attitudes towards parental rejection is critical for translating this body of research into more targeted and effective prevention and intervention efforts for immigrant families. On the other hand, delineating the different experiences of parental rejection would help to move the literature away from stereotypes, such as "Tiger moms", to a more balanced and comprehensive empirical knowledge base that accurately captures the experiences of immigrant families and their young adult children.

In summary, when immigrant families arrive in their host culture and find that their

young adult offspring are not retaining as much as their native cultural values as they would desire, higher intergenerational conflict can be expected. This heightened occurrence of intergenerational conflict is worrying for immigrant families as it often results in higher psychological distress for both parents and children (Kwak, 2003; Sluzki, 1979; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993). The negative effects of intergenerational conflict on the mental wellbeing of young adults have been extensively demonstrated in immigrant families (Ying & Han, 2007; Ying & Tracy, 2004). Intergenerational conflict has been associated with lower self-esteem and higher depression (Espiritu & Wolf, 2001), and feelings of alienation, distress, anxiety and other negative mental health behaviours (Wolf, 1997). More strikingly for immigrant youth, higher depressive symptom levels as a result of intergenerational conflict has been even seen to affect young adults longitudinally (Ying & Han, 2006). Additionally, for these young adults who have yet to form a strong cultural identity, navigating two cultures simultaneously with the risk of feeling marginalized from one or both of those cultures (Balcazar, Castro, & Krull, 1995) may add additional stress to their acculturation experience, as has been shown in the experiences of the bicultural individuals examined in this thesis. Greater acculturation gaps, as reported by both parents and offspring, were also associated with higher conflict on interpersonal issues (Tardif & Geva, 2006). Overall, these findings clearly demonstrate that more research is needed to fully understand how the immigration experience affects families with young adults who are starting to forge their own identities and make relationship decisions on their own in a new environment.

Strengths and Limitations of this Research

There are several strengths to the research conducted in this thesis. Through the use of a mixed-methods approach, Study One was able to gain a better understanding of the specific attitudes surrounding the acceptance of parental involvement in young women's romantic relationships. Study One was also able to identify specific themes and negotiation strategies

that young women might utilize following parental rejection of their relationships. The thesis also explored young women's perspectives from a variety of cultural backgrounds, and was able to zero in on the perceptions and experiences of bicultural women, in particular. The vignette studies reinforced many of the findings from Study One and the wider literature, while also raising some intriguing issues around young males' and parents' perspectives on adult children's dating and romantic relationships that need further exploration.

Along with its strengths, however, the thesis has some limitations. One limitation that is quite typical in the parent-child relationship research involves the collection of data from only one member of the dyad , either parents or offspring (Gracia, 2002; Mash, 1991; Peterson & Hann, 1999). A potential issue with the single informant approach is that parents and offspring may inaccurately perceive each other's acculturation status and may either over- or underestimate conflict to a confounding source. For example, young adults may mistakenly attribute normative parent-adolescent conflict around issues such as dating, to acculturation gaps. This thesis did not attempt to address this limitation since matters such as rejection of romantic relationships are sensitive topics which parents and offspring may not wish to discuss together. Since a large portion of this thesis' participants consisted of participants from collectivistic backgrounds, where dating openly does not typically occur before marriage, they may not have wished to discuss attitudes towards relationships in the presence of their parents. For future research, the potential confounds that may arise as a result of using single informants may be avoided by assessing acculturation gaps and intergenerational conflict impacts (on romantic relationships) by investigating both parents and young adults independently, yet simultaneously.

Hypothetical rejection. As mentioned earlier, all three studies in this thesis were limited by the inability to experimentally test the impact of actual parental rejection of an adult

child's relationship. While Study One heard the experiences of young women who had actual experience with rejection, not all participants had. In fact, the large majority of participants had not experienced rejection of intercultural relationships directly, but instead, had divulged what they would do *if* their parents had rejected their relationship. This may be problematic since the attitudes of the young women may not predict what they would actually do if they experienced actual parental rejection first hand. Additionally, as mentioned in a previous chapter, it was unclear whether reactions to perceived rejection in Studies two and three would be similar in other types of relationships, since intra-cultural vignettes were not given as an option for comparison. It would be interesting to assess whether young adults respond similarly to parental rejection of both inter- and intra-cultural relationships. As a result, future research should focus on first, investigating the attitudes of young adults who have experienced actual rejection from their parents and second, gain a better understanding, perhaps qualitatively, of why parents actually reject certain relationships over others.

Heterogeneous sample. A limitation that was addressed earlier concerns the heterogenous samples utilized in each of the three studies. While Studies one, two, and three targeted participants from a wide range of ethnic, religious, cultural, and generational backgrounds, the majority were from backgrounds of major representation. For example, in Study One, the majority of low acculturated participants were from China, whilst only one participant was from Mongolia. Additionally, in the highly acculturated group, the majority of participants were Caucasians/White or Black, whereas there was zero representation from Aboriginal/First Native individuals. Study Two and Three's samples were just as problematic as the majority of participants were from America, whose cultural values for acculturation may differ from Canadians or other Western societies. For example, Americans are expected to assimilate to their "melting pot" culture, whereas Canadians value their "cultural mosaic" and may value integration. Clearly, it would be fascinating to break down so-called 'Westernized'

cultures in more detail and to explore the issues studied in this thesis from within more discrete cultural groups.

Acculturation and cultural identity measures. In a related vein, and as mentioned previously, a limitation in this thesis was the self-identified measures of acculturation status or cultural identity. Cultural identity was assessed through a self-identified item, which asked participants to choose whether they believed they were "Very" or "Somewhat" Easternized/Westernized or "Bicultural". This is problematic as Berry (1997) defined biculturalism as the highest level of acculturation, as bicultural individuals would have retained cultural values from both heritage and host cultures. Moreover, the research on biculturalism and integration is mixed. For example, the majority of the literature finds that bicultural individuals are better adjusted than mono-cultural young adults (Szapocznik, Kurtines, & Fernandez, 1980; Nguyen & Benét-Martinez, 2012). However, studies on "cultural homelessness" found that young adults who had acculturated to two or more cultures indicated lower self-esteem scores and lower feelings of belongingness (Hoersting & Jenkins, 2011). These studies demonstrate that assigning cultural identity may be a major limitation as the criteria used to identify such categories may not have been accurately captured. Although participants were asked to self-identify their cultural identity, assigning countries into "Western" or "Eastern" groups is problematic. For example, Turkey, which was categorized as an "Eastern" country, has a diverse population of both Muslims and Christians. A conservative Muslim may themselves (and Turkey) as Easternized, whereas a progressive Christian who may view themselves as Westernized. This is also problematic in typically Western countries, such as Canada, as well. Although Canada is incredibly multi-cultural, one's cultural identity may depend on many different facets, such as one's cultural identity within the domestic or public sphere. For instance, an individual in Canada may consider themselves as Easternized during the month of Ramadan or when they are at home with their conservative parents, but as Western-

ized when they are at school with their multicultural friends or with their intercultural partner, or may even consider themselves as Bicultural. Cultural identity may be transient, ever changing, and completely dependent on several categories. As a result, it is recommended that future studies utilize several different categorizations when grouping individuals based on cultural identity.

In Study One, acculturation "level" was assigned to each participant as a result of the combination of their demographic information and their self-identified cultural identity. This was problematic for Caucasian/White or Black individuals who believed they were highly Westernized (i.e., their cultural identity), but felt close connections to their great- or grand-parents' country. While Chapter Two highlights the methodological steps that were conducted in order to ensure this was done as accurately as possible, it is still difficult to fully ascertain the complicated acculturation history of each and every individual, especially when considering such a varied sample group.

The acculturation status labels was mainly an issue for Easternized individuals who were not from Asian backgrounds. Africans, South Americans (Hispanic and Latina), and Caribbean young women's identities were considered to be a mix of both Eastern and Western ideals and values, and so, many believed they did not hold as strict traditional values and ideals as their Asian peers. Study Two and Three allowed participants to choose their own acculturation level or cultural identity. Self-assigning cultural identity was also a limitation for some individuals as they did not feel Easternized, Westernized, or Bicultural contextualized how they saw themselves. For example, some participants (who self-described themselves as Bicultural) believed that they acted Westernized with their friends but highly Easternized with their parents. When it came to reacting to parental rejection, many individuals who placed themselves in the Bicultural group believed that their traditional values and ideals

would “take over” in dating and marriage situations and so, believed that their attitudes were more typical of an Easternized individual.

Moreover, the definition of acculturation needs to be widened in order to consider individuals from countries such as Canada where most young adults have immigrant roots from their grandparents or great-grandparents. Although acculturation is typically defined as a second culture learning, Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936) defines acculturation as an intergroup phenomenon. This may be an issue as it is not widely known what cultural mainframe certain highly acculturated individuals, whose cultural identity is impacted by their family’s immigrant history, may use since they have only ever known one culture but still identify with the culture of their ancestors. As a result, it is highly recommended that future research create acculturation scales in mind of participants who may not have necessarily acculturated in their lifetime, but may have retained the values from their ancestral country (e.g., a 4th generation Italian-Canadian may still consider themselves “part Italian”, while simultaneously consider their heritage country to be Canada).

Concluding Thoughts

Overall, this thesis asked, ‘when it comes to love, do parents know best?’. This thesis has attempted to answer this question by empirically investigating whether parental involvement and rejection of their adult children’s relationships are affected by sociocultural factors such as acculturation level, gender, and cultural identity. The findings of this thesis highlight the need to understand such influences since acculturation distress and intergenerational conflict are severe consequences which threaten family harmony. This thesis demonstrates that such factors have an impact on how relationship decisions are made and negotiated, suggesting that relationship rules and norms are constantly changing among young adults. As young adults from immigrant families are having to forge their own sets of rules about the accepta-

bility of parental involvement in their lives, they don't necessarily want to 'throw the baby out with the bath water'. They love and respect their parents and want to retain meaningful, supportive aspects of their traditional cultures. Clearly, immigrant families must be supported to successfully negotiate these intergenerational challenges, and to be willing to navigate these changes together.

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APPENDIX A: STUDY 1 DOCUMENTS

Screening Questions

1. How old are you?

2. What is your ethnicity?
    a. Caucasian
    b. Asian
    c. South Asian
    d. African
    e. Indian
    f. Hispanic or Latino
    g. Other

3. What is your nationality?
    a. Canadian
    b. Other

4. What is your religious affiliation?
    a. Protestant Christian
    b. Roman Catholic
    c. Evangelical Christian
    d. Jewish
    e. Muslim
    f. Hindu
    g. Buddhist
    h. Other

5. Where were you born?

6. How long have you been living in Canada? Please specify in years and months.

7. What generation are you?

    a. 1st generation = I was born in Asia or country other than Canada

    b. 2nd generation = I was born in Canada, either parent was born in Asia or country other than Canada

    c. 3rd generation = I was born in Canada, both parents were born in Canada, and all grandparents born in Asia or country other than Canada

    d. 4th generation = I was born in Canada, both parents were born in Canada, and at least one grandparent born in Asian or country other than Canada and one grandparent born in Canada

    e. 5th generation = I was born in Canada, both parents were born in Canada, and all grandparents were also born in Canada

    f. Don't know what generation best fits since I lack some information.

8. How would you rate yourself?

    a. Very Asian

    b. Mostly Asian

    c. Bicultural

    d. Mostly Westernized

    e. Very Westernized

Informed Consent Form

Name of Project: The Impact of Parental Acceptance & Rejection on Youth Adults' Intercultural Relationships: A Focus Group Study

You are invited to participate in a study of the impact of parental acceptance and rejection on intercultural romantic relationships. The purpose of the study is to help psychologists better understand some of the reward and challenges involved when young people become involved in romantic intercultural relationships.

The focus group will be conducted by Anika Munshi (telephone: (647) 971-4976; email: anika.munshi@students.mq.edu.au). This project is being conducted to meet the requirements of the Ph.D. under the supervision of Dr. SiSi Tran of the Department of Psychology at the University of Toronto Scarborough (telephone: (416) 208-4869; email: sisi.tran@utsc.utoronto.ca).

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to provide your opinion on different aspects of intercultural relationships, parental acceptance, rejection, control, and dating rules. While the focus group is in session, an audio device will record your voice for transcribing purposes. You will not be recorded when the study is not in session. Your opinions and personal information will be completely confidential and not identifiable in any way. Questions asked during the focus group will pertain to cultural ideals, practices and rules that may be discomforting for some individuals. If any individual question happens to cause discomfort, there is no obligation to respond to it. The focus group session will last approximately an hour and a half.

Participants will receive information on counselling resources available in the community should they feel distressed after completing the study. Participants from UTSC will receive research participation credit of 1.5 credits. All participants will be placed in a lottery system for a chance to win an iPad mini at the completion of data completion.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential. Individuals' remarks, comments, or personal details will not be identifiable in any publication of the results. Only the researchers involved in this specific project will have access to the data. A summary of the results of the data can be made available to you on request through email.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Toronto Scarborough. If you decide to withdraw, you will not lose compensation.

I, _____ have read and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name:_____
(Block letters)

Participant's Signature: _____Date:_____

Investigator's Name: ANIKA MUNSHI
(Block letters)

Investigator's Signature: _____ ___Date:_____

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights in this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you are encouraged to contact the Office of Research Ethics at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or at 416-946-3273. Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

(INVESTIGATOR'S [OR PARTICIPANT'S] COPY)

Debriefing Form

You have just participated in focus group research on the impact of parental acceptance and rejection on intercultural romantic relationships conducted by researchers in the Department of Psychology at UTSC. The purpose of this present study is to help psychologists better understand some of the reward and challenges involved when young adults become involved in romantic intercultural relationships, especially when young females are from collectivistic cultures.

As part of this study, you have been asked to provide your opinion on different aspects of intercultural relationships, parental acceptance, rejection, control, and dating rules. You have been assigned to a specific group of culturally similar individuals in order for us to examine the differences in themes, ideals and norms in opinions between females from collectivistic and individualistic cultures. This allowed us to investigate the similarities (or disparities) in opinions in the context of a culturally relevant discussion.

Research has shown that familial acceptance impacts intimate cultural interactions and relationships, especially among young adults. The aim of this particular study is then, to explore the factors, including acculturation, that underlie parental acceptance of intercultural relationships, and the impact of parental rejection on the development and stability of young adults' intercultural romantic relationships.

We expect to find that females from both collectivistic and individualistic cultures will experience more parental involvement and control when concerning issues on dating or relationship matters. We also expect to find females from collectivistic cultures ascertain the justification of increased parental control in comparison to females from individualistic cultures. Finally, it is also expected that regardless of culture, increased parental involvement and control will have a negative impact on their young adult's romantic intercultural relationship.

We greatly appreciate you taking the time to participate in our focus group study and apologize for any discomfort this study may have caused. If you feel extreme discomfort from the study itself or from the opinions that you have divulged, you may withdraw your data without any loss of compensation. To ensure that you remain completely confidential, you have been assigned a random identification number. This procedure will ensure that your identity will never be associated with your questionnaire data or any of your focus group responses.

If you would like to speak with someone about issues relating to this study, please contact the primary investigator Anika Munshi (anika.munshi@students.mq.edu.au (416)-269-4976) or the faculty supervisor Dr. SiSi Tran (sisi.tran@utsc.utoronto.ca (416) 208-4869). If participating in this study has raised personal, cultural, familial or relationship issues that you want to discuss further, you can contact the UTSC Health and Wellness Centre in the Student Centre, SL-270 on the UTSC campus, email at health-services@utsc.utoronto.ca or call (416) 287-7069. The center is open to all students and members of the community from Monday to Friday from 9:00am to 4:45pm; personal counselors are available by appointment until 7pm on Wednes-

days. You can also contact the MCI Medical Clinic, located in Scarborough by calling (416) 492-8068. The center is available for walk-ins from members of the community on Wednesdays and Fridays from 2:00pm to 6:00pm; same day appointments are available on all other days. The center is located at 325 Bamburgh Circle, M1W 3Y1. 4 other locations in Scarborough exist and can be found at www.mcithedoctorsoffice.com.

Thank you for your participation in this focus group study.

Email Script

"Dear _____,

Thank you for your interest in our focus group study about parental involvement in intercultural relationships. We would like to invite you to first complete a screening questionnaire before we schedule your session.

Please note that you must be a female between the ages of 18 to 25 and you must feel comfortable speaking about your culture in a small group setting.

Please click the following link to access the screening questionnaire. It should take no longer than 10 minutes. Once you have completed your questionnaire, I will contact you for further instructions and to let you know when you have been booked for a study.

https://macquariehs.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_exFlWU2InrPuaX3

If you cannot make the time that you are booked for, please let me know as soon as possible.

Thank you for your time, we greatly appreciate you helping us with our research!

Regards,

Anika Munshi
The Primary Investigator"

Confidentiality Disclosure Agreement

Confidentiality, a trust of privacy or secrecy of communication and information, is special in a focus group setting, and is the shared responsibility of all participants and their facilitator(s). Although a group facilitator will not disclose any participant's communications or information, group members' communications and information are not protected. Thus, this agreement is an attempt to provide you and your fellow group members with as much confidentiality protection as possible.

I, _____ (name) as a member of _____ (Group ID), will not divulge any confidential information which comes to me through the involvement of the focus group that I am participating on _____ (date). This shall include:

- not discussing any information pertaining to any group member with anyone (including my own family), roommates, significant others or any other person(s) not a member of this focus group.
- not discussing any information pertaining to any group member in any place where it can be overheard by anyone not directly involved with the group.
- I will not contact any individual or agency outside of the University of Toronto to get personal information about any group member.
- I will not release any information, in writing or orally, regarding any group member to any person(s) or agencies. I understand that in extreme circumstances, such as medical emergencies, it may be necessary to release information to a health care giver without the group member's consent.
- I understand that violation of these confidentiality principals could potentially result in my termination as a group member. Further, breaching of confidentiality may subject me to certain civil liability.

By my signature below, I indicate that I have read carefully and understand this Agreement and that I agree to its terms and conditions.

Signature of participant _____ Date _____

Signature of facilitator _____ Date _____

Recruitment Poster

PARTICIPATE IN FOCUS GROUP RESEARCH!

Are you a female between the ages of 18 to 25?

We're seeking the participation of females who are comfortable speaking about parental involvement in intercultural relationships in a 1.5 hours focus group setting. All you have to do is give your own opinion!

Win an iPad mini just for participating! Gift cards are also available for every participant.

Requirements:

- Female
- 18 to 25 years old
- Comfortable speaking about your culture in a small group setting!

Please contact anika.munshi@students.mq.edu.au for more information!

Study One Ethics Approval Letter

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT, RESEARCH

PROTOCOL REFERENCE # 28789 April 9, 2013

Dr. Sisi Tran UTSC:DEPT-PSYCHOLOGY UT SCARBOROUGH

Dear Dr. Tran and Miss Anika Munshi,

Miss Anika Munshi UTSC:DEPT-PSYCHOLOGY UT SCARBOROUGH

Re: Your research protocol entitled, "The impact of parental acceptance & rejection on young adults' intercultural relationships: A focus group"

ETHICS APPROVAL Original Approval Date: April 9, 2013 Expiry Date: April 8, 2014

Continuing Review Level: 1

We are writing to advise you that the Social Sciences, Humanities, and Education Research Ethics B has granted approval to the above-named research protocol under the REB's delegated review process. Your protocol has been approved for a period of **one year** and ongoing research under this protocol must be renewed prior to the expiry date.

Any changes to the approved protocol or consent materials must be reviewed and approved through the amendment process prior to its implementation. Any adverse or unanticipated events in the research should be reported to the Office of Research Ethics as soon as possible.

Please ensure that you submit an Annual Renewal Form or a Study Completion Report 15 to 30 days prior to the expiry date of your current ethics approval. Note that annual renewals for studies cannot be accepted more than 30 days prior to the date of expiry.

If your research is funded by a third party, please contact the assigned Research Funding Officer in Research Services to ensure that your funds are released.

_____

_____

_____

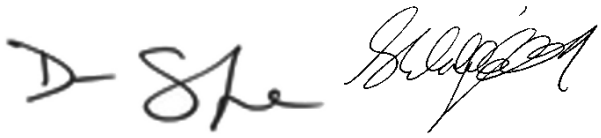
_____

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research. Yours sincerely,

Sarah Wakefield, Ph.D. REB Chair

OFFICE OF RESEARCH ETHICS

Dean Sharpe REB Manager



McMurrich Building, 12 Queen's Park Crescent West, 2nd Floor, Toronto, ON M5S 1S8 Canada
Tel: +1 416 946-3273

Fax: +1 416 946-5763

ethics.review@utoronto.ca

http://www.research.utoronto.ca/for-researchers-administrators/ethics/

APPENDIX B: STUDY 2 DOCUMENTS

Demographic Questionnaire

1. How old are you?

2. What is your ethnicity?

    1. Caucasian
    2. Asian
    3. South Asian
    4. African
    5. Indian
    6. Middle Eastern
    7. Hispanic or Latino
    8. Caribbean
    9. Bi-racial/Mixed
    10. Other

3. What is your Nationality?

a. Australian

b. Canadian

c. American

4. What is your religious affiliation?

a. Christian

b. Catholic

c. Jewish

d. Muslim

e. Hindu

f. Buddhist

g. Sikh

h. Spiritual/Agnostic

i. Atheism/None

j. Other

5. Where were you born?

6. Is English your first language?

   a. Yes

   b. No

7. If no, what language is your first language?

8. What generation are you?

   a. 1st generation = I was born in a country other than Australia/Canada/USA.

   b. 2nd generation = I was born in Australia/Canada/USA, either parent was born in a country other than Australia/Canada/USA.

rd

c. 3 generation = I was born in Australia/Canada/USA, both parents were born in Australia/Canada/USA, and all grandparents born in a country other than Australia/Canada/USA.

th

d. 4 generation = I was born in Australia/Canada/USA, both parents were born in Australia/Canada/USA, and at least one grandparent born in a country other than Australia/Canada/USA and one grandparent born in Australia/Canada/USA.

th

e. 5 generation = I was born in Australia/Canada/USA, both parents were born in Australia/Canada/USA, and all grandparents were also born in Australia/Canada/USA.

f. Don't know what generation best fits since I lack some information.

9. If we divided culture identity into these 2 categories:

Eastern

Bangladesh, China, India, Egypt, Iraq, Somalia, Chile, Mexico, Iran, South Africa, Vietnam, Sudan, Korea, Hong Kong, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Afghanistan.

Western

Canada, USA, Australia, France, Ireland, United Kingdom, Germany, Poland, Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Russia, Ukraine, New Zealand, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece

10. How would you rate yourself?

a. Very Easternized

b. Mostly Easternized

c. Bicultural

d. Mostly Westernized

e. Very Westernized

Consent Form

Title: Acculturation, Romantic Relationships and Parental Rejection

Introduction

You are invited to participate in a study which will investigate reactions to parental rejection of intercultural romantic relationships. The purpose of the study is to help participants better understand some of the reward and challenges involved when young adults from different cultures become romantically involved in intercultural relationships.

Procedures

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to provide your reaction to several hypothetical situations involving different types of romantic relationships. Following the completion of the vignettes, you will be asked to complete a series of questionnaires about yourself. Your opinions and personal information will be completely confidential and not identifiable in any way. Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential, except as required by law. Only the researchers involved in this specific project will have access to the data. A summary of the results of the data can be made available to you on request through email. This study will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Benefits/Risks

There are no direct benefits for participants. However, it is hoped that through your participation, researchers will learn more about the impact of parental rejection on intercultural relationships. There are no expected risks associated with this study. However, if you feel uncomfortable with any of the questions asked, you are under no obligation to answer those questions. If you feel any emotional or psychological harm as a result of your participation in this study, you are under no obligation to complete the study. Macquarie University offers free health and wellness supportive services for all students. The Counselling and Psychological Service (CAPS) is open from Monday to Friday, 8:00 am to 6:00pm and can be contacted at +61 (02) 9850 7497 or campuswellbeing@mq.edu.au. If you are not a Macquarie University student and would like to speak to someone, you can contact Lifeline, which is a crisis support phone supportive service. They are available at 13 11 14.

Confidentiality

All data obtained from participants will be kept confidential and will only be reported in an aggregate format (by reporting only combined results and never reporting individual ones). All questionnaires will be concealed, and no one other than then primary investigator and assistant researches listed below will have access to them. The data collected will be stored in the HIPPA- compliant, Qualtrics-secure database until it has been deleted by the primary in-

vestigator. The data collected in this study may be made available to other researchers for future Human Research Ethics Committee-approved research projects. However, your personal and identifiable information will not be made available to other researchers outside of this project.

Compensation

Participants from Macquarie University enrolled in PSY105 will receive 0.5 bonus credits. All other participants will be placed into a draw to win a $250, $100 or $50 gift card to Amazon. All participants recruited from Qualtrics Panels will receive reimbursement through Qualtrics and will not qualify for the draw.

Participation

Participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time or refuse to participate entirely without jeopardy to your academic status, GPA or standing with the university. If you desire to withdraw, please close your internet browser and exit the study. If you choose to withdraw your data after the completion of the study, please notify the principal investigator at this email: anika.munshi@mq.edu.au.

Questions about the Research

Data will be collected by Anika Munshi (telephone: (02)9850-4081;
email: anika.munshi@mq.edu.au). This project is being conducted to meet the requirements of the Ph.D. under the supervision of Dr. Julie Fitness of the Department of Psychology at Macquarie University (telephone: (02) 9850-8015; email: Julie.fitness@mq.edu.au). If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Anika Munshi.

Questions about your Rights as Research Participants

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics and Integrity (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

I have read, understood, and printed a copy of, the above consent form and desire of my own free will to participate in this study. (Yes/No)

Debriefing Form

You have just completed a study on the impact of perceived parental rejection on intercultural romantic relationships conducted by researchers in the Department of Psychology at Macquarie University. The purpose of this present study is to help psychologists better understand some of the rewards and challenges involved when young adults become involved in romantic intercultural relationships, especially when young adults come from immigrant families.

As part of your involvement in this study, you have been asked to provide your reactions to different hypothetical situations of intercultural relationships and parental rejection. You have been assigned to a specific group of culturally similar individuals in order for us to examine the differences in values, ideals and norms in opinions between individuals from different levels of acculturation status. This will allow us to investigate the similarities (or disparities) in opinions in the context of a culturally relevant discussion.

Research has shown that familial acceptance impacts intimate cultural interactions and relationships, especially among young adults. The aim of this particular study is to explore the impact of parental rejection on the decisions that young adults make regarding intercultural relationships. More specifically, we are interested in exploring whether factors such as acculturation, gender, and cultural background influences those decisions.

We expect to find that individuals who are low acculturated to Western cultures will be more likely to break up or negotiate with their partner, following perceived parental rejection. We also expect individuals who are highly acculturated to Western culture to be more likely to rebuff perceived parental rejection. Finally, we expect females to experience higher intergenerational conflict compared to males and we expect low acculturated females to experience higher intergenerational conflict overall.

We greatly appreciate you taking the time to participate in our study and apologize for any discomfort this study may have caused. If you feel extreme discomfort from the study itself or from the information that you have divulged, you may withdraw your data without any loss of compensation. To ensure that you remain completely confidential, you have been assigned a random identification number. This procedure will ensure that your identity will never be associated with your questionnaire data or any of your vignette responses.

If you would like to speak to someone about issues relating to this study, please contact the co- investigator Anika Munshi (anika.munshi@mq.edu.au, +61 (02) 9850-4081) or the chief investigator Dr. Julie Fitness (julie.fitness@mq.edu.au, +61 (02) 9850-8015). If participating in this study has raised personal, cultural, or familial or relationship issues that you want to discuss further, you can contact Macquarie University's Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS) (campuswellbeing@mq.edu.au, +61 (02) 9850-7497).

If you would like to enter our draw to win either a $250, $100 or $50 Amazon gift card, please enter your email address below. Thank you for participating in our study.

Study Two Questionnaires

Acculturation Status

Instructions: If the white circles represents YOU and the grey circles represents the HOST culture that you currently LIVE IN, which set would represent you?

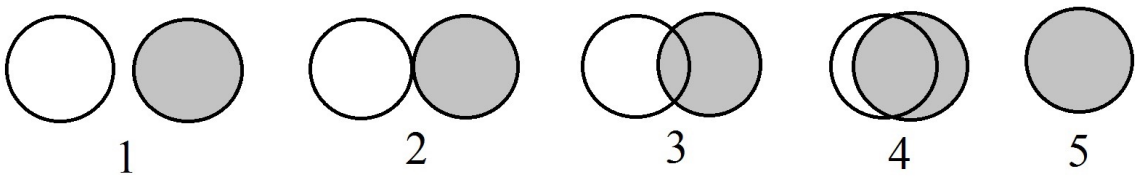
1) Set 1

2) Set 2

3) Set 3

4) Set 4

5) Set 5



Intergenerational Conflict Inventory (ICI) Measure (Dating and Marriage Subscale)

Directions: For each of the items below, use the following scale to indicate how much

conflict each item causes between you and your parents. If you have different level of conflict with each parent, answer according to the most conflict you experience regardless of which parent.

No conflict over this issue **1**
Some conflict over this issue **2**
Neutral **3**
Moderate amount of conflict over this issue **4** A lot of conflict over this issue **5**

1. When to begin dating

2. Whom to date

3. When to marry

4. Whom to marry

5. Race of the person I date or marry

Rejection Vignettes and Felt Acceptance/Rejection Questions

Relationship 1 (Religion Vignette)

Imagine that you are in a romantic relationship. A year ago, you began dating your partner, a 22 year old student in college. You're very happy together and have even discussed getting married. You bring your partner home for dinner one day in order to introduce them to your parents. During dinner your parents learn that your partner's parents are Muslim but that they don't practice very often. You feel embarrassed because you forgot to mention this to your parents, who are practicing Catholics. When you begin casually discussing marriage, your partner mentions that their parents would prefer a Muslim ceremony in a mosque. However, your father tells everyone that he would like the ceremony to be in his church. Later that night, your parents tell you that they aren't happy with the relationship because they don't want to lose their child to another religion.

After experiencing this situation, how likely are you to feel the following ways?

1. I would feel unloved/rejected by my parents.

2. I would feel like my parents care about me and my relationship.

3. I would feel like my parents are treating me and my relationship harshly.

4. I would feel supported by my parents.

5. I would feel like my parents do not care about what I think.

6. I would feel like my parents are looking out for me.

After experiencing this situation, how likely are you to perform these behaviours? Please use the 5 point Likert scale provided below.

Very Unlikely Unlikely Undecided Likely Very Likely

1. I would break up with my partner because I owe it to my parents by listening to them.

2. I would still date my partner but hide the relationship from my parents.

3. I would ask my partner to attend church with my parents and become Catholic.

4. I would reason with my parents so that they see my way and continue the relationship.

5. I would ignore my parents and continue the relationship.

Whether you are or aren't in a current romantic relationship, consider the following statements using the 5 point Likert scale provided below.

Very Unimportant Unimportant Undecided Important Very Important

1. How important is religion to you when considering a romantic partner for yourself?

2. How important is religion to your parents when considering a romantic partner for you?

Relationship 2 (Ethnicity Vignette)

Imagine that you are in a romantic relationship. Lately, the relationship has become serious and you've decided to take the next step and introduce your partner to your parents. During the holidays, you asks your parents if you can bring your partner to the annual holiday family reunion. You notice your father's hesitation but you decide to ask your partner anyway. You later overhear your parents discussing how they're shocked that your partner is Black. They point out that they don't have a problem with different ethnicities but they aren't quite as liberal. They also point out that there aren't any interracial relationships in your family and that your relationship is quite novel and strange to them. Your parents later tell you that while it's okay for you and your partner to date, they would be very disappointed if you wanted to get married.

After experiencing this situation, how likely are you to feel the following ways?

1. I would feel unloved/rejected by my parents.

2. I would feel like my parents care about me and my relationship.

3. I would feel like my parents are treating me and my relationship harshly.

4. I would feel supported by my parents.

5. I would feel like my parents do not care about what I think.

6. I would feel like my parents are looking out for me.

After experiencing this situation, how likely are you to perform these behaviours? Please use the 5 point Likert scale provided below.

Very Unlikely Unlikely Undecided Likely Very Likely

1. I would break up with my partner because I owe it to my parents by listening to them.

2. I would still date my partner but hide the relationship from my parents.

3. I would tell my partner to act in a way that is considered less "Black".

4. I would reason with my parents so that they see my way and continue the relationship.

5. I would ignore my parents and continue the relationship.

Whether you are or aren't in a current romantic relationship, consider the following statements using the 5 point Likert scale provided below.

Very Unimportant Unimportant Undecided Important Very Important

1. How important is ethnicity/race to you when considering a romantic partner for yourself?

2. How important is ethnicity/race to your parents when considering a romantic partner for you?

Relationship 3 (Culture Vignette)

Imagine that you are in a romantic relationship. You grew up in Australia but your partner grew up in another country very different from yours. You have a lot in common with your partner, such as similar taste in books and movies. Your partner wasn't raised to celebrate Chinese New Year, like you were. Instead, they celebrate Hanukkah which has very different traditions from your family. You realize that whenever your partner interacts with your family, they feel awkward with your parents and your parents don't attempt to learn any of your partner's cultural practices. Your partner doesn't eat the spicy food that your parents serve for

dinner and it upsets them. Once, your partner forgot to bring red pockets to your Chinese New Year party and your parents comment that it was disrespectful to your Chinese heritage. Your parents reject your relationship, stating that you and your partner are just too different culturally. They believe your partner is disrespectful to your culture and want you to end the relationship.

After experiencing this situation, how likely are you to feel the following ways?

1. I would feel unloved/rejected by my parents.
2. I would feel like my parents care about me and my relationship.
3. I would feel like my parents are treating me and my relationship harshly.
4. I would feel supported by my parents.
5. I would feel like my parents do not care about what I think.
6. I would feel like my parents are looking out for me.

After experiencing this situation, how likely are you to perform these behaviours? Please use the 5 point Likert scale provided below.

Very Unlikely Unlikely Undecided Likely Very Likely

1. I would break up with my partner because I owe it to my parents by listening to them.
2. I would still date my partner but hide the relationship from my parents.
3. I would tell my partner to become more integrated with my culture.
4. I would reason with my parents so that they see my way and continue the relationship.
5. I would ignore my parents and continue the relationship.

Whether you are or aren't in a current romantic relationship, consider the following statements using the 5 point Likert scale provided below.

Very Unimportant Unimportant Undecided Important Very Important

1. How important is cultural similarity to you when considering a romantic partner for yourself?

2. How important is cultural similarity to your parents when considering a romantic partner for you?

Relationship 4 (Language Vignette)

Imagine that you are in a romantic relationship. You met your current partner at university where you were both studying. Your parents are very proud of you because they have left China in order to give you better opportunities. Your relationship has progressed to something serious and you bring your partner over to your house to meet your parents. Since your parents immigrated at a later age, they feel uncomfortable speaking English and aren't fluent. However, your partner only speaks English and cannot understand them. Your parents later tell you that dating someone who speaks the same language as them would be easier because your partner would be able to understand them and their values. Your parents explain to you that in their culture, a child's future spouse should try to get along with the parents of whomever they're marrying. They highlight the importance of respecting elders in their culture and want you to continue having those values. They disapprove of your relationship because of the severe language barriers and state that your partner can never fully come to understand them.

After experiencing this situation, how likely are you to feel the following ways?

1. I would feel unloved/rejected by my parents.

2. I would feel like my parents care about me and my relationship.

3. I would feel like my parents are treating me and my relationship harshly.

4. I would feel supported by my parents.

5. I would feel like my parents do not care about what I think

6. I would feel like my parents are looking out for me.

After experiencing this situation, how likely are you to perform these behaviours? Please use the 5 point likert scale provided below.

Very Unlikely Unlikely Undecided Likely Very Likely

1. I would break up with my partner because I owe it to my parents by listening to them.

2. I would still date my partner but hide the relationship from my parents.

3. I would tell my partner to learn my parents' language.

4. I would reason with my parents so that they see my way and continue the relationship.

5. I would ignore my parents and continue the relationship.

Whether you are or aren't in a current romantic relationship, consider the following statements using the 5 point likert scale provided below.

Very Unimportant Unimportant Undecided Important Very Important

1. How important is it to you to have your partner and your parents speak the same language?

2. How important is it to your parents to have your partner and them speak the same language?

Study Two Recruitment Poster

Interested in Intercultural Relationship Research?

Help us better understand them by taking part in our exciting new online study!

ONLY Requirement: You must be between the ages of 18-30 years old.

All participants will enter our draw and winners will receive either a $250, $100, or $50 Amazon gift card. All you have to do to qualify is complete a 15-30 minute questionnaire ONLINE!

Contact **anika.munshi@mq.edu.au** for more details

Study Two Ethics Approval Letter

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

16 October 2014

Professor Julie Fitness Department of Psychology Faculty of Human Sciences MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109

Dear Professor Fitness
Reference No: 5201400896
Title: *Acculturation, Romantic Relationships and Parental Rejection*

Thank you for submitting the above application for ethical and scientific review. Your application was considered by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC (Human Sciences & Humanities)) at its meeting on 26 September 2014 at which further information was requested to be reviewed by the HREC (Human Sciences and Humanities) Executive.

The requested information was received with correspondence on 8 October 2014.

The HREC (Human Sciences and Humanities) Executive considered your responses at its meeting held on 14 October 2014.

I am pleased to advise that ethical and scientific approval has been granted for this project to be conducted at:

Macquarie University
This research meets the requirements set out in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in*

Human Research (2007 – Updated March 2014) (the *National Statement*).

Details of this approval are as follows:

Approval Date: 14 October 2014

The following documentation has been reviewed and approved by the HREC (Human Sciences & Humanities):

Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)

Research Office
C5C Research HUB East, Level 3, Room 324 MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109 AUSTRALIA

Phone

Fax Email

+61 (0)2 9850 7850

+61 (0)2 9850 4465 ethics.secretariat@mq.edu.au

Documents reviewed

Macquarie University Ethics Application Form

Correspondence from Miss Anika Munshi responding to the issues raised by the HREC (Human Sciences and Humanities)

Advertisement - Poster (Young Adults)

MQ Participant Information and Consent Form (PICF) entitled

Version no.

2.3

2

Date

July 2013

Received 8/10/2014

8/10/2014

Participant Questionnaire

Debriefing Form

This letter constitutes ethical and scientific approval only.

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1. Continuing compliance with the requirements of the *National Statement,* which is available at the following website:

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2. This approval is valid for five (5) years, subject to the submission of annual reports. Please submit your reports on the anniversary of the approval for this protocol.

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The HREC (Human Sciences and Humanities) wishes you every success in your research. Yours sincerely

Dr Karolyn White

Director, Research Ethics & Integrity,
Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee (Human Sciences and Humanities)

This HREC is constituted and operates in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (2007) and the *CPMP/ICH Note for Guidance on Good Clinical Practice*.

Study 2 Sample Demographic Information

Frequency and Percentages of Study 2 Sample's Current Location

Location	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Canada	35	12.4
Australia	62	22.0
U.S.A.	185	65.6
Total	282	100

Frequency and Percentages of Study 2 Sample's Religious Affiliation

Religious Affiliation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Christian	95	33.7
Catholic	47	16.7
Jewish	5	1.8
Muslim	14	5.0
Hindu	18	6.4
Buddhist	7	2.5
Sikh	4	1.4
Spiritual/Agnostic	27	9.6
Atheist/None	56	19.9
Other	8	2.8
Total	281	100

Note. 1 participant declined to answer

Frequency and Percentages of Study 2 Sample's Ethni

Ethnicity	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Caucasian	122	43.4
Asian	42	14.9
South Asian	11	3.9
African	27	9.6
Indian	17	6.0
Middle Eastern	9	3.2
Hispanic/Latino/Latina	17	6.0
Caribbean	1	0.4
Biracial/Mixed	33	11.7
Other	2	0.7
Total	281	100

c IdentityNote. 1 participant declined to answer

Frequency and Percentages of Sample 2's Generational Status
Note. 19 i

Generation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1st generation	82	31.2
2nd generation	77	29.3
3rd generation	19	7.2
4th generation	31	11.8
5th generation	54	20.5
Total	263	100

ndividuals stated they did not know which generation they belonged to

Appendix C: STUDY 3 DOCUMENTS

Demographic Questionnaire

1. Are you over 18?

2. Do you have at least one child?

    a. Yes

    b. No

3. How old is your child? If you have more than one, please just indicate how old the eldest child is in years.

4. What is your ethnicity?

    1. Caucasian
    2. Asian
    3. South Asian
    4. African
    5. Indian
    6. Middle Eastern
    7. Hispanic or Latino
    8. Caribbean
    9. Bi-racial/Mixed
    10. Other

5. What is your Nationality?

a. Australian

b. Canadian

c. American

d. Other

6. What is your religious affiliation?

a. Christian

b. Catholic

c. Jewish

d. Muslim

e. Hindu

f. Buddhist

g. Sikh

h. Spiritual/Agnostic

i. Atheism/None

j. Other

7. Where were you born?

8. Where do you live?

9. How long have you lived there?

10. Is English your first language?

a. Yes

b. No

11. If no, what language is your first language?

12. What generation are you?

st

a) 1 generation = I was born in a country other than Australia/USA/Canada.

nd

b) 2 generation = I was born in Australia/USA/Canada, either parent was born in a country other than Australia/USA/Canada.

rd

c) 3 generation = I was born in Australia/USA/Canada, both parents were born in Australia/USA/Canada, and all grandparents born in a country other than Australia/USA/Canada.

th

d) 4 generation = I was born in Australia/USA/Canada, both parents were born in Australia/USA/Canada, and at least one grandparent born in a country other than Australia/USA/Canada and one grandparent born in Australia/USA/Canada.

th

e) 5 generation = I was born in Australia/USA/Canada, both parents were born in Australia/USA/Canada, and all grandparents were also born in Australia/USA/Canada.

f) Don't know what generation best fits since I lack some information.

13. If we divided culture identity into these 2 categories:

Eastern

Bangladesh, China, India, Egypt, Iraq, Somalia, Chile, Mexico, Iran, South Africa, Vietnam, Sudan, Korea, Hong Kong, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Afghanistan.

Western

Canada, USA, Australia, France, Ireland, United Kingdom, Germany, Poland, Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Russia, Ukraine, New Zealand, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece

How would you rate yourself?

a. Very Easternized

b. Mostly Easternized

c. Bicultural

d. Mostly Westernized

e. Very Westernized

Consent Form

Title: The Impact of Acculturation on Parent's Mating Preferences

Introduction

You are invited to participate in a study which will investigate the impact of parents on romantic relationships. The purpose of the study is to help participants better understand some of the reward and challenges involved when young adults from different cultures become romantically involved in intercultural relationships.

Procedures

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to provide your reaction to several hypothetical situations involving different types of romantic relationships. Following the completion of the vignettes, you will be asked to complete a series of questionnaires about yourself. Your opinions and personal information will be completely confidential and not identifiable in any way. Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential, except as required by law. Only the researchers involved in this specific project will have access to the data. A summary of the results of the data can be made available to you on request through email. This study will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Benefits/Risks

There are no direct benefits for participants. However, it is hoped that through your participation, researchers will learn more about the impact of parental rejection on intercultural relationships. There are no expected risks associated with this study. However, if you feel uncomfortable with any of the questions asked, you are under no obligation to answer those questions. If you feel any emotional or psychological harm
a result of your participation in this study, you are under no obligation to complete the study. Macquarie University offers free health and wellness supportive services for all students. The Counselling and Psychological Service (CAPS) is open from Monday to Friday, 8:00 am to 6:00pm and can be contacted at +61 (02) 9850 7497 or campuswellbeing@mq.edu.au. If you are not a Macquarie University student and would like to speak to someone, you can contact Lifeline, which is a crisis support phone supportive service. They are available at 13 11 14.

Confidentiality

All data obtained from participants will be kept confidential and will only be reported in an aggregate format (by reporting only combined results and never reporting individual ones). All questionnaires will be concealed, and no one other than then primary investigator and as-

sistant researches listed below will have access to them. The data collected will be stored in the HIPPA-compliant, Qualtrics - secure database until it has been deleted by the primary investigator. The data collected in this study may be made available to other researchers for future Human Research Ethics Committee-approved as research projects. However, your personal and identifiable information will not be made available to other researchers outside of this project.

Compensation

Participants from Macquarie University enrolled in PSY105 will receive 0.5 bonus credits. All other participants will be placed into a draw to win a $250, $100 or $50 gift card to Amazon. All participants recruited from Qualtrics Panels will receive compensation through Qualtrics and will not qualify for the draw.

Participation

Participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time or refuse to participate entirely without jeopardy to your academic status, GPA or standing with the university. If you desire to withdraw, please close your internet browser and exit the study. If you choose to withdraw your data after the completion of the study, please notify the principal investigator at this email: anika.munshi@mq.edu.au.

Questions about the Research

The data will be collected by Anika Munshi (telephone: (02)9850-4081;
email: anika.munshi@mq.edu.au). This project is being conducted to meet the requirements of the Ph.D. under the supervision of Dr. Julie Fitness of the Department of Psychology at Macquarie University (telephone: (02) 9850-8015;
email: Julie.fitness@mq.edu.au). If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Anika Munshi.

Questions about your Rights as Research Participants

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics and Integrity (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

I have read, understood, and printed a copy of, the above consent form and desire of my own free will to participate in this study. (Yes/No)

Debriefing Form

You have just completed a study on the impact of parental rejection on intercultural romantic relationships conducted by researchers in the Department of Psychology at Macquarie University. The purpose of this present study is to help psychologists better understand some of the reward and challenges involved when young adults become involved in romantic intercultural relationships, especially when young adults come from immigrant families.

As part of this study, you have been asked to provide your reaction on different hypothetical situations of romantic relationships and varying situations of parental rejection. You have been assigned to a specific group of culturally similar individuals in order for us to examine the differences in values, ideals and norms in opinions between individuals from different levels of acculturation status. This allowed us to investigate the similarities (or disparities) in opinions in the context of a culturally relevant discussion.

Research has shown that familial acceptance impacts intimate cultural interactions and relationships, especially among young adults. The aim of this particular study is then, to explore the impact of acculturation level on the decisions that parents make regarding intercultural relationships. More specifically, we are interested in exploring whether factors such as acculturation, gender, and cultural background influence those decisions.

We expect to find parents from low acculturated collectivistic backgrounds to be more likely to accept parental rejection of intercultural relationship scenarios. We also expect to find that parents from low acculturated backgrounds will experience more intergenerational conflict. We greatly appreciate you taking the time to participate in our study and apologize for any discomfort this study may have caused. If you feel extreme discomfort from the study itself or from the information that you have divulged, you may withdraw your data without any loss of compensation. To ensure that you remain completely confidential, you have been assigned a random identification number. This procedure will ensure that your identity will never be associated with your questionnaire data or any of your vignette responses. If you would like to speak with someone about issues relating to this study, please contact the co-investigator Anika Munshi (anika.munshi@mq.edu.au, +61 (02) 9850-4081) or the chief investigator Dr. Julie Fitness (Julie.fitness@mq.edu.au, +61 (02) 9850-8015). If participating in this study has raised personal, cultural, familial or relationship issues that you want to discuss further, you can contact Macquarie University's Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS) (campuswellbeing@mq.edu.au, +61 (02) 9850-7497).

If you would like to enter our draw to win either a $250, $100 or $50 Amazon gift card, please enter your email address below. Thank you for participating in our study.

Study 3 Questionnaires

Acculturation Status

Instructions: If the white circles represents YOU and the grey circles represents the HOST culture that you currently LIVE IN, which set would represent you?

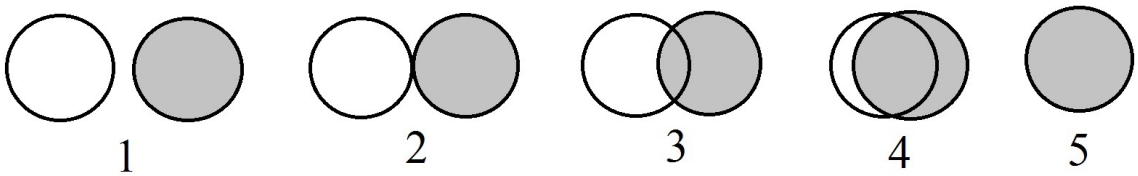
1) Set 1

2) Set 2

3) Set 3

4) Set 4

5) Set5



Intergenerational Conflict Inventory (ICI) Measure (Dating and Marriage Subscale)

Directions: For each of the items below, use the following scale to indicate how much conflict

each item causes between you and your adolescent or young-adult child. If you have more than one child in this age group, fill out a separate form for each child.

No conflict over this issue **1**
Some conflict over this issue **2**
Neutral **3**
Moderate amount of conflict over this issue **4** A lot of conflict over this issue **5**

1. When to begin dating

2. Whom to date

3. When to marry

4. Whom to marry

5. Race of the person I date or marry

Relationship 1 (Religion Vignette)

A year ago, Samantha began dating Mohammed, a 22 year old student in college. Samantha and Mohammed are very happy together and have even discussed getting married. Samantha brings Mohammed home for dinner one day in order to introduce him to her parents. During dinner her parents learn that Mohammed's parents are Muslim but that they don't practice very often. She feels embarrassed because she forgot to mention this to her parents, who are practising Catholics. When Samantha begins casually discussing marriage, Mohammed mentions that his parents would prefer a Muslim ceremony in a mosque. However, Samantha's father tells everyone that he would like the ceremony to be in his church. Later that night, Samantha's parents tell her that they aren't happy with the relationship because they don't want to lose their child to another religion.

Please look at the statements below and using the scale provided, answer how much you agree with each statement.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree

1. Samantha's parents are looking out for her.
2. Samantha is unloved/rejected by her parents.
3. Samantha's parents only want the best for her future.
4. Samantha's parents do not have a right to be upset about the relationship. 5. Samantha's parents care about her and her relationship.
6. Samantha's parents do not care about what she wants.
7. Samantha's parents are treating her and her relationship harshly.
8. Samantha's parents know what's best for their daughter.

Whether your child is or isn't in a current romantic relationship, consider the following statement using the 5 point Likert scale provided below.

Very Unimportant Unimportant Undecided Important Very Important

1. How important is religion to you when considering a romantic partner for your child?

2. How important was religion to **your** parents when considering a romantic partner for you?

Relationship 2 (Ethnicity Vignette)

Several months ago, Kiera started dating her partner, Jack. Lately, the relationship has become serious and Kiera has decided to take the next step and introduce Jack to her parents. During the holidays, she asks her parents if she can bring her partner to the annual holiday family reunion. She notices her father's hesitation but decides to ask Jack anyway. She later overhears her parents discussing how they're shocked that Jack is Black. They point out that they don't have a problem with different ethnicities but that they aren't quite as liberal. They also point out that there aren't any interracial relationships in their family and that Kiera's relationship is quite novel and strange to them. Her parents later tell her that while it's okay for them to date, they would be very disappointed if they wanted to get married.

Please look at the statements below and using the scale provided, answer how much you agree with each statement.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree

1. Kiera's parents are looking out for her.
2. Kiera is unloved/rejected by her parents.
3. Kiera's parents only want the best for her future.
4. Kiera's parents do not have a right to be upset about her relationship. 5. Kiera's parents care about her and her relationship.
6. Kiera's parents do not care about what she wants.
7. Kiera's parents are treating her and her relationship harshly.
8. Kiera's parents know what's best for their daughter.

Whether your child is or isn't in a current romantic relationship, consider the following statement using the 5 point Likert scale provided below.

Very Unimportant Unimportant Undecided Important Very Important

1. How important is race/ethnicity to you when considering a romantic partner for your child?

2. How important was race/ethnicity to **your** parents when considering a romantic partner for you?

Relationship 3 (Culture Vignette)

Mike grew up in Australia but his partner, Kate grew up in another country very different from his. He has a lot in common with Kate, such as similar taste in books and movies. Kate

wasn't raised to celebrate Chinese New Year, like he was. Instead, she celebrates Hanukkah which has very different traditions from his family. Mike realizes that whenever Kate interacts with his family, she felt awkward with his parents while his parents do not attempt to learn any of Kate's cultural practices. Kate also doesn't eat the spicy food that Mike's parents serve for dinner and it upsets them. Once, Kate forgot to bring red pockets to his Chinese New Year party and Mike's parents commented that it was disrespectful to their Chinese heritage. His parents reject your relationship, stating that Mike and Kate are just too different culturally. They believe Kate is disrespectful to their culture and want Mike to end the relationship.

Please look at the statements below and using the scale provided, answer how much you agree with each statement.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree

1. Mike's parents are looking out for him.
2. Mike is unloved/rejected by his parents.
3. Mike's parents only want the best for his future.
4. Mike's parents do not have a right to be upset about the relationship.
5. Mike's parents care about him and his relationship.
6. Mike's parents do not care about what he wants.
7. Mike's parents are treating him and his relationship harshly.
8. Mike's parents know what's best for their son.

Whether your child is or isn't in a current romantic relationship, consider the following statement using the 5 point Likert scale provided below.

Very Unimportant Unimportant Undecided Important Very Important

1. How important cultural similarity to you when considering a romantic partner for your child?

2. How important was cultural similarity to **your** parents when considering a romantic partner for you?

Relationship 4 (Language Vignette)

Jessie met her partner, Peter at university where they were both studying. Her parents are very proud of her because they have left China in order to give her better opportunities. Their relationship has progressed to something serious and she brings Peter over to her house to meet her parents. Since Jessie's parents immigrated at a later age, they feel uncomfortable speaking English and aren't fluent. However, Peter only speaks English and cannot understand them. Jessie's parents later tell her that dating someone who speaks the same language as them would be easier because her partner would be able to understand them and their values. Her parents explain to her that in their culture, a child's future spouse should try to get along with the parents of whomever they're marrying. They highlight the importance of respecting elders in their culture and want Jessie to continue having those values. They disapprove of her relationship because of the severe language barriers and state that her partner can never fully come to understand them.

Please look at the statements below and using the scale provided, answer how much you agree with each statement.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree

1. Jessie's parents are looking out for her.
2. Jessie is unloved/rejected by her parents.
3. Jessie's parents only want the best for her future.
4. Jessie's parents do not have a right to be upset about her relationship. 5. Jessie's parents care about her and her relationship.
6. Jessie's parents do not care about what she wants.
7. Jessie's parents are treating her and her relationship harshly.

8. Jessie's parents know what's best for their daughter.

Whether your child is or isn't in a current romantic relationship, consider the following statement using the 5 point Likert scale provided below.

Very Unimportant Unimportant Undecided Important Very Important

1. How important is it to you that you and your child's partner speak the same language when considering a romantic partner for your child?

2. How important was it to **your** parents to speak the same language as you and your romantic partner when considering a romantic partner for you?

Study Three Recruitment Poster

Are you a parent? Are you interested in Intercultural Relationship Research?

All participants will enter our draw and winners will receive either a $250, $100, or $50 Amazon gift card. All you have to do to qualify is complete a 15-30 minute questionnaire ONLINE!

ONLY Requirement: You must be a PARENT over the age of 18.

Contact **anika.munshi@mq.edu.au** for more details

Study Three Ethics Approval Letter

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

16 October 2014

Professor Julie Fitness Department of Psychology Faculty of Human Sciences MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109

Dear Professor Fitness
Reference No: 5201400912
Title: *The Impact of Acculturation on Parents' Mating Preferences for their Adult Children*

Thank you for submitting the above application for ethical and scientific review. Your application was considered by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC (Human Sciences & Humanities)) at its meeting on 26 September 2014 at which further information was requested to be reviewed by the HREC (Human Sciences and Humanities) Executive.

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Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)

Research Office
C5C Research HUB East, Level 3, Room 324 MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109 AUSTRALIA

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+61 (0)2 9850 7850

+61 (0)2 9850 4465 ethics.secretariat@mq.edu.au

Documents reviewed

Macquarie University Ethics Application Form

Correspondence from Miss Anika Munshi responding to the issues raised by the HREC (Human Sciences and Humanities)

Advertisement - Poster

Version no.

2.3

Date

July 2013

Received 8/10/2014

MQ Participant Information and Consent Form 1 (PICF)

Participant Questionnaire

Debriefing Form

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8/10/2014

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The HREC (Human Sciences and Humanities) wishes you every success in your research. Yours sincerely

Dr Karolyn White

Director, Research Ethics & Integrity,
Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee (Human Sciences and Humanities)

This HREC is constituted and operates in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (2007) and the *CPMP/ICH Note for Guidance on Good Clinical Practice*.

Study Three Sample's Demographic Information

Frequencies and Percentages of St

Religious Affiliation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Christian	77	42.3
Catholic	42	23.1
Jewish	8	4.4
Muslim	7	3.8
Hindu	9	4.9
Buddhist	9	4.9
Spiritual/Agnostic/Other	11	7.3
Atheist/None	17	9.3
Total	180	100

udy 3 Sample's Religious BackgroundNote. 2 participants declined to answer

Frequencies and Percentages of

Ethnicity	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Caucasian	90	49.5
Asian	21	11.5
African	10	5.5
Indian	10	5.5
Middle Eastern	10	5.5
Hispanic/Latino/Latina	13	7.1
Biracial/Other	28	15.4
Total	182	100

Study 3's Ethnic Identity

Frequencies and Percentages of Sample 3's Generational Levels

Note. 21

Generational Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1st generation	55	34.2
2nd generation	36	22.4
3rd generation	31	19.3
4th generation	10	6.2
5th generation	29	18.0
Total	161	100

individuals stated they did not know which generation they belonged to