The Influence of Familial Involvement and Cultural Values on Mate Preferences and

Romantic Relationships: What Do Today's Emerging Adults in India and America Want?

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree. Studies 1-3, presented in this thesis, have been accepted for publication.

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Abstract

With increasing globalization, researchers are beginning to document the changing patterns of family life in collectivistic societies undergoing rapid economic development, such as India. With these changes, expectations of romantic relationships are also shifting as individuals re-calibrate their gender roles and attitudes towards romantic relationships to meet the challenges of modern society. Yet, not enough is known about the younger generation of collectivist youth and their evolving romantic habits and preferences. Therefore, the overarching goal of this thesis was to gain a more comprehensive understanding of cultural and familial influences in selecting a marital partner, maintaining a relationship, endorsing romantic beliefs, and anticipating future difficulties in marital life.

In collectivist cultures, families tend to be characterized by respect for parental authority and strong, interdependent ties. Do these aspects of collectivism exert countervailing pressures on mate choices and relationship quality? In Study 1, I tested my predictions on a British sample by dividing participants into high or low collectivist groups based on their heritage cultural background, whereas in Study 2 I recruited participants from India and the United States. In both studies, I found that collectivism was associated with greater acceptance of parental influence over mate choice, thereby driving relationship commitment down, but collectivism was also associated with stronger family ties (referred to as family allocentrism), which drove commitment up (Study 2). Along similar lines, Study 1 found that collectivists' greater acceptance of parental influence on mate choice contributed to their reduced relationship passion, whereas Study 2 found that their greater family allocentrism may have enhanced their passion. Study 2 also revealed that collectivists may have reported a smaller discrepancy between their own preferences for mates high in warmth and trustworthiness and their perception of their parents' preferences for these qualities because of their stronger family allocentrism. However, their higher tolerance of parental

influence may have also contributed to a smaller discrepancy in their mate preferences versus their perceptions of their parents' preferences for qualities signifying status and resources.

Studies 3 and 4 moved away from familial dynamics and took a closer look at the cultural values of collectivism and gender role ideology. Previous studies have established that Indians tend to be greater in collectivism and gender role traditionalism than Americans. The purpose of Studies 3 and 4 was to examine whether these differences explained further cultural differences in romantic beliefs, traditional mate preferences, and anticipation of future difficulties in marital life. Results for both studies revealed that Indians reported greater collectivism than Americans and, in turn, held stronger romantic beliefs. Additionally, Indians' greater collectivism, endorsement of more traditional gender roles and benevolent sexism in part predicted their preferences for a marital partner possessing traditional characteristics. Collectivism and gender role traditionalism accounted for Indians' heightened concerns about encountering future difficulties in marital life in Study 3, while in Study 4 only collectivism explained these concerns. Overall, the results from these four studies shed light on the processes underlying cultural differences in relationship attitudes and preferences, and point to the need for greater cultural awareness and sensitivity to the diversity that exists in relationship functioning across societies.

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General Introduction

Romantic relationships comprise a fundamental facet of human life in societies around the world (Madathil & Benshoff, 2008). This intimate bond not only has the potential to fulfil one's own emotional and physical needs, but also to influence one's social standing and affiliation to close others in the community (Isaac & Shah, 2004; Sedikides, Oliver, & Campbell, 1994). With the importance attached to these relationships comes the equally significant, if not daunting, task of finding the 'right one' and the challenge of maintaining the relationship over time. While the desire for a mate is universal, the characteristics found desirable in a partner and the purpose attached to a romantic relationship can significantly differ from one culture to another (Fong & Goetz, 2010; Medora, Larson, Hortacsu, & Dave, 2002). The present studies examined the extent to which cultural influences and familial involvement play a part in marital partner selection and relationship quality. In doing so, this research sought to redress the focus in the literature on individualistic Western-style relationship processes that ignore extra-dyadic factors, which also influence mate choices and relationship outcomes. The following sections outline several cultural influences on relationships: individualism and collectivism, acceptance of familial and parental involvement, and traditional gender role ideology.

Individualistic and Collectivistic Cultures

People's attitudes and behaviours are shaped and directed by the norms and customs prevalent in their particular social milieu (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). Cultural values – in particular, individualism and collectivism – influence how people define themselves, relate to others, and interact with their social environment (Triandis, 1995). Western, individualistic cultures emphasize the rights of the individual, advocating freedom of personal choice (Buunk, Park, & Dubbs, 2008; Kashima et al., 1995). This value system encourages independence, self-expression, and uniqueness (Ferenczi, Marshall, & Bejanyan, 2015).

Individualists set meaningful personal goals, look within themselves to make decisions, and are guided by their own self-determination and life choices (Hagger, Rentzelas, & Chatzisarantis, 2014). Personal needs frequently take precedence over group needs; social interactions are cultivated on the basis of one's own beliefs and motives, rather than maintained out of a sense of duty or social courtesy (Greenfield, 2013).

In contrast, many Eastern cultures stress the merits of in-group harmony and cohesion (Buunk, Park, & Duncan 2010; Imada & Yussen, 2012). The interdependent self, rather than regarded as a separate entity, is contextualized and defined by group membership (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Social behaviour is governed by the standards, customs, and duties set by the in-group (Lykes & Kemmelmeier, 2014). Therefore, conducting oneself in accordance with conventional customs is heavily stressed, and individuals risk criticism by community members if they stray too far from these expectations. Similarly, to retain group uniformity and preserve its structural integrity, collectivists tend to respect social order and the authority of elders, even at a cost to one's own choices (Nath & Craig, 1999). Inasmuch as collectivists are socialized to consider the well-being of the group over their own needs, they are likely to abandon personal desires that conflict with group welfare, especially in relation to other family members (Le & Impett, 2013). This self-sacrifice has implications for collectivists' mate choice and relationship experiences.

Family Involvement

Eastern, collectivistic cultures are more strongly oriented towards family commitments and kin relationships compared to their Western, individualistic counterparts (Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam 1999). Indeed, compliance to traditional customs is heavily stressed, with family values as the source of cultural integrity. Obedience to family members and disapproval of self-expression and autonomy helps to ensure that family stability and cohesiveness are maintained (Netting, 2010). Therefore, individuals are encouraged to

minimize their own personal desires, especially, when there is a discrepancy between what they want and what is best for other members of the family or community. Indeed, deference to family members is one of the hallmarks of collectivism (Kapadia & Miller, 2005).

Accordingly, the relationship between the self and others reflects a symbiotic, mutually dependent, and beneficial relationship; individuals rely on one another's support for emotional, psychological and social fulfilment. This type of relationship is especially critical within the family network (Kagitcibasi, 1990). Family members express strong interest in one another's well-being and life outcomes, taking pride in each other's success. Likewise, a misfortune that transpires against one member of the family reflects upon everyone, and it is deemed the responsibly of the family to deal with the aftermath (Huang, 1994). Therefore, rather than highlighting one's own subjective needs, each person, instead, does his or her part to support the other members of the family with everyone working together towards the ultimate directive of ensuring the collective welfare of the family as a whole.

Preserving strong bonds with kin and other extended family members is also stressed. This is accomplished by having frequent visits with aunts, uncles, grandparents etc. Spending holidays and other special occasions with large groups of family members and, in some cases, having extended family living arrangements is common (Fuligni et al., 1999). These ideals of dedication and loyalty towards family members and honouring of one's familial duties is visible in many collectivistic cultures. In China, the Confucian model of filial piety – duty to respect and honour parents – still endures (Chen, Bond, Tang, 2007). In India, filial obligations, largely based on religious scriptures, assert that children should be committed to the family welfare regardless of their age or marital status (Diwan, Lee, Sen, 2011). Finally, in Latin America, strong emphasis is placed on family loyalty and devotion – a concept known as familism (Sabogal, Marin, Otero-Sabogal, Marin, & Perez-Stable, 1987).

To continually sustain harmony within the family network, collectivists actively

cultivate good relations with one another by minimizing opposing ideologies between family members, avoiding conflictual interactions and relying on a firm hierarchical family structure (Nath et al., 1999). Under this premise, parents socialize their children to respect authority, emphasizing the virtues of cooperation and interdependence. Younger family members are taught to revere their elders and defer to their authority. Likewise, youngsters are not meant to act alone in important matters, but instead seek out the guidance and permission of their parents or other older family members and follow the advice they are given. Indeed, old age in collectivist cultures is often revered for its greater wisdom, spiritual understanding, and insight (Bhat & Dhruvarajan, 2001).

Parental Authority

Preserving a harmonious parent-child relationship in Eastern, collectivistic cultures is especially important; children often comply with parental wishes and strive to meet the expectations set by them (Diwan et al., 2011). For example, in a study conducted by Yau and Smetana (1996) on adolescent-parent conflict and resolution styles, the authors reported that in cases of disagreements between parents and children's desires, Chinese-American adolescents were more likely to submit to parental requests rather than follow their own personal wishes. In another study by Dixon, Graber and Brooks-Gunn (2008), cultural differences were found in perceptions of parental authority by both the parents and children. African American and Latina girls demonstrated greater adherence towards parental authority than did European American girls. In addition, when respect was low by the daughters towards their mothers, African American and Latina mothers described having considerably more intense arguments with their daughters about their lack of regard.

From a Western, individualistic perspective it may seem that collectivists are taught to readily relinquish their personal desires in favour of familial interests; however, Kapadia et al. (2005) offer another perspective. A critical value in collectivist cultures is the deep

reverence and honour people hold for the role parents play in children's lives. In collectivist cultures, power distance – the degree to which disparities in equality among members of society or institutions are viewed as acceptable and commonplace (Hofstede, 1980) – is generally higher compared to individualistic cultures (Robert, Probst, Martocchi, Drasgow, & Lawler, 2000). Higher power distance, likewise, is endorsed in the family setting, where power is more autocratic and parents hold a higher position of authority over children (Schwab, 2013). Therefore, Kapadia et al. (2005), based upon their study of Indian-American parent-child dynamics, explain that collectivist adolescents often regard their parents with respect, viewing them as wise and knowledgeable. The parental role, they believe, consists of parents advising their children when necessary and guiding them in the right direction. Therefore, rather than view their deference to parental authority as a show of weakness or yielding to another's demands – as Westerners might see it – they believe their parents are acting out of care and concern for them, keeping their best interests in mind.

In the same respect, parents may not regard their authority over their children as an assertion of power, but what they deem as their parental responsibility as good caretakers to look after their children, ensuring their well-being. Consistent with this philosophy, Iyengar and Lepper (1999) found that Asian American children performed better and took a longer time on tasks that they believed were chosen for them by their mothers, while European American children performed better and spent more time on tasks that they selected for themselves. The Asian American children credited their mothers with knowing what is best for them.

Accordingly, Kapadia et al. (2005) argue that from both parents' and children's point of view, parental involvement in children's affairs in Indian culture is regarded with positivity and the relationship accepted as a mutually-beneficial alliance. In complying with parental guidance even when they want something different, children validate the

understanding that their parents have their best interests in mind and, in return, they demonstrate that they value their parents' dedication by not discarding parental input and upsetting their elders. Along the same lines, filial piety in Chinese culture also establishes similar notions of mutual advantage and reciprocity between parents and children (Chen et al., 2007). Children respect their parents and accept their guidance in return for their parents' love and security. This relationship also evolves into adulthood when children are then expected to look after their parents as they age, reciprocating the care they were shown when they were young (Yeh, 1997). This respect for parents has implications for the acceptance of parental input into one's mate choices.

Accommodation Tendencies in Interpersonal Situations

Multiple studies have shown that people from Eastern, collectivistic cultures have a stronger tendency to adjust themselves to fit within their context, whereas people from Western, individualistic cultures are more inclined to influence the environment to meet their needs (Storti, 2007). For Westerners, perceived control emanates from the individual and his or her ability to influence outside circumstances – primary control (Weisz, Rothbaum, & Blackburn, 1984). To boost personal gains and minimize punishment, Westerners often try to exert authority over existing reality through personal command and agency. For Easterners, control is gained through aligning oneself with the existing reality – secondary control. In this way, while they may not be able to change the external world, they are, instead, able to gain control over its influence on their internal psychological state and well-being (Weisz et al., 1984). Consequently, inasmuch as collectivists are more group-oriented and practice secondary control, in interpersonal situations they are more likely to accommodate themselves to fit within other people's standards and expectations.

In line with this premise, Savani, Morris, Naidu, Kumar, and Berlia (2011) examined accommodation tendencies in interpersonal situations – i.e., circumstances in which a person

makes a decision based on someone else's influence when their original choice had been different to the one ultimately selected. In cultures where people frequently face situations in which they are often rewarded for accommodating to others' needs, members of that society will be more likely to respond favourably to the influence of others. In contrast, individuals will respond less favourably if they are from a culture that values autonomy and independence and does not reward subordination.

Cultural sanctions themselves regularly perpetuate these accommodation beliefs by favouring those who follow the culturally prescribed standards and punishing those who do not. In collectivistic cultures, acting selflessly towards close others and taking their needs into consideration – at times above one's own – is an important cultural virtue (Yamagishi, Hashimoto, & Schug, 2008). Therefore, implicit social structures (e.g., attitudes, behaviours, ethics) are in place to ensure individuals abide by these standards. In Japan, for instance, compared to the United States, it is a lot harder to mend broken relationships between close others, when it appears that one individual acted selfishly towards another; this serves to minimize individuals' focus on the self and dissuade acts of callousness or insensitivity towards friends and loved ones (Savani et al., 2011). Likewise, Japanese people are especially inclined to make decisions and act in accordance with social norms when they believe others are watching them because they fear being judged if they do not abide by these standards (Yamagishi et al., 2008).

Indian culture also falls in line with these social standards. Savani, Morris and Naidu (2012) found that Indian participants were more likely to accommodate to the needs of others than American participants. However, an interesting finding to note was that Indians were still more likely to accommodate even in situations where there was little to no social consequence to their actions. The researchers extrapolated that Indians' tendencies to comply with other's expectations is not simply an attempt to avoid social sanctions, but also because

they may believe that abiding by these expectations demonstrates the merits of a good person behaving rightly – results also shared by Kakar (1971). Supporting this argument is their further finding that while Indians were more likely to accede to others who personified the role of authority figures, they did not show similar behavioural deference towards the preferences of their peers. Therefore, Indians are likely to make choices in accordance with authority figures, believing that the person in charge has their best interests in mind and that by following these expectations they themselves are acting righteously. Savani et al. (2012) offer the example of single Indian professionals who report on the advantages of living at home with their parents. These young adults explain that without the presence of their parents and the constant reminder of the importance of morally just behaviour, they may be more likely to be swayed by the allure of external temptations and internal desires.

Likewise, Indian children's respect for parental authority remains constant as they age. Even after they get married and form families of their own, the transition to interacting with their parents from the position of one adult to another does not necessarily take place, as is so often the case in Western, individualistic cultures (Sonpar, 2005). Children are still expected to remain subservient to their parents regardless of their age because parents will always remain older than their children and therefore will forever retain the title of wiser authority figures.

To assert one's self against an authority figure is not only perceived as disrespectful, but often it is also believed to be unwise and working against one's own personal interests. Since those often in a position of influence are viewed as more knowledgeable and aware of what is best, acting independently and going against their advice can appear as making the wrong choice and ultimately setting oneself up for failure (Kapadia et al., 2005; Sonpar, 2005). Therefore, drawing conclusions from Savani et al.'s (2012) paper, Americans may show conflicting feelings regarding compliance with the requests of authority figures, but

Indians support this hierarchical structure and actively seek the guidance of those perceived to be in higher-status positions to help them make choices in their daily lives. Moreover, this guidance may not be viewed as an infringement of one's rights, but instead offers comfort in the knowledge that an individual is moving in the right direction, and that compliance to this advice exemplifies the behaviour of a virtuous person. Similarly, chronic tendencies to prioritize group needs over personal ones and defer to authorities, especially to one's family, can have strong influences on mate choice and dating practices.

Mate Selection and Dating Practices in Individualistic versus Collectivistic Cultures

While mate selection is commonly seen worldwide, the process by which partners are selected and relationships are maintained is often determined by societal circumstances. Culture, in particular, is frequently recognized as having proximal influence on the mate selection process (Hynie, Lalonde, & Lee, 2006). Inasmuch as cultural ideals and standards shape individuals' perspectives about themselves and others, these beliefs also lead to the development of ideals in romantic relationships and preferences for a marital partner in line with cultural norms (Dion & Dion, 1996). Furman and Buhrmester (1992) explained that as individuals age, their growing desire for connection and intimacy with a romantic partner may be partly driven by cultural pressures, encouraging people to find a prospective long-term partner and begin the formation of a family.

In the West, mate selection is based upon personal preferences. Romantic relationships form between individuals who share mutual love and attraction for one another (Moore & Leung, 2001). Dating different partners and exploring the concept of relationships, intimacy, and sexuality is seen as the norm in Western societies and generally begins during adolescence (Nesteruk & Gramescu, 2012). While finding a long-term partner may be an outcome of the dating process, this is not necessarily the sole objective, especially in the earlier stages of one's dating activity. Montgomery (2005) explained that dating is in itself

thought to be a relevant and enriching part of an individual's path to maturation by benefiting his or her identity development and providing the opportunity to practice cultivating an intimate bond with another person.

When adolescents in Western, individualistic cultures initially begin to explore the realm of romantic relationships, their relationships tend to be more casual in nature, with a shorter duration and less intensity (Luo, 2008). In addition, the relationship is frequently not only about exploring emotional intimacy with another person, but can also include a sexual component (Shulman & Scharf, 2000). Western, individualistic cultures generally take a liberal approach to these experiences. Parents, rather than chastise their children or restrict them from developing romantic relationships with others, increasingly take on the vital role of supporters. They become someone the child can go to for advice and guidance as they manoeuvre through the highs and lows of different relationship experiences. Morgan, Thorne, and Zurbriggen (2010) reported that parents' conversations with their college-aged children consisted of children openly discussing their dating status and experiences with their parents, while parents listened without judgment, offering support and advice about their beliefs regarding good relationship habits. Young adults reported finding this open communication between themselves and their parents both helpful and important in sorting through their romantic experiences.

Alternatively, within Eastern, collectivistic cultures, the concept of dating is less recognized as a legitimate practice and is often a sensitive topic of discussion between parents and children (Netting, 2006). For example, Manohar (2008) reported that for most South Asians, dating is viewed as a 'betrayal' of the traditional cultural establishment in favour of more Western, individualistic practices. While children push for more freedom in this area, parents take a restrictive approach to their children's dating activities, frequently causing conflict and serving as a continual source of strife between the two groups (Chung,

2001). In cultures where parental authority is highly valued, children's dating activities can appear to give children too much freedom, leading parents to fear losing control over their children's behaviour and ties to cultural traditions (Netting, 2006).

Consequently, whereas the onset of adolescence brings increasing freedom and autonomy in individualistic cultures, this developmental stage in collectivistic cultures is generally marked with parents' more stringent rules regarding socializing, dressing and, in particular, regarding romantic relations with peers (Kim & Ward, 2007). Accordingly, as puberty hits, adolescents are sent messages by family to adopt a more practical approach to relationships by obeying cultural customs and placing familial duties above the personal desire for romance and intimacy (Madathil et al., 2008). This, in turn, paves the way for young adults to abide by societal standards and forgo their personal needs in favour of permitting their parents to exercise greater influence on their mate selection. In particular, parents exert greater influence on their children's marriages in the East relative to the West.

Marriage in the East and West

Historically, marriage around the world centred on political, economic, or social benefits (Hatfield & Rapson, 2002). Within the last few centuries, however, a new model of marriage has been established in Western, individualistic cultures that has shifted away from this paradigm (Coontz, 2005). This contemporary model espouses love as the foundation for marriage and paints an idealistic picture of marital bliss. Insofar as marriage ensues, partners commonly become one another's primary source of social support, frequently investing more energy into their romantic relationship than close relations with friends or family. Indeed, Furman et al. (1992) found that support networks change over time; while parental bonds are identified as the primary relationship for children, peers fulfil this role for adolescents, and romantic partners serve this purpose for young adults. Once married, other dyadic relationships such as those with parents, siblings or friends are expected to take a secondary

position in a couple's life in lieu of their marital partner (Coontz, 2005). The couple places their chief focus on ensuring the well-being of the relationship as they perceive themselves as solely responsible for its maintenance. As a result of the significant role attributed to romantic relationships in the Western, individualistic cultural milieu, open communication, intimacy, and affection are both expected and central to the sustainment of marital satisfaction and continuity (Medora et al., 2002).

This conceptualization of the marital union is still fairly new and not fully embraced throughout other parts of the world (Zaidi & Shuraydi, 2002). Most cultures, in fact, have some level of family involvement in the process of coordinating a marriage. In societies where the welfare of the group is dependent upon member cohesion and solidarity, individual freedom of choice is minimized. In such cases people are less likely to base the decision of selecting a marital partner on their personal needs, instead seeking family and kin involvement in this process (Levine, Sato, Hashimoto, & Verma, 1995).

Eastern, collectivistic cultures, in particular, stress the merits of group membership, encouraging individuals to prioritize the well-being of the group over their own needs (Buunk et al., 2010). The marital institution, likewise, helps to reinforce societal obligations as young adults are expected to marry as part of their duty to fulfil cultural and familial commitments. Family members are often involved in partner selection by directly choosing the spouse or introducing potential couples to one another (Buunk et al., 2010). Frequently kin also take part in preparing marital arrangements, regularly paying for wedding celebrations in part or in full (Hortacsu & Oral, 1994).

Strengthening family relations and building new alliances are often a key objective for marital unions in Eastern, collectivistic cultures. Goode (1959), in his theory of love and marital relationships, reasoned that the importance of mutual love and attraction varies across different cultures. In cultures where extended family networks and familial relationships were

more strongly emphasized and revered, love as the basis for marriage was less likely to be valued. Personal choice and the desire for love and connection in romantic relationships by young adults carries the potential risk of upsetting traditional customs of family-approved unions and the hope of establishing new partnerships between family networks (Derne´, 1995). Consequently, these types of unions – based purely on personal desires and choice – are by and large discouraged and regarded with contempt.

Contrary to the Western, individualistic notion of the nuclear family arrangement – comprised of the adult couple and their children – Eastern, collectivistic cultures affirm the importance of extended family arrangements (D'Cruz & Bharat, 2001). Accordingly, the objective of the marital union in not intended for the new couple to separate from their birth family, establishing their own independent family unit; instead, the focus is on the couple merging with in-laws and one another's extended kin to expand the family network (Chekki, 1996). To the extent that the involvement of family members and the purpose of marriage is heavily rooted in family values and obligations for collectivists, intimacy is not a prerequisite nor a significant part of marital bonds. Unlike in Western, individualistic cultures, psychological or emotional needs are not exclusively the responsibility of spouses to satisfy for one another. Instead, in Eastern, collectivistic cultures, this responsibility is disseminated among the extended family and community members (Medora, 2007; Nath et al., 1999).

Evolutionary and Social Constructionist Perspectives on Mate Choice and Relationships

The preceding sections delineated the cultural and familial influences on mate choice and relationships. The following sections explore two major theoretical perspectives on cultural universality and variability in mating and relationships: evolutionary theory and social constructionist theories. Ecological factors have interacted with sociocultural forces over time to produce behavioural, psychological, and group variability across cultures (Wood & Eagly, 2013).

Significant diversity exists among human societies in nearly all aspects of life, yet beneath these differences are undercurrents of human universals. The desire for romantic relationships is an example of this dynamic between diversity and universality; while marital arrangements may differ broadly across cultures, the desire for a mate and an intimate relationship prevails among almost all societies (Gangestad, Haselton, & Buss, 2006). Insofar as the interplay of many influences leads to evolved developmental systems and individual behavioural outcomes, biological and social influences should both be examined to better understand differences and similarities in human mating behaviour and romantic relationships. Accordingly, the following sections consider evolutionary and social constructionist theoretical perspectives on mating and relationships.

Evolutionary Psychology

Evolutionary psychology has often been applied to identify and interpret human behaviour that is universally detected throughout different communities around the globe (Gangestad et al., 2006). By examining preindustrial societies, evolutionary psychology attempts to reconstruct the primordial environment our ancestors lived in, thereby gaining understanding of how human behaviour and psychological adaptations evolved over time (Pinker, 1997). Typically, a behaviour or psychological schema is considered an evolutionary adaptation if it has existed for a substantial amount of time, has biological origins and is universally or near-universally pervasive (Simpson & Campbell, 2005) – criteria that can be applied to human beings' desire for close relationships. For example, romantic feelings of love exist throughout almost all societies and are perceived as a mechanism that facilitates pair-bonding in order to ensure the survival of offspring (Buss & Schmitt, 1993). Therefore, from an evolutionary standpoint, love is a consequence of the interaction between biological and social adaptations; attraction to another person and desire to form a romantic relationship is regarded as a physiological response born out of the necessity to procreate.

Evolutionary psychology is also helpful when trying to understand cultural differences because it can potentially identify how cultural disparities in and of themselves first originated (Gangestad et al., 2006). It is based on Darwin's premise of natural selection: human adaptations developed as mechanisms of survival in response to the early environment in which humans lived. Inasmuch as there were a number of ecological conditions within which humans survived, these different environmental settings produced different adaptive responses.

In recent decades, Tooby and Cosmides (1992) referred to the term *evoked culture* to describe this phenomenon. They explained that ecological and social conditions such as famine, scarcity, war, or abundance of resources present varying domain-specific conditions, thereby eliciting different psychological or behavioral responses from the people experiencing these conditions. Humans react differently as a result of their different psychological and developmental capabilities. Human behavioral plasticity coupled with ecological variability gives rise to evoked culture. Therefore, variations in culture are constructed through the interplay of social and environmental factors and the evolved, specialized contingent adaptations of the humans confronting these particular conditions; this creates within-group similarities and between-group differences (i.e., cultural variation across different societies).

By observing the disparities in cultural groups around the world, we are able to see the results of the many adaptive strategies used to survive under varying environmental conditions. For example, people who live in environments with high pathogen prevalence have developed social strategies to inhibit disease transmission – namely, they tend to be more ethnocentric and collectivist (Fincher, Thornhill, Murray, & Schaller, 2008). In the case of mate selection, another outcome in societies with high pathogen prevalence is the increased awareness of qualities that signal health and wellbeing. In these societies, greater

emphasis is placed on one's physical appearance compared to societies with lower pathogen prevalence (Gangestad, Haselton, & Buss, 2006). Tooby and Cosmides (2005) also explain the important role emotions play in these processes. They reason that, given the multiple adaptive tactics we have developed, our emotions – such as feelings of love or passion – act as a type of guidance system to help us choose which behavioural or psychological strategy to use in any given situation to provide us with maximum benefit.

Sexual Strategies Theory is one of the primary theories under the evolutionary model (Smiler, 2011). This theory addresses evolved approaches to mate selection, reproductive strategies, and sex differences centring on the biological, intrinsic benefits of mating (Buss et al., 1993; Buss, 1995). Mating strategies help to guide and direct an individual's reproductive attempts by influencing the type of mate they choose, the tactics they use to select a mate, and how much they invest in the relationship and potential offspring reproduced from the relationship (Gangestad & Simpson, 2000).

Buss et al. (1993) explained that mating strategies do not necessarily stem from one's conscious awareness, but often these strategies are employed implicitly. Moreover, they theorize, that, while in some instances men and women are expected to be divergent in their mating approaches, given the unique adaptive problems they face that are specific to their sex, they are also expected to be similar in areas where they face related adaptive challenges. For example, both men and women have evolved strategies for short and long-term mating. Therefore, under certain conditions considerable overlap may exist between the mating schemas of men and women, with both sexes exhibiting similar desires and measures for seeking a mating partner (Miller & Fishkin, 1997).

Nevertheless, men and women also faced varying evolutionary adaptive problems particular to their sex, generating different trade-offs in mating tactics that were especially advantageous for one group relative to the other (Smiler, 2011). For instance, based on

evolutionary history, on average, men may have profited from greater net gains in pursuing multiple mates compared to women (Gangestad et al., 2000). Consequently, while both groups may engage in similar mating strategies under some conditions, they have also developed different adaptive tactics, particular to their sex, to facilitate pair-bonding and cope with various adaptive challenges.

According to Sexual Strategies Theory, when men are seeking a short-term mating opportunity, they are more likely to seek an attractive, sexually available partner while trying to invest little commitment or resources into the relationship (Buss, 1995). For a long-term partner, men are willing to invest more of themselves and their resources into the relationship. They generally seek a mate with high reproductive value, and are more likely to appraise a potential mate's parenting skills, personal qualities, and level of commitment to the relationship (Smiler, 2011). Conversely, women are more particular about their partner selection in comparison to men (Buss, 1994). This has been attributed to women's tendency to have higher parental investment in offspring given that that mating mistakes can be more costly for them compared to men (i.e., parental investment theory; Trivers, 1972). Nevertheless, in a short-term mating circumstance, they are more likely to aim for the most physically appealing mate they can attract, thus striving to enhance the genetic fitness of any potential offspring (Pedersen, Putcha-Bhagavatula, & Miller, 2011). For long-term relationships, women, similar to men, commonly desire a partner who is willing to commit to the relationship, displays an amiable disposition, but also possesses resources (Buss et al., 1993; Schmitt, 2005).

A key component of Sexual Strategies Theory relating to culture is that mating preferences are primarily context-driven, such that preferences for a partner fluctuate based on the necessity for the type of relationship one needs at any given time. More specifically, the qualities individuals find attractive in a partner and the person they pursue for a

relationship is largely influenced by their short- and long-term mating intentions (Schmitt, 2005). Consequently, while women have evolved to become generally more stringent in their partner selection, both males and females are more selective when looking for a long-term partner (Buss, 1994). It is crucial to keep this in mind when examining collectivistic cultures given that mate selection for collectivists almost always revolves around securing a long-term partner (Netting, 2006). While people from Western, individualistic cultures may sift through different relationships, some for short-term enjoyment, and some with long-term potential, people from Eastern, collectivistic cultures primarily seek a partner only for long-term marriage prospects (Nesteruk et al., 2012; Luo, 2008).

The practice of dating provides a relevant example. Whereas individualists often like the process of dating, finding it natural and fun to explore different relationships with different partners – separate from the promise of marriage – collectivists are more likely to view dating, if at all practiced, as a means to an end; they date in hope of finding the right person and getting married (Tang & Zuo, 2000; Turner, 2003; Whyte, 1992). Manohar (2008) explains that the justification for dating by collectivist adolescents is that it is not necessarily about experiencing intimacy and romantic relationships for their own sake, but rather, there is the hope of cultivating a long-term relationship and achieving the end goal of marriage. Similarly, younger generations in China have adopted the Western notion of dating, but do not mimic its patterns exactly (Luo, 2008). Instead, the Chinese youth have tailored it to fit within their more traditional cultural standards by regulating the expression of intimacy, practicing more restrictive sexual activity, and maintaining a shorter dating period with earlier expectations for the relationship to evolve into a serious commitment, rather than one of causal courtship and fun (Jackson, Chen, Guo & Gao, 2006).

Overall, evolutionary psychology attempts to interpret and give meaning to human behaviour and implicit psychological drives by examining the biological motives and genetic

heritability of humans, tempered by the influence of ecological factors and social ideologies or practices. It reasons that psychological adaptations are often facultative, such that ecological settings, environmental factors, and social conditions play a strong role in the prospective expression of these adaptations, but not necessarily their *definitive* expression. Therefore, while the possibility to express a psychological adaptation may be collectively present, the likelihood of it doing so is largely contingent upon circumstances and conditions. The human psyche and behavioural adaptations, evolutionary psychology affirms, is remarkably formative and flexible (Buss & Schmitt, 2011). A facultative adaptation may also be applied, on a greater scale, to entire populations of people such that in certain cultural communities some adaptations may be more expressed than others (Tooby et al., 1992).

The concept of evoked culture speaks to this phenomenon. As detailed earlier, evoked culture focuses on the importance of the interaction between ecological, social conditions and human developmental and psychological capabilities that give rise to variations in many cultural communities across the world. Another process that can lead to the emergence of various facets of culture, as discussed by Tooby et al. (1992), is known as transmitted culture. In this understanding, cultural elements are obtained through social learning, modeling and observing, and transmitted throughout large groups of people. An example of this is agricultural practices, which have been learned and taught (i.e. transmitted) throughout communities.

In comparison to evoked culture, transmitted culture more heavily highlights the significance of social learning in cultural disparities. Its central focus is based on the process by which culture is spread through social conditioning such as modeling, instructing, mimicry, etc. – concepts that are also echoed by social constructionist theorists.

While other species, such as primates, show primitive forms of cultural transmission, the culmination of knowledge and speed of transmission of this knowledge has been noted as

particularly rapid within human populations (Richerson and Boyd, 2005). Social learning, therefore, for humans is an especially important mechanism through which individuals learn and transfer knowledge to others. It is precisely this aspect of human aptitude – social learning – that social constructionists view as the premise for human dispositions (Johannesen-Schmidt & Eagly 2002). They contend that, as result of human relational interactions and language, ideas spread and eventually become embedded into social norms (i.e. ideals surrounding mate preferences and romantic relationships) (Wood et al., 2013). To further build on this understanding, I will now also discuss social constructionist theories; particularly as it relates to culture and human processes in love and romantic relationships.

Social Constructionist Theories

Social constructionist theories operate on the premise that who we are as people and the understanding we possess of the world is the result of social influence (Burr, 1995). Thus, it is not environmental factors nor inherent biological drives that motivate human thought and behaviour, but social practices themselves shape the core of our existence (Gergen, 1985). Knowledge is believed to be socially constructed: social mechanisms have given rise to our thoughts, ideas, beliefs and understanding of the world and have informed our narrative about who we are and how we operate in society.

Berger and Luckmann (1966), leading advocates of this movement, explained that social ideologies are created through the implementation of three processes: externalization, reification, and internalization. A key component of this model is the importance of language; it is the instrument through which new concepts are spread. Without the use of language, ideas, thoughts, and beliefs would not take form or be externalized – rendering them meaningless. Once new concepts are encoded into language, they are 'objectified' or reified; they become concrete concepts that are accessible to others and spread. Finally, as people speak and exchange these new concepts within a community, they become internalized into

the social fabric of that society's ideological framework. A cyclical sequence is established, such that ideas are created in a particular environment, leading to socio-cultural beliefs and practices, which then feed back into the loop, generating more knowledge, ideas, beliefs, and concepts.

Understanding this system of information creation and diffusion is fundamental to social constructionists' belief that this is how our perception of reality becomes materialized; we see and acknowledge entities which are embedded in the socio-cultural context we live in, accepting these as reality (Burr, 1995). As this construction of reality is cultivated around the world, diverse cultures arise. Once established, cultures themselves continue to construct and reconstruct their reality. Accordingly, people from one part of the world may operate from an entirely different worldview than others from the opposite side of the globe because the environment they exist in and the language they use shapes and reinforces their unique impression of the world (Geertz, 1979).

Social constructionist theories view the self as embedded in the social context, such that social doctrines influence how people view themselves and others (Marsella, DeVos, & Hsu, 1985). Everyday interactions with family and peers or experiences such as going to work, taking the kids to school, grocery shopping or a trip to the mall become proxies through which the self is consistently being shaped. The self – a product of social agents – is, therefore, both temporal and malleable, able to change and shift depending on the social context. Inasmuch as the self is context-dependent and easily adaptable to social cues, there may exist multiple facets of the self (e.g., Tafarodi, Lo, Yamaguchi, Lee, & Katsura, 2004). Our experiences of ourselves can change as we interact with our surroundings and other people (Markus et al., 1991). For example, a person may be formal and reserved while at work with colleagues, but relaxed and open around family and friends at home.

This ability to alter the self to fit within varying contexts is trans-cultural and

practiced regularly. However, Kashima et al. (2004) explained that, while self-concept flexibility is familiar to cultures worldwide, the degree to which the self is expected to vary across contexts may differ by culture. Illustrating the significant role of language in social constructionist ideology discussed earlier, Kashima et al. (2004) give the example of the English and Japanese word usage of the self. In English-speaking cultures, the word "self" uses the definite article "the," which may suggest a more established or fixed sense of self. Alternatively, Japanese use the term *jibun* to refer to selfhood, which directly translates into "own part." The Japanese consider the self to be a part of a greater whole; as the context of the whole changes, one's perception of their self may also change to suit the situation (Kashima et al., 2004; Marshall, Chuong, & Aikawa, 2011).

From a social constructionist perspective, the paradigm of individualism-collectivism captures basic cultural differences in the interaction of people and societies. Depending on cultural values, either the individual or the collective is seen as the chief object of significance (Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002). Along these lines, Western, independent cultures by and large define the self as an autonomous, self-governing entity that tends to remain constant (English & Chen, 2007). While people in this cultural milieu may engage in relationships and social interactions with others, the self is seen as existing separately from others and is the primary centre of importance.

In contrast, Eastern, collectivistic cultures view the self as being situated within the social structure. Individuals do not exist independent of the whole, but instead are connected with one another through their social relationships and group membership (Kashima et al., 1995). Consequently, the collective is the focus of attention. This leads to a degree of awareness and responsibility concerning how one's behaviour may impact another member of the group. Therefore, collectivists are likely to feel accountable for the group's welfare, frequently contemplating what actions or choices they should take in order to ensure the best

outcome for everyone's benefit. This ideology carries over to mate preferences as well. To the extent that collectivists are more focused on group well-being rather than personal benefits, they are more likely to choose a mate congruent with their family's choices. On the other hand, people from individualistic backgrounds largely base their mate choice on their own needs (Buunk et al., 2010). Likewise, men and women find those traits attractive in a prospective partner, which their particular cultural discourse has constructed as desirable. Therefore, social constructionism not only influences how individuals see themselves within society, but it also impacts the mate selection process by promoting the desirability of certain qualities in a prospective mate and prescribing the process by which romantic partners are selected.

On the whole, evolutionary psychology focuses on the interplay between biological and social conditions in an attempt to explain how and why humans think and act in the ways that they do cross-culturally. Social construction theorists, while attempting to do the same, are less concerned with genetic origins. Instead, they focus on deconstructing the interplay of society and people and how one influences the other to produce the reality we exist in.

For the purpose of this dissertation, both theories are important for addressing human processes in romantic relationships. Human beings have developed a high proficiency for social learning, which both evolutionary psychology and social constructionists acknowledge is significant to human growth and progression (Burr, 1995; Richerson, et al., 2005). This advanced mechanism is successfully applied to transmit ideas throughout communities and help embed them in cultural norms. However, human aptitude for social learning, as contended by many researchers, is in itself an evolutionary adaptation that has biological roots (Mesoudi, 2009; Richerson, Boyd, & Henrich, 2010; Wood, et al., 2013). Therefore, evolutionary psychology and social constructionist theories are both relevant in addressing human mechanisms. Both theoretical models are essential to glean a comprehensive

understanding of mate preferences and romantic relationship ideals throughout diverse cultural frameworks and explain how these beliefs continue to be passed on and perpetuated within some societies, while changing in others. I will now take a closer look at two cultural groups – Indians and Americans – which are the focal participant samples in our studies.

Cultural Groups

The preceding sections discussed theoretical perspectives on mate choice and relationships across cultures. The following sections will focus more specifically on two cultural contexts, India and the United States, and discuss their behaviours and attitudes towards relationships. Specifically, the next section details Indians' attitudes towards mate selection and marriage, gender role ideology, extended family system, and regard for authority.

India

In contemporary India, diversity is widespread; throughout different regions of the country, there are many types of cultures, religions and ethnicities, each with their own set of customs and specification of norms (Medora, 2007). Hindus comprise the predominant religious and cultural group, encompassing roughly eighty percent of India's population (Bowker, 1997). Despite its diversity, however, there are common threads of beliefs across India relating to marital unions, family structures, and parental authority (Jejeebhoy, 2002) – all reflecting the notion of Dharma. This refers to the importance of duty, and is the primary decree that guides Indian cultural obligations and responsibilities. It is an ancient philosophy that delineates what is expected of people at different stages of their development and how individuals can prosper through acts of selflessness, goodness, and by fulfilling their part in the social order. This philosophy has been firmly incorporated into Indian culture, and the tradition of marriage is an important part of its teachings (Juthani, 2001).

Mate selection and marriage. As outlined above, the mate selection customs in India are primarily rooted in ancient religious philosophies that emphasize duty and honour to cultural and familial obligations. In accordance with Dharmasastras – religious texts that strongly prescribe moral, ethical and legal conduct – marriage is a sacrament that is expected of everyone (Harlan & Courtright, 1995; Shukla & Kapadia, 2007). Marriage is believed to enable social harmony, endowing individuals with value and purpose within the family and society at large (Dhar, 2013). Therefore, in contrast to the Western, individualistic conceptualization of marriage as a private, intimate union between two individuals, in India marriage is considered a necessary and long-standing cultural institution. Many Indians believe that social order and balance is contingent upon its preservation (Sheela & Audinarayana, 2003).

Given its prominent role in Indian social structure, marriage can also hold strong implications for the bride and groom's extended family network. A 'bad' match between couples is likely to harm the entire family's reputation and potentially jeopardize the future marriage prospects of younger siblings (Dhar 2013; Mueller, 2008). Consequently, the vast majority of marriages in India today – over 90% – are arranged by parents to secure a good match for their children and to preserve family integrity and honour (Netting, 2010; Uberoi, 2006).

Historically, the patriarchal family system in India was strictly enforced and maintained through controlling a woman's sexuality and subordinate place in the family hierarchy (Sonawat, 2001). Parents, chiefly the father, would chose a suitable match for his prepubescent daughter, making sure her virginity remained intact, until she began menarche and was ready to lead her life as a married woman. Securing marital ties between families at a young age also helped to ensure that daughters married according to their parents' wishes; an adult woman may be more likely to exercise independence and contest her parents'

expectations (Netting, 2010). Age still plays a strong factor in females' marriage prospects today, but less so in the middle classes where it is accepted that girls pursuing education will be somewhat older.

The girl's family traditionally provided dowry to the husband's family and it was stipulated that they gave up any rights to her after the marriage (Medora, 2007; Ullrich, 1987). The dowry tended to consist of money, jewellery, household goods, or even livestock. Generally, the younger the female's age at marriage, the less dowry parents were expected to pay – a tenet still frequently in practice today, albeit in more rural areas (Caldwell, 2005; Caldwell & Caldwell, 1983); in the same respect, the larger the dowry, the more desirable the husband or the better the marriage (Gaulin & Boster, 1990). The newly-married bride was to assume a role of obedience and deference towards her husband and in-laws, while dutifully serving her new home without complaint (Sheela et al., 2003).

This patriarchal system and the traditional marital rituals largely disadvantaged women, but young men were also impacted by having very little to no say in their choice of marital partner (Kurian, 1991). Analogous to women's lack of input, elders in the family conventionally negotiated a match for male children as well. On the whole, children did not have a voice in the matter and were often obliged to agree to the union, unable to refute elders' selection – in some cases, never having seen their match until the wedding day (Mullatti, 1995). It was believed that children's views and feelings in this arena were premature and naive. They were meant to obey their parents, work hard and study, while leaving the important task of partner selection to the cultivated foresight and wisdom of the family. Self-chosen marriage – based on mutual attraction and love – also existed, but was heavily criticized as impure and judged for its immorality. If individuals chose to pursue a love marriage, the community believed the couple was lascivious, behaving insolently

towards one's parents, and challenging societal order and hierarchy (Harlan et al., 1995).[1]

Nowadays, however, it has become more normative for parents and children to work together in a partnership to search for a mate that will be a good fit for the child, while still offering a suitable match for the family – albeit, for the most part, primarily in urban areas (Henry & Parthasarathy 2010). Parents are more receptive to their children's needs and make an effort to take into account their preferences (Sireesha & Uma Devi, 1997). However, there may be a limit to parents' openness to their children's choices; children's preferences remain highly reflective of their family's expectations (Shukla et al., 2007). Indeed it may be challenging for outsiders to accurately speculate about the degree of input that children versus families contribute to the marital selection process, given that the two are so enmeshed.

Marital partner selection in India is based on a number of factors, including caste, dowry payment, horoscope, family background, age, and compatibility between the two families (Dhar, 2013). However, in contemporary India, children more than ever are expressing their desire for a partner that is compatible with them on an individual level. Therefore, among the traditional concerns of selecting someone that is socially suitable, they are also increasingly seeking a mate that can meet their personal needs for connection and intimacy. Shukla et al. (2007) recount the comments of one of their participants who expressed an interest in finding a girl with a good nature and disposition; if she possessed these characteristics, he explained, he was not too concerned about her family background.

Nevertheless, while Westernization may be inspiring young adults to take a stronger stance when choosing a personally-compatible partner, this has not necessarily reduced the importance still afforded to traditional criteria. For example, within the matrimonial

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[1] While in some ways non-Hindu Indians may view marriage differently than Hindus, almost all Indians practice marital customs that have underlying similarities to the emphasis on chastity, patriarchal hierarchy, and familial authority over children's choices in mates (Netting, 2010).

advertisements that are being increasingly used for finding a martial partner, ads are organized under caste headings, allowing those who are seeking a marital mate to, first and foremost, locate someone within their own caste level (Banerjee, Duflo, Ghatak, & Lafortune, 2013). Providing dowry is also reminiscent of traditional marital considerations when assessing suitable matches. While this practice is no longer considered legal in India today, it is still largely practiced out of social courtesy (Dhar, 2013; Sonawat, 2001). Thus, while individually-calibrated factors such as personality and charisma are now being incorporated into the partner selection process, cultural and familial input still continues to be very important.

Indian families largely manage the beginning stages of matchmaking during which they screen prospective partners according to their objective, customary standards. This enables the family to ensure traditional standards are upheld, establishing first that the two individuals are a suitable match (Ullrich, 1987). Subsequently, the prospective couple is frequently given a chance to meet and evaluate one another on a more individual level, gauging to see if they get along and are a good fit, whereas traditionally children were not afforded this opportunity. During this appraisal process children are able to determine if prospective partners will make a good wife or husband, commonly evaluating one another on the basis of how well each individual will fulfil their respective gender roles in the marriage (Bowman & Dollahite, 2013).

Gender role ideology. The patriarchal value system in India still preserves robust gender gaps between men and women's roles in society (Mahalingam & Balan 2008; Mullatti, 1995). A woman's desirability as a wife is largely based on her chastity, demureness and ability to be a dutiful wife – not only to her husband, but to her in-laws as well. While education and career opportunities among middle class women has risen in contemporary India and may be viewed as an asset, more emphasis is placed on a woman's homemaking

skills (e.g., cooking and cleaning) and caretaking abilities (Bhatnagar & Rajadhyaksha, 2001; Bowman et al., 2013). For men, their marketability as husbands revolves around their competence as a provider and protector of family welfare (Lee & Stanley, 2000). While India is modernizing, these idealized gender roles – perpetuated by the patriarchal society – are continuing to shape young men and women's identities, regulating behaviour and restricting a more egalitarian heterosexual exchange.

From the perspective of social constructionism the social context plays a strong role in the development and perpetuation of idealized masculine and feminine gender perceptions (Johannesen-Schmidt, et al., 2002; Wood, et al., 2013). For example, the culture of honour and male dominance accentuates preference for male children in India. Sons can serve as attributes to the family by contributing to the family income, while also acting as guardians who protect family reputation and interests. Conversely, cultural practices such as dowry offerings and placing the burden of family honour on women's chastity mean that female children are often regarded as potential liabilities (Mahalingam & Jackson, 2007). These attitudes towards raising a son or daughter have lead to an epidemic of violence against women, often resulting in death (Mahalingam, et al., 2008). Demographers have widely chronicled the pervasiveness of neglect, infanticide and selective abortion of girls in many different parts of India, creating a surplus of men (Mahalingam, 2007).

In addition to the prevalent hierarchical gender structure, the unequal sex ratio further magnifies preferences for gender-specific attributes in both sexes (Yim & Mahalingam, 2006). Inasmuch as men outnumber women, hyper-masculine qualities are more likely to be glorified because men need to be competitive and successful in order to successfully procure a partner. Meanwhile, hyper-feminine virtues – such as chastity, compliance and meekness – are emphasized because they enable men to more easily control women's sexual behaviour (Hudson & den Boer, 2004). Accordingly, boys and girls in male-surplus populations are

socialized to revere hyper-masculine and hyper-feminine traits as ideals they should strive towards. Insofar as individuals internalize these ideals, they are likely to construct their identity around these standards and evaluate their self-worth by how closely they are able to live up to them. For example, Mahalingam et al. (2007) reported that idealized beliefs about gender have the power to hamper or enhance the well-being of individuals, depending on context. They also identified masculinity as a dominant contributor to both men and women's negative mental health, perhaps because masculinity often acts as an agent to control people's behaviour through acts of dominance or shaming.

While traditional gender roles are embedded in Indian culture, globalization has also gradually affected shifts in the Indian family structure, often creating stress and friction as individuals' salient role identities are threatened (Henry et al., 2010). Western egalitarian attitudes about the importance of men and women's equality in the home and workplace are prompting Indian young adults to rethink their own future roles as husbands and wives rather than instinctively follow the path that has been carved out for them by previous generations (Henry et al., 2010). At the same time, the cultural emphasis on preserving proper gender roles may generate conflicting ideologies.

When modern and traditional values clash, spousal relationships may be disrupted as the couple tries to negotiate their new roles. The younger generation is increasingly finding the fortitude to vocalize their thoughts and feelings, but doing so may undermine the long-standing authority of elders and risk the harmony of extended family dynamics. Therefore, a prominent issue for young Indian men and women revolves around how to successfully balance traditional gender roles – which are strongly embedded within conventional Indian culture – with contemporary gender beliefs in a society that is increasingly gaining exposure to Western, egalitarian influences.

Extended family network. In India, most families live within extended family networks (Bowman et al., 2013). This type of living arrangement is generally comprised of individuals who are related through biology (parent-child offspring) or associated to one another through marriage. The family structure – almost always patrilineal – commonly includes three generations, consisting of children, the marital couple, and grandparents (Juthani, 2001). The primary aim of this living accommodation is to firmly establish the unity of the family system, safeguarding against separation or outside influences and ensuring the collective welfare of all family members (Singh, 2008).

Generally, age and sex dictate the importance of each person's ranking in the family hierarchy, with the principal positions being allocated to male members and those who are older in age. Therefore, significant decisions in the family are usually made by the males or by the oldest female member – the mother-in-law (Nath et al., 1999). In contrast to the nuclear family model in which the husband and wife dyad are considered the most significant relationship and comprise the nucleus of the family structure, in Indian families the primary relationship is not the marital couple, but multiple intergenerational relationships (Falicov & Brudner-White, 1983). The overarching family structure is therefore comprised of other, more important groupings, such as the affiliation between the wife and mother-in-law or the married son and his father.

Moreover, the marital bond between young couples is generally discouraged from becoming too intimate and strong (Derné, 1994a). If the couple become too dominant and secure in their connection – formulating an alliance between themselves – they can potentially pose a threat to the hierarchical system of authority within the family structure (Nath et al., 1999; Sandhya, 2009). The primary fear is that the couple may prefer to make choices without consulting and deferring to elders, thereby upsetting the order of the family system. As such, a new bride entering the family, while a cause for excitement and

celebration, also poses a threat to the family system because she may disrupt the son's relationship with his parents. If the son becomes too enthralled with his new wife, he can potentially displace his primary loyalty, duties, and obligations from his family of origin to his wife (Kakar, 1990). To prevent this from taking place, often the son's relationship with his mother remains firmly intact as she continues to occupy the position of chief female figure in his life. The couple is discouraged from seeking privacy with one another and excluding other family members. When the couple wants to do activities together without the rest of the family, or when they prefer to remain in their room alone (Sonpar, 2005), the others view it with suspicion and disapproval.

Marriage is an important landmark in life for Indians (Netting, 2010). It marks the entry into adulthood, where young adults are expected to bear their own children and formulate new family alliances. While simultaneously trying to juggle the demands of their new status as adults, Indian newlyweds are still expected to remain compliant to elders, maintaining their standing as children who subordinate to parental authority (Sonpar, 2005). Respecting those in positions of authority and abiding by their expectations are vital cultural principles in India.

Authority. The ideal authority figure in India is someone who exerts strong leadership qualities, is dominant, powerful, and assists individuals in making the right decisions, but who also has a softer, nurturing side. This combination of qualities is not necessarily exclusive to one person, but can be attributed to a dyad who embodies the male-female archetype (Sonpar, 2005). For example, when it comes to parents, these characteristics are frequently divided into two parts: fathers exemplify the dominant, strong role, while mothers imbue the characteristics of a nurturing, soft caretaker.

Kakar (1971) explored the role of authority in Indian social relations by content-analysing textbooks used to teach in Indian schools. He found that parents were depicted in

stories as holding the predominant authority roles. While the Western notion of paternal authority may involve a father who is more informal with his children and has an open egalitarian relationship with them, Kakar (1971) reported that not one of the cases he investigated portrayed Indian fathers in this light; rather, in all stories fathers were authoritarian, superior figures, while mothers were the nurturing and supporting characters.

With regard to how others responded to authority, Kakar (1971) explained that individuals predominantly accepted the superior's directives without question – in some cases even anticipating the superior's orders beforehand and fulfilling these expectations without being asked. As mentioned earlier, collectivistic cultures, such as India, are high in power distance (Weisz et al., 1984). Consequently, they are more accepting of a larger power differential between individuals and more readily comply with the authority of superiors. For instance, recent research done by Savani et al. (2012) showed that Indians who subordinated to authority figures demonstrated "active submission" without experiencing anger or resentment for doing so. In contrast, they expressed feeling emotionally rewarded, and perceived their actions as morally virtuous. In fact, when subordinates did not follow orders, there was a general arousal of guilt, again demonstrating that deferring to the authority of superiors, especially in the case of parents, helped Indians feel good about their actions.

Therefore, from a very early age, Indian youth are inundated with messages about the virtues of fulfilling family obligations, accepting their gender roles and carrying out their respective cultural responsibilities (Suppal, Roopnarine, Buesig, & Bennett 1996). In line with this outlook, marriage is regarded as a necessary practice and young adults are expected to marry as part of their duty to fulfil cultural and familial commitments (Netting, 2010). To ensure children exercise the right judgment in selecting a marital partner, parents are an integral part of this process in Eastern cultures (Nesteruk et al., 2012), where marriage is considered to be a lasting alliance, formed between the couple along with their respective

families. In contrast, Western, individualistic cultures place an emphasis on personal individuality and one's own choices in selecting a martial partner (Buunk et al., 2010).

Americans

The United States is often cited as highly individualistic, with a strong emphasis on the self in contrast to group orientation (Imada, 2012).[2] Individuals are perceived to give more credence to personal needs and to prioritize their wants or desires over those of others, even at a cost to group cohesiveness. One of the main facets of individualism is the perception of in-groups as heterogeneous, such that people within each in-group (e.g., family, community, friendships) are distinct from one another, possessing personal and separate needs based on their individuality (Triandis, McCusker & Hui, 1990). This understanding allows Americans the flexibility to base important decisions, such as partner selection, on their own preferences – free from parental influences or extended family involvement.

Mate selection and marriage. Over the last several decades, the structure of the ideal American family has been steadily changing. There has been a move towards deinstitutionalizing marriage as more and more of the American population has grown to acknowledge and accept different forms of marriage or its alternatives (Baker, Sanchez, Nock, &Wright, 2009; Finkel, Hui, Carswell, & Larson, 2014). Specifically, the process of deinstitutionalizing refers to the declining strength of social norms to dictate people's attitudes and actions within a social institution – in this case, the social institution of marriage (Cherlin, 2004). Consequently, while getting married may still be an important milestone for many Americans, less people in the United States may be inclined to follow the stringent,

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[2] It is important to note that the United States is an ethnically diverse place. Therefore, my discussion of American culture may not accurately reflect the experience of ethnic minorities (i.e., Asians, Latinos, African Americans), but rather is primarily applicable to European Americans.

conventional norms once governing this practice. For example, from 1970 to 2004, the percent of people who never married rose from 16% to 25% (Finer, 2007).

Alternative opportunities such as cohabitating, having children outside of marriage, and maintaining separate accommodations while still sustaining a close and committed relationship, are now common in American society. For instance, most young adults today (66%) have cohabitated with a partner at some point in their life; women especially have experienced a drastic increase in cohabitation unions (82%) in the past 23 years (Manning, 2013). The United States has been classified as a culture of looseness (Gelfand et al. 2011). Societal looseness-tightness refers to the strength and prevalence of social norms that govern a society and the degree to which digressing from these norms is tolerated (Gelfand, Nishii, & Raver, 2006). Unlike Indian culture, which is considered tight and imposes stronger social norms regarding marriage, American culture's looseness permits individuals to practice different types of relationship arrangements. Consequently, romantic relationships are portrayed in many different forms in the US and marriage as a social institution – governed by clear societal norms and pragmatic functions – is increasingly losing its appeal for some Americans.

During the 1950s – also known as the golden age for marriage and the idealized American family – the marital bond focused on the relationship between two people and the importance of the roles each spouse fulfilled in the home (Coontz, 2005). Women and men derived their sense of purpose and fulfilment by how well they were able to accomplish their respective objectives as homemaker or breadwinner. This conceptualization of marriage is known as a companionate marriage, in which partners strive towards cultivating feelings of romantic love, mutual friendship, and interdependence (Amato, 2012; McCarthy, 1997). Over time, however, this idea of marriage and the purpose it serves in peoples' lives has been shifting from one of gaining satisfaction from traditional role fulfilment and the

companionship of a partner towards the individualized marriage (Cherlin, 2005).

In more recent conceptualizations of marriage, Americans have begun assessing their level of marital contentment through their own personal sense of happiness and growth. Mainstream norms about men and women's roles in marriage and deriving satisfaction from enacting these roles has slowly given way to a need to authentically express one's self in the marital union. Therefore, compared to generations past, marriage is viewed less as a necessary institution to reach societal expectations and more as a means of fulfilling one's personal needs of contentment and gratification (Finkel et al., 2014). For instance, Cherlin, Frogner, Ribar and Moffitt (2009) reported that the marital union has slowly become a place to cultivate a deeper understanding of the self through establishing open communication and self-disclosure in a close, intimate relationship.

This shift from companionate to individualized marriage may be due to the culmination of a number of different factors. Age at first marriage for both men and women has steadily increased over the past few decades. Currently, the median age for women is 26.3 and 28.7 for men – a two-year increase for both groups in less than two decades (see Manning, Brown, Payne, 2014; U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). This increase in age at first marriage has been linked to greater independence, higher continuing education, and better employment opportunities (Martin, 2004). Nowadays, women with college-level education or greater are more likely to marry compared to women with less than a college degree (Goldstein & Kenney, 2001). Copen, Daniels, Vespa, and Mosher (2012) found that by the time women reached 35 years of age, 84% of those with college degrees had married, while only 72% of women without a high school degree had married.

Moreover, today's single, young adults are seemingly lead very different lives than their counterparts did several decades ago. With more education and better job prospects, young adults are more likely to be living separately from their parental homes (Buck & Scott,

1993). This permits them the freedom to spend their earnings on themselves rather than having to contribute to the general pot of their family's wages. Taboos surrounding sex and having to abstain from intercourse are also largely out-dated. With the advent of the birth control pill in the 1960s, women benefited from greater control over their sex lives and fertility options. Sex could now be enjoyed without the looming fear of pregnancy and social shame (Finkel, et al., 2014).

Most Americans nowadays have had several sexual encounters before getting married (Cherlin, 2005). For instance, by the time they have reached 19, over half of adolescents – 70% of females and 65% of males – have already engaged in sexual activity (Finer, 2007). Furthermore, whereas romantic partners of the past frequently lived apart until marriage, today it is commonplace for American couples to cohabitate or even raise children together before getting married (Manning et al., 2014).

Gender role ideology. These changes in American society have particularly impacted the roles that men and women tend to fulfil in the marital relationship, granting more flexibility and negotiation power to both individuals in the relationship. In the past, men have held the patriarchal position of breadwinner, permitting them more authority in the home and the ability to oppose partaking in household labour and childrearing responsibilities (Neff & Suizzo, 2006; Steil, 1997). However, as women have entered the workforce in greater numbers and egalitarian beliefs have emerged that recognize the value and contribution of both sexes in a relationship, the position of power has gradually shifted from men as head of the household to the appreciation of equality in a partnership (Bartley, Blanton, & Gilliard, 2005).

Young adults are increasingly able to decide for themselves how they want to contribute to the household tasks, without having to follow the traditional guidelines of the wife as homemaker and the husband as the breadwinner (Bartley et al., 2005). This freedom

to choose and set their own standards reduces pressure to follow traditional social norms for young Americans. Studies have shown that the more an individual supports traditional gender roles or the stronger their sexist beliefs, the more likely they are to also prefer sex-type characteristics in a partner (Eastwick et al., 2006; Zentner & Mitura, 2012). Eagly and Wood (1999) argued that, inasmuch as a society adopts egalitarian gender roles, sex differences in mate preferences decreases. Zentner et al. (2012) concurred with this notion; they reasoned that in nations where egalitarian beliefs are more readily endorsed, gender differences in people's attitudes and sex-typed mate preferences also begin to decrease. With increased egalitarianism, American young adults are, therefore, able to establish a relationship with their partner that uniquely addresses their personal needs, instead of conforming to social expectations and sacrificing themselves to traditional gender roles (Cherlin, 2009). Moreover, frank communication and openness has allowed today's American couples to reap greater rewards from their marital relationship, such as deeper intimacy and emotional fulfilment (Whitehead & Popenoe, 2001).

Nuclear family. Throughout much of American history, the nuclear family – generally comprised of parents and their children – has been a long-standing institution as the ideal family structure (Laslett, 1977). Geographic mobility and urbanization has allowed children to move out of their parental homes in an attempt to establish their independence (Conger, 1981). Other factors, including the desire for fewer children, less financial or economic dependence on other members of the extended family network, more job opportunities, and increased flexibility of family roles, have also helped to stabilize the nuclear family arrangements in contrast to the extended family structure (Goldscheider & DaVanzo, 1986).

Moreover, whereas several decades ago leaving home was primarily associated with economic mobility or reaching a cultural milestone – such as getting married – more and

more the desire to move out of the parental home is increasingly associated with a need for independence and ability to take care of oneself, free of parental involvement (Cordon, 1997; Seiffge-Krenke, 2013). For many emerging adults, moving out of the home has become an important step towards maturation in a culture where separating from parents and establishing an independent life is considered the eventual goal for many Americans. Therefore, it is not uncommon for conflicts between parents' expectations and children's demands for increasing freedom and individuation to precipitate the need to leave the home and create a life in accordance with personal standards (Seiffge-Krenke, 2013).

Authority and free mate choice. In the United States, where individualistic patterns of family behaviour is commonplace, assertion of personal preferences and affirmation of the self against parental authority is an important developmental task for many young adults (Rothbaum, Pott, Azuma, Miyake, & Weisz, 2000). Parents encourage children's autonomy and ability to defend their rights. Accordingly, American parents often anticipate children's expression of noncompliance, and sometimes even value it. Conflict between parents and children is often perceived as necessary and healthy, initiating the process of separation between the parent-child bond and promoting children's strength in their own convictions (Canary, Cupach, & Messman, 1995).

The parental home is not meant to be a permanent fixture in the child's life, but one in which love, support and nurturance is offered until the children are ready to embark on their own life path. This sentiment is evident in the disciplining of children in the United States compared to Japan, where family coherence and unanimity is valued above personal independence. When children misbehave, American parents commonly ground children inside the home, restricting their movement and freedom to the outside world; Japanese parents, on the other hand, do the opposite by sending noncompliant children outdoors and away from family as a form of punishment (Johnson, 1993). In the United States, the

development of children's skills to negotiate with their parents regarding their personal rights and preferences are viewed as critical relational skills, consistent with the cultural objective of ensuring children's individuation from parental authority and influence (Rothbaum et al., 2000). Ultimately, the children are expected to reach a stage of complete independence, free of parental involvement – a life that is uniquely theirs.

Consequently, a standard developmental trajectory in adolescence and early adulthood is to begin the progression towards individuation and to freely undertake the process of mate selection (Morgan et al., 2010). During this time period, relations between parents and child may become especially strained and conflictual as the adolescent tries to reconcile the growing need for independence with parental authority. Adolescents and parents work through this process, resolving and integrating the adolescent's new identity as a young adult (Furman et al., 1992). The parents' authority and influence gradually reduce as children take full responsibility for their own actions and decision-making processes.

In accordance with the cultural value placed on children's rights to independence and freedom to make their own choices, marital mate selection is also largely left to individual preferences in the United States (Buunk et al., 2010). People are expected to choose their own partner based on mutual attraction and chemistry (Finkel et al., 2014; Levine et al., 1995). Unlike characteristics that can be externally valued (e.g., financial resources, familial background, homemaking skills) these qualities are such that, for the most part, only the two people involved in the relationship can really determine if they exist in the relationship. Inasmuch as the social norm in the United States is free mate choice, with an emphasis on love and attraction, parents are often reluctant or even unable to influence their children's choices in a marital partner (Buunk et al., 2010). This stands in stark contrast to parental beliefs about marriage in Indian culture where parents expect to have a major influence on children's mating decisions.

Overview of Studies

Sex differences between men and women, their preferences for a mating partner, and strategies for procuring and maintaining a romantic relationship are embedded within social contexts, stemming from the interplay of biological drives and ecological conditions (Wood & Eagly 2002). The mating behaviour of humans is viewed as a co-evolutionary process between men's and women's reproductive adaptive strategies, shaped throughout evolutionary history (Buss et al., 1993). Likewise, a key component – the role of parents – has also played a significant role in the evolution of human mating behaviour (Apostolou, 2007, 2008).

Throughout history, parents have applied considerable pressure on children's mating decisions and relationship outcomes. Nowadays, societies vary greatly in the degree to which parents continue to influence children's mating choices, with certain cultures endorsing parental involvement more heavily than others (Buunk, et al., 2010). Taking a biosocial approach, the first two studies begin by exploring parent-child conflict in mate preferences and relationship outcomes with the aim of unpacking the collectivistic cultural importance afforded to parental involvement on children's mating decisions. Moreover, I also examine the influence of parental involvement on children's level of commitment and passion to a romantic partner – two indices of relationship quality that share evolutionary origins in romantic relationships, yet differ in their level of importance in Eastern, collectivistic cultures versus Western, individualistic cultures (Medora et al., 2002).

Beyond parental input, social and cultural influences also play a crucial role in mate preferences and perceptions about romantic relationships (Johannesen-Schmidt, et al., 2002). Research has shown that human behaviour is highly variable and flexible, heavily susceptible to cultural, ecological, and temporal inputs (Buss, et al., 2011). Therefore, as natural and sexual selection pressures sculpted psychological and behavioural sex differences, these

evolved dispositions have been adapted into social norms as standards of beliefs regarding men's and women's roles in society (Wood, et al., 2002).

Support of these attitudes perpetuates sex-typed behaviour between men and women, influencing individuals' choices in mates and romantic relationship ideals. Collectivistic and individualistic cultures, however, show large variability in their endorsement of these views (Sastry, 1999). Therefore, to the degree that individuals ascribe to traditional gender role beliefs and to cultural values that endorse these views (i.e., collectivism), their mate preferences and attitudes towards romantic relationships are expected to vary – the premise for Studies 3 and 4.

Study 1

The role of culture and gender on mate preferences and relationship dynamics has been extensively studied (Buunk et al., 2010; Hynie et al., 2006; Medora et al., 2002; Sheela et al., 2003). For example, we know that individuals from collectivistic cultures prefer marital partners who exhibit more traditional characteristics compared to those from individualistic cultures (Bowman et al., 2013; Sastry, 1999). We are also familiar with the courting habits of men and women with respect to short or long-term mating, as discussed in an earlier section of this dissertation (Buss et al., 1993; Buss, 1995). While these studies have been beneficial in promoting our understanding of mate preferences and romantic relationships, they only offer a narrow perspective on these complex areas of study.

Beyond cultural conditions, familial dynamics (e.g., interpersonal relationships between family members) are also an important variable in how children's mate preferences and the expectations they hold for romantic relationships are shaped (Hamid, Johansson, & Rubenson, 2011; Pan, 2014). For instance, Dubbs, Buunk, and Li (2012) explained that parental involvement and children's sensitivity to parental input is a large factor in people's mating patterns. For parents, being able to transmit their personal values onto their offspring

is often the benchmark of successful socialization within the family (Grusec & Davidov, 2007), especially in the case of mate selection.

Therefore, throughout history and even today, parents have gone to great lengths to influence their children's mating choices through monitoring, restricting, bribing or controlling children's behaviour (Dubbs et al., 2012). Extreme forms of parental influence on mate choice, such as arranged marriage or the practice of child brides, have received relative notoriety and been well documented in cross-cultural research (Erulkar, 2013; Hart 2007; Zaidi et al., 2002). However, other forms of parental involvement and transmission of parental values onto children through less direct means, such as family allocentrism, which is characterized as the closeness family members feel towards one another (Lay et al., 1998), have garnered less attention. Through this close relationship, children may feel less guarded towards parents, and therefore more willing to accept parental input on their mating choices.

Insofar as collectivistic cultures frequently emphasize both forms of parental input – direct parental influence and family allocentrism – Study 1 explored their possible distinct influences on children's mate preferences and relationship outcomes using a British sample; participants were divided into high or low collectivist groups depending on their heritage cultural background. I postulated that these two variables – parental influence and family allocentrism – may have opposing effects on the degree of commitment and passion individuals feel towards their partner in a romantic relationship. Whereas I expected parental influence would drive collectivists' commitment and passion down, I hypothesized family allocentrism would drive them up. Concurrently, I also expected to see that both parental influence and family allocentrism would narrow the gap between collectivists' marital preferences and their perceptions of their parents' preferences. These hypotheses are outlined in greater detail in the introduction to Study 1.

Study 2

Whereas in Study 1 I tested my predictions on a British sample, separating

participants into high or low collectivist groups, in Study 2 I aimed to extend the findings of

Study 1 by recruiting participants from two nations widely regarded as typifying high versus

low collectivism – India and the United States. In Study 1 I chose to examine passion and

commitment because they are two components of relationship quality that are universally

present – but in varying degrees – in relationships across cultures. Inasmuch as Indian and

American cultures vary greatly in their standards and expectations surrounding passion and

commitment, Study 2 offered a deeper understanding of these two appendices of relationship

quality.

Furthermore, I also continued to investigate the discrepancy between parent-child

preferences in a marital partner by using a more refined scale – the Ideal Partner Scale by

Fletcher, Simpson, Thomas, and Giles, 1999. Unlike the Preferred Mate Attributes Scale

(Buss et al., 1990) used in Study 1, which only distinguished mate preferences by traditional

characteristics, the Ideal Partner Scale (Fletcher, et al., 1999) is composed of three subscales.

These three subscales (warmth-trustworthiness, status-resources, and vitality-attractiveness)

helped to discern in greater detail the differences in children's preferences for a mate versus

their parents' preferences.

Study 3

In Study 3, I moved beyond familial influences on children's romantic partner

preferences and relationship outcomes and investigated the association of gender role

ideology and collectivism with romantic beliefs, mate preferences and anticipated difficulties

in future marital life. Additionally, beliefs about interpersonal relations between men and

women underlie sexist ideology (Glick et al., 2000); therefore, the degree to which

individuals support these views should also inform how they choose a romantic partner and

perceive romantic relationships. India and the United States have a large disparity in term of the gender roles they promote in society, with greater egalitarianism more prevalent in American culture (Williams & Best, 1994).

The more a society promotes similarity between masculine and feminine role expectations, the more flexibility couples have to negotiate their roles and distribute responsibility within their marital dynamic (Barnett & Hyde, 2001). While egalitarian attitudes promote equity between the sexes, they may also introduce potential conflict in heterosexual relationships (Flores, Tschann, Marin, & Pantoja, 2004). Couples with egalitarian beliefs must make additional effort to negotiate their roles and reach a fair division of labour that both parties are satisfied with; couples who hold traditional gender role beliefs, on the other hand, have their roles clearly laid out for them (Claffey & Mickelson, 2009). When marital partners fail to reach a mutually-satisfying agreement, they tend to report lower relationship quality (Claffey et al., 2009; Hallett & Gilbert, 1997).

The larger the difference a society endorses among gender roles, the more it encourages segregation between men and women's responsibilities and the division of paid work outside the home versus unpaid household duties (Bharat, 1995). The set expectations between male and female responsibilities may feel rigid and limiting for individuals who want to expand beyond their traditional roles, but instead feel constrained by social norms and what is expected of them based on their gender (Stanik & Bryant, 2012). Therefore, in Study 3, I also examined how gender role ideology and collectivism can influence, not only mate preferences and romantic beliefs, but also individuals' perceptions about their future marital life.

Study 4

In today's society, direct and aggressive forms of sexism that were commonly practiced in the past are largely recognized as unfair, yet other forms of sexism often go

undetected. Therefore, in Study 4, going one step beyond traditional gender roles, I also examined benevolent sexism as a possible mediator of cultural differences in mate preferences, romantic beliefs, and anticipated future difficulties in marital life. Moreover, while Studies 1-3 were correlational in nature, and, therefore, could not demonstrate causality among their variables, in Study 4, to better establish a casual direction, I used an experimental design.

Study 4 primed a sexist or egalitarian gender role ideology among American and Indian participants to see if these primes would influence participants endorsement of romantic beliefs, preferences for a marital partner, and anticipated difficulties in future marital life. Insofar as stereotypes can exist even without the conscious realization or endorsement of the person perpetuating these views, people's attitudes, feelings and actions can often, therefore, be influenced by the stereotypes that they hold at an implicit level (Bargh, Chen, & Burrows, 1996; Rudman & Phelan, 2010). Particularly in cases of complex issues – like the interplay of gender role relations – individuals can carry conflicting ideals simultaneously (Garst & Bodenhausen, 1997; Wilson & Hodges, 1992). Therefore, the aim of Study 4 was to understand how implicit beliefs about gender, when primed, influence the three dependent variables.

**Study 1: Associations of Collectivism with Relationship Commitment, Passion, and
Mate Preferences: Opposing Roles of Parental Influence and Family Allocentrism**

Parents have traditionally played a large part in their children's mate selection
(Madathil et al., 2008), exerting influence by approving or even choosing their children's
marital partner for them. Western cultures, with their emphasis on personal desires and
independence (Markus et al., 1991), have long since moved away from this practice;
individuals are expected to exercise personal control over their own partner selection and
relationship maintenance. Conversely, a higher degree of parental influence on mate choice
and relationship functioning is still evident among Eastern, collectivistic cultures, where
greater emphasis is placed on family cohesion and the needs of the group over those of the
individual (Buunk et al., 2010). As a consequence of parental influence, individuals
sometimes date in secrecy, exercising temporary liberties over their own partner choice until
they are expected to abide by parental expectations and choose a marital partner congruent
with their parents' standards (Netting, 2006). Accordingly, while individuals try to reconcile
their personal needs with those of familial and cultural expectations, the degree of passion
and commitment they feel towards their romantic partner may change.

While parental influence highlights the authority parents can have over their
children's choices, family allocentrism – defined as the strength of closeness and devotion
between family members (Lay et al., 1998) – can potentially influence the willingness for
children to take their parents' opinions into consideration when selecting a mate.
Consequently, an equally important variable that may influence relationship quality and mate
preferences – albeit less studied than parental influence – is the cultural value of family
allocentrism. The closeness generated by family allocentrism may also set a high standard for
desired levels of commitment and passion in children's subsequent romantic relationships.
Insofar as more collectivist cultures emphasize both family allocentrism and parental

influence on mate choice, individuals from these cultures may feel opposing pressures on their romantic relationships: family allocentrism may drive commitment and passion up, while parental influence on mate choice may drive them down.

I chose to examine cultural influences on passion and commitment because they are two indices of relationship quality that are universally experienced, but heavily regulated by social norms across cultures. Passion has a strong sexual component (Hatfield & Rapson, 2006), and from an evolutionary standpoint, all humans have the same capacity for sexual passion because of their biological propensity to reproduce (Neto et al., 2000). However, while the inner experience of passion may be universal, the *expression* of passion in relationships may be prone to cultural variability, with certain cultures viewing it as a disruption to family dynamics and culturally-sanctioned marital arrangements (Netting, 2010; Sandhya, 2009).

Relationship commitment, similar to passion, has some universal resonance. According to evolutionary psychologists, demonstrating commitment in a relationship is valuable for both men and women in long-term relationships – the primary group of interest in this dissertation. Commitment can strengthen the alliance between mating partners, help secure an on-going sexual relationship, increase access to resources, and help to ensure the long-term survival of offspring (see Ackernman, Griskevicius, & Li, 2011). Likewise, commitment can also increase attachment between two people by being a demonstrative show of love and affection for one another (Ackernman et al., 2011). The importance of commitment across cultures is evident in studies showing that it is predictive of relationship growth and longevity across cultures (Bullis, Clark, & Sline, 1993; Campbell & Ellis, 2005). Still, cultures vary in the extent to which they value relationship commitment (Kin Ng & Cheng, 2010).

Furthermore, I was interested in investigating the difference between children's mate preferences and what they perceive to be their parents' mate preferences. According to the tenets of evolutionary theory, parent-offspring conflict suggests that parents and children have differing mating interests to advance because, while genetically similar, they are not identical (Apostolou, 2007; Buunk et al., 2008). Consequently, while it is true that mate preferences do often overlap between the two groups, this is not always the case. Apostolou (2008) argued that parent-offspring conflict arises when mating decisions involve trade-offs: an investing partner, preferred by parents, versus good genes, favoured by children.

Accordingly, across cultures and historical eras, parents have made overt attempts to influence children's mating behaviour, such as arranging their marriages, or more subtle attempts at influence, such as bribing, regulating children's social environment, or facilitating children's interactions with others (Buunk et al., 2008). While parental influence over children's mating choices has considerably decreased over the past few centuries, it nevertheless still exists in many cultures. In the following studies, I was interested in examining how different forms of parental involvement (i.e., parental influence on mate choice and family allocentrism) could potentially sway children to prefer partners who are aligned with parental expectations. Overall, the current studies examined whether parental influence and family allocentrism mediated the association of collectivism with commitment, passion, and parent-child discrepancies in preferences for marital partners. I begin with an overview of romantic relationships across cultures.

Romantic Relationships in Individualistic and Collectivistic Cultures

As discussed earlier, Western, individualistic cultures value self-sufficiency and the development of personal identity (Madathil et al., 2008) and the foundation for relationships is built on the idealization of romantic love – a self-seeking, intrinsic desire (Amato, 2012; Levine et al., 1995). Passion is frequently touted as the essence of love – the basis upon

which love is cultivated (Hatfield et al., 2002). In Eastern, collectivistic cultures, instead of placing emphasis on the romantic connection between individuals, parents encourage children to assign more weight to pragmatic qualities in a prospective partner such as economic resources, social and religious status and, often most importantly, positive interactions between the two families (Myers, Madathil, & Tingle, 2005).

While cultural values fundamentally construe one's worldview, in order to ensure that these ideals are sustained over time, parents need to play an active role in promoting and transmitting these beliefs from one generation to another. Within immigrant families, family allocentrism, rather than interdependence, tends to be a more effective means of transmitting preferences for traditional mates between parents and children (Lalonde, Hynie, Pannu, & Tatla, 2004; Hynie et al., 2006). To further this area of research, the present study examined the collectivist values of parental influence on mate choice and family allocentrism as predictors of parent-child discrepancies in marital preferences and two indices of relationship quality – commitment and passion.

Predictors of Commitment

With globalization, there is a growing trend in more collectivistic cultures for young adults to exercise greater personal choice in their mate selection and engage in dating (Buunk et al., 2010) in spite of parents' disapproval (Dugsin, 2001). As a way to combat parental disapproval, young adults often conceal their romantic life from family and date without parental knowledge and consent. In their study of dating and sexual activity among Asian Americans, Lau, Markham, Flores, and Chacko (2009) found that 70% of Asian-Americans dated in secrecy from their parents. In keeping with these findings, Manohar (2008) found that Indian-American adolescents reported having to go to great lengths to hide their dating life from their family members. Insofar as premarital connections are treated very carefully in collectivistic cultures, partners commonly date in secret until they are ready to get married,

and can then reveal their intentions to their families (Luo, 2008; Netting, 2006). However, the decision between the partners does not ensure the prospect of marriage, as both families also have to agree. Therefore, the commitment partners feel in these relationships can often waver, depending on the perceived acceptance of other family members. Macdonald, Marshall, Gere, Shimotomai and Lies (2012) found that in collectivistic cultures, confidence in the relationship was derived at least in part from the approval of family members towards the couple's relationship.

Accordingly, while a number of researchers have noted the importance of commitment to a romantic relationship for many collectivist couples (Bowman et al., 2013; Luo, 2008; Kin Ng et al., 2010), this may primarily be the case for married couples and not necessarily apply to those in dating or premarital relationships. Instead, in premarital relationships, parental influence may drive down commitment because the union is not yet recognized as legitimate and integrated into family ties. Consequently, I expected individuals from collectivistic backgrounds compared to those not from collectivistic backgrounds to experience higher parental influence on their mate choice, and in turn, report feeling less committed to their romantic partner.

On the other hand, whilst collectivists' tendency to accept high parental influence on mate choice may undermine commitment in premarital relationships, their family allocentrism may also bolster feelings of commitment to close others. In an attempt to preserve the heritage cultural value system and maintain solidarity within the familial unit, parents may strive to cultivate family allocentrism (Uskul, Lalonde, Konanur, 2010; Sato, 2007). Experiencing stronger family relationships – i.e., greater family allocentrism – allows for more efficient communication and transfer of heritage culture values from one generation of immigrants to successive generations (Lay et al., 1998). Lay and colleagues (1998) discovered that within their sample of Western participants who possessed some degree of

ethnic identity, those who were higher in family allocentrism also showed greater adherence to their heritage cultural customs and group membership. By extension, Marshall (2010) found that Chinese Canadians who identified more strongly with their collectivistic heritage culture also reported feeling more committed to their romantic relationships. A stronger connection to the family unit may lead to a stronger identification with heritage cultural values of commitment to in-group members. Given these findings, I expected collectivists to report stronger family allocentrism, resulting in stronger commitment towards their romantic partner compared to non-collectivists.

Moreover, I did not expect to find any gender differences between participants. Evolutionary psychology holds that while some gender differences exist between men and women in their mating approach, given the varying adaptive problems unique to their sex faced by each group, men and women also faced similar challenges in their evolutionary history (Gangestad et al., 2000); commitment in long-term relationships was one of these similarities. Buss et al. (1993) explained that, in this situation, both groups were confronted with the challenge of distinguishing between mates who would be willing to commit to them over the long-term, increasing the chance of offspring survival, from those who would not.

Predictors of Passion

Western notions of romance and passion are increasingly influencing collectivists' perceptions of romantic relationships (Henry et al., 2010). For instance, the salience of Western romantic novels has increased in India, with many Indian women enthralled with these stories of passion and desire (Puri, 1997; Roy, 1975). Likewise, Bollywood movies routinely depict passionate interludes between lovers as they struggle against confining social norms and family obligations (Bowman et al., 2013). Moreover, Indian epics and mythology often venerate romantic love and passion between couples, while some Indian philosophers

praise romantic love as the highest possible ideal individuals can reach (Gala & Kapadia, 2014; Punja, 1992).

Likewise, many Chinese artworks and historical stories are permeated with tales of longing, passionate love and sexual desire (Ruan, 1991). Accordingly, many researchers have argued that passionate love may be a cross-cultural phenomenon and not just confined to the West (Bullough, 1990; Fisher, Aron, & Brown, 2006; Hatfield, et al., 2002). In their study of adolescent romantic experiences, Regan, Durvasula, Howell, & Rea (2004) found that 85% of the adolescents in their sample, regardless of cultural background, had experienced love.

While this may be the case, in many Eastern, collectivistic cultures, passionate love is seldom encouraged outside of movies and stories (Derne ́, 1995). The expression of passionate love is often viewed not only as lewd and inappropriate, but many elders believe it poses a threat to family hierarchy by drawing children's focus away from the family and onto the romantic partner (Roland, 1988; Sandhya, 2009). Under the thrall of passion, parents fear, children may gain the fortitude to act against their normative familial and cultural obligations, potentially jeopardizing the honour of the entire family (Netting, 2010). Therefore, children may experience excessive pressure from parents to act pragmatically and suppress any feelings of passion for a romantic partner (Espiritu, 2001; Hamid et al., 2011). This especially applies to the dating or courting period when parents may feel their children's actions can pose a greater liability to the family; given that the romantic union has not yet been legitimatized through marriage, the risk of children disobeying parents or tarnishing the family's reputation is particularly high (Nesteruk et al., 2012). Therefore, to the extent that collectivists relative to non-collectivists accept greater parental influence on their mate selection, I predicted that they would report decreased feelings of passion within their relationship.

Complying with parental wishes about who to marry and how to behave in a romantic

relationship can also mean that collectivist youth may find themselves in relationships with romantic partners that they feel less passionate towards (Sonpar, 2005). While their partners may meet cultural and parental standards, pleasing family, children themselves may not feel much desire towards their mate as a result of their limited input in partner selection, dampening passion. Netting (1996) explained that, in some instances, children who have found themselves in this situation have, nevertheless, managed to cultivate passion and attraction for one another as the relationship has developed. An interesting topic to explore in future studies is whether, in spite of the initial inhibition of their feelings of passion towards a partner due to parental involvement, children still develop passion towards their romantic partner over time.

Alternatively, it is also possible that in some cases collectivist young adults may themselves try to actively restrain feelings of passion towards their romantic partner. Western popular culture, such as the story of Romeo and Juliet, has often highlighted a reactive approach by children against their parents' opposition to their choice of romantic partner. Rather than dampen their feelings towards their partner, parental resistance may increase feelings of passion. In their study of parental influence on romantic love, Driscoll, Davis and Lipetz (1972) found cross-cultural evidence for a positive correlation between parental interference and romantic love: the more individuals perceived parental intrusion within their relationship, the stronger their personal feelings of romantic love, longing, and passion. However, a number of other studies have also found the opposite to be the case (Sinclair, Hood, & Wright, 2014; Lehmiller & Agnew, 2007). Sprecher et al. (1992) explained that couples who perceive acceptance from their family and social networks regarding their relationship, compared to couples who do not, experience greater mental and emotional balance, leading to increased attraction to the partner.

In Eastern, collectivistic cultures, especially, maintaining harmony with kin

relationships is particularly important (Nath et al., 1999). Therefore, youth may try to

decrease the expression of passion towards their romantic partner, not just because these

feelings are often viewed as inappropriate in their cultural milieu, but also because they do

not want to upset family ties. For instance, 60% of the Hindu men Derne´ (1994a)

interviewed believed that partners should not spend too much time together because, in

cultivating a closer, more romantic bond, they will inevitably neglect their parents and

cultural duties. Therefore, parental influence and family allocentrism may work in tandem

together to dampen down passion; parents try to influence their children's romantic

relationship to ensure focus still remains on the family, while children, in feeling close to

family, do the same to ensure on-going family harmony.

Alternatively, to the extent that family allocentrism creates close bonds between

family members, this connection may be similarly desired within a romantic relationship. As

a result, the feelings one develops towards a romantic partner can often be inextricably tied to

the connection one feels towards family members. For instance, Indian participants reported

that the greatest joy one can experience in a relationship is through nurturing stronger ties to

family and religion (Bowman et al., 2013). Therefore, family allocentrism can elevate the

value of a romantic relationship, idealizing it as a means of increasing overall familial

happiness and closeness, thereby heightening feelings of passion and romance towards a

partner.

Moreover, it could also be that in families where there exists high family allocentrism,

parents are more willing to allow children to choose a partner they are passionate about.

With an increased sense of closeness and intimacy between family members, parents may be

more attuned to children's needs and show a higher willingness to allow their children to

exercise greater control over their mate choice (Shukla et al., 2007). In turn, children who are

able to have increased say in who they select as a marital partner may feel stronger feelings

of passion towards the partner of their choosing.

Additionally, experiencing close family ties may create the desire to have a similar connection with a romantic partner. Derne´ (1994a) reported that in Hindu Indian families, the relationship between a younger son and his older sister-in-law can serve as an important channel through which a young man learns about romantic relationships. This relationship, which can frequently be sexually provocative and playful, but never acted upon by either party, can often cultivate the desire for a similar relationship with a marital partner. Thus, given these competing predictions for the association of family allocentrism with passion, I investigated this association on an exploratory basis only. Similar to commitment, I did not predict any gender differences. As discussed earlier, passion is a universal emotion, which facilitates pair-bonding (Fisher, 2004, 2006). As such, it would be prudent to expect that both men and women would feel this emotion. Moreover, given the exploratory nature of this hypothesis, I did not predict the degree to which each sex may experience passion.

Predictors of Parent-Child Discrepancies in Mate Choice

Romantic relationships exist cross-culturally, with parents and children often viewing marriage as the touchstone of a successful romantic union (Madathil et al., 2008; Myers et al., 2005). Through this union, new bonds are established and families expand to incorporate in-laws and children. However, while both parents and children are affected by this match, the motivation behind forming a marital relationship may differ for each group (Apostolou, 2008; Dubbs & Buunk, 2010). In collectivistic cultures, parents often utilize their children's marital union as an important means for forging new alliances, strengthening social standing, and ensuring the continuity of family lineage (Dubbs et al., 2010).

For children, however, the partnership cultivated through marriage can help satisfy personal needs for emotional connection and fulfilment. As postulated by parent-offspring conflict theory over mate choice (Buunk et al., 2008), the differing attitudes parents and

children hold regarding the purpose of marriage may lead them to value different ideals in a marital partner. However, in cases where parents exert strong influence over their children's mate choice, there may be an inclination for children to succumb to their parents' wishes, especially in collectivistic societies where deferring to elders is both expected and commonplace. Several studies have found that in the West marital happiness is motivated by factors that benefit the self, while factors that benefit social relationships are frequently associated with marital happiness in the East (Kousha & Mohseni, 1997; Sandhya, 2009). Consequently, insofar as collectivists relative to non-collectivists report higher parental influence on their mate choice, I expected them to report a smaller discrepancy between their choices for a marital partner versus their parents' perceived choices.

Family allocentrism, on the other hand, strengthens bonds between family members, and may actually lead children to develop similar mate preferences to their parents' preferences. Lalonde and colleagues (2004) found that second-generation South Asian Canadians who identified more strongly with their heritage culture reported higher family allocentrism and, in turn, more traditional mate characteristics. Thus, stronger ties with family members may have transmitted the heritage culture value placed on traditional characteristics such as conventional gender role behaviour in a potential spouse. In an environment where parents and children feel warmth and intimacy towards one another, they are also more likely to share related values and beliefs, thereby exhibiting similar preferences for a marital partner. A significant relational dynamic between emotional closeness of family members and willingness to accept parental messages is established – the closer children feel they are to their parents, the greater acceptance they have of parental values (Barni, Ranieri, Scabini, & Rosnati, 2011). Therefore, based on these findings, I hypothesized that individuals from collectivistic backgrounds, relative to those not from a collectivistic background, would

experience higher family allocentrism and, in turn, report a smaller gap between their choices for a marital partner versus their parents' perceived choices.

I expected this to be the case for both men and women. While it is true that men often have more freedom in mate selection in collectivistic cultures, this is generally the case for more short-term, temporal relations (Nesteruk et al., 2012). In long-term marital relationships, collectivist parents are commonly just as involved with sons as they are with daughters in mate selection. The process by which potential partners are evaluated and deemed appropriate for marital purposes does not differ for each sex. Sons, similar to daughters, heed to parental knowledge and guidance when appraising an individual for marital intentions (Netting, 2006).

The Present Study

Many studies have explored cultural influences on relationship quality and mate preferences (Buss et al., 1990; Goodwin et al., 2012; Lalonde et al., 2004; Marshall, 2008), but have primarily focused on the value assigned to specific mate attributes within an individualistic-collectivistic cultural milieu. Moreover, these studies have taken a Western standpoint by examining relationship quality from the perspective of the couple, not giving enough weight to the role of family involvement in this dynamic (Buunk et al., 2010; Netting, 2006). To the extent that family influences collectivists' marital partner preferences and relationship outcomes, the present study fills a gap in the existing research by testing two facets of collectivism – parental influence and family allocentrism – as countervailing forces on romantic relationship outcomes. I propose that while parental influence and family allocentrism are both tenets of collectivism and positively associated with one another, they are separate constructs that can exert differential influences on mate preferences and relationship quality. While I expected that parental influence would drive collectivists' commitment and passion down, I also expected family allocentrism to drive them up

(Hypotheses 1 and 2, respectively). Meanwhile, I predicted that parental influence and family allocentrism would narrow the gap between collectivists' marital preferences and their perceptions of their parents' preferences (Hypothesis 3). In this first study, I tested my hypotheses within a British sample, and classified participants as high or low in collectivism based on their heritage culture.

Hypothesis 1: Compared to individuals from non-collectivistic backgrounds, collectivists' higher parental influence on their mate choice would drive their level of commitment to their romantic partner down, while their greater family allocentrism would drive it up.

Hypothesis 2: Compared to individuals from non-collectivistic backgrounds, collectivists' higher parental influence on their mate choice would drive down their feelings of passion toward their romantic partner. No specific predictions were made for family allocentrism.

Hypothesis 3: Compared to individuals from non-collectivistic backgrounds, collectivists' higher parental influence on their mate choice and greater family allocentrism would result in a smaller discrepancy between their choices for a marital partner versus their parents' perceived choices.

Methods

Ethics Statement

The Brunel University Psychology Research Ethics Committee provided ethical approval for Study 1. Participants gave written informed consent at the beginning of the survey. All responses were confidential and anonymous.

Participants

The sample consisted of 154 participants who currently resided in the United Kingdom (121 women and 33 men; $M_{age:}$ 20.77, *SD*: 4.75). They were recruited through an advertisement placed on the authors' university intranet site; if they completed the survey, they were given the option of entering a raffle to win a £20 gift certificate at a local shopping mall. Participants were further enlisted through the university's undergraduate psychology participant pool; they were awarded one course credit upon completion of the survey. Prior to

Study 1 data collection, power analyses were conducted using the software package called G*

Power (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007). The analysis was two-tailed, consisted of

an effect size of .5, alpha level of $p < .05$, power of .8, and allocation ratio of 1. Results

indicated that a sample size of 128 participants would be appropriate for the study. Of the

total sample of 154 participants, 54% indicated they were currently single and the remaining

46% stated they were in a relationship (dating, cohabitating, engaged, or married). Because

only participants involved in a relationship completed measures of commitment and passion,

we have reported the demographic information separately for single and involved

participants.

Of the single participants, 62 were female and 21 were male ($M_{age:}$ 20.23, SD: 3.89).

70% indicated that they have regularly dated, while 30% stated that they do not regularly

date. 76% stated they were born in the UK, and 24% stated they were born elsewhere.

Participants who were not born in the UK had lived there an average of 17.81 ($SD = 40.97$)

months. 34% reported their ethnicity as White/Caucasian, 18% Afro-Caribbean, 30% Asian,

2% South East Asian, 11% mixed race, and the remaining 5% identified themselves as

"other." These participants also reported their heritage culture as follows: 33% British, 5%

European, 27% South Asian, 2% Middle Eastern, 18% African, 8% Caribbean, 4% East

Asian, 2% Southeast Asian, and 1% North American.

Of the participants who were currently involved in a relationship, 59 were female and

12 were male ($M_{age:}$ 21.41, SD: 5.56). 4 of these participants were married, while the rest

were in dating relationships, cohabitating or engaged. 89% indicated they have regularly

dated in the past, while 11% indicated they did not regularly date. 78% stated that their

parents knew about their current relationship, and the rest stated that their parents thought of

the relationship as a friendship or did not know of their relationship. 69% of these

participants stated they were born in the UK and 31% stated they were born elsewhere. The

mean average of months participants who were not born in the UK had lived there was 69.69 ($SD = 66.87$). Ethnicity of participants who were in a relationship consisted of 63% White/Caucasian, 9% African/Caribbean, 7% Asian, 3% Southeast Asian, 4% mixed race, and the remaining 14% identified themselves as "other." These participants also reported their heritage culture as 47% British, 18% European, 11% South Asian, 6% Middle Eastern, 7% African, 4% Caribbean, 1% East Asian, 3% Latin American, 2% South East Asian, 1% North American. Participants involved in a relationship were further asked to report their partner's ethnicity, which consisted of the following: 68% White/Caucasian, 7% Asian, 4% African/Caribbean, 3% Southeast Asian, 4% mixed race, and the remaining 14% were identified as "other".

Furthermore, all participants were classified as either collectivistic or individualistic for the purpose of the study. Participants were asked to specify their heritage culture and what they themselves identified as. This information along with what they indicated their ethnic background to be were used in categorizing individuals as high or low collectivistic. This procedure was followed for all participants including those who indicated mixed race or other. All subsequent studies replicated this process of classification.

Procedure and Materials

An online survey was generated through a survey-development website (www.surveymonkey.com). Participants were initially presented with demographic questions, and at the end of this section, they were asked to indicate their current relationship status. Individuals who indicated that they were currently involved in a romantic relationship were directed to complete a section on the level of commitment and passion they felt in their relationship before moving on to the other measures.

Collectivism. Participants were asked to indicate their heritage culture. It is quite typical for cross-cultural research to use an individual's heritage country as a proxy for

collectivism (e.g., Frias, Shaver, & Diaz-Loving, 2013; Hamedani, Markus, & Fu, 2013; Tao, Zhou, Lau, & Liu, 2013). Therefore, in line with Hofstede's (1980) ratings of nation-level collectivism, we created an effect-coded variable that distinguished between participants from more collectivistic heritage cultures (1 = South Asian, African, Middle Eastern, Latin American, East Asian, Southeast Asian) and less collectivistic ones (-1 = British, European, Caribbean, North American). To test whether those who were categorized as high or low in collectivism did, in fact, differ in their degree of collectivism I also administered the collectivism subscale of the Horizontal/Vertical Individualism/Collectivism Scale (Sivadas, Bruvold, & Nelson, 2008). The collectivism scale consists of 8 items; sample items include, "My happiness depends very much on the happiness of those around me" and "I usually sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of my group". Responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 *(Strongly disagree)* to 5 *(Strongly agree).* I collapsed across the horizontal-vertical dimension to increase the reliability of the scale. Cronbach's alpha was .72.

Parental Influence on Mate Choice. The 10-item Parental Influence on Mate Choice Scale by Buunk et al. (2010) assesses acceptance of parental involvement in children's mate choice. This scale was created with the intention that it could be utilized within diverse cultural groups. Example items include "It is the duty of parents to find the right partner for their children, and it is the duty of children to accept the choice of their parents" and "If their parents have serious objections against someone their children prefer as a partner, children should break off the relationship with that person." Responses were measured with a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 5 = *Strongly agree*). Cronbach's alpha was .77.

Family Allocentrism. The Family Allocentrism Scale (Lay et al., 1998) is comprised of 21 items. This scale measures the extent of closeness a person feels towards his or her family. Example items are "The opinions of my family are important to me" and "My

happiness depends on the happiness of my family". Participants used a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly disagree,* 5 = *Strongly agree*) to indicate their level of agreement with each item. Cronbach's alpha was .80.

Preferred Mate Attributes. Eighteen items were taken from the Preferred Mate Attributes Scale (Buss et al., 1990) to measure the desirability of a range of mate characteristics (e.g., sociability, similar education, desire for home and children). Participants rated the importance of each attribute for a potential marital partner. Next, they were asked to reflect on their parents' point of view and rate each item according to how important it would be to their parents for the participant's potential marital partner to possess the characteristic. Ratings were made on a 4-point Likert scale *(0 = Irrelevant/Unimportant, 3 = Indispensible/Very Important).* Cronbach's alpha was .82 for participants' own marital partner preferences and .84 for participants' perception of parental mate preferences. Principal components analysis indicated that a single dominant factor accounted for 28% and 29% of the total variance in one's own and perceptions of parents' mate preferences, respectively; additional factors accounting for small portions of the total variance were not interpretable. To assess the discrepancy between the participant's preferences for a marital partner and perceived parental preferences for the participant's marital partner, I calculated the absolute difference between total scores for marital preferences and parental preferences. This new score was utilized in the analyses to indicate parent-child discrepancy in mate preferences, with larger scores representing larger discrepancies.

Commitment. Seven items from the Investment Model Scale (Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew, 1998) were used to measure commitment for participants currently involved in a romantic relationship. Examples of the items include "I am committed to maintaining my relationship with my partner" and "I feel very attached to our relationship – very strongly

linked to my partner". The items were measured with a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly disagree,* 5 = *Strongly agree*) and were highly reliable (α = .94).

   Passion. Fifteen items taken from the Triangular Love Scale (Sternberg, 1997) were used to assess passion (e.g., "Just seeing my partner is exciting for me" and "I adore my partner") for those individuals who indicated they were currently involved in a romantic relationship. A 7-point Likert scale was used ranging from 1(*Not at all*) to 7 (*Extremely*). Internal consistency was high (α = .95).

   Demographic questions. Participants stated their sex, age, where they were born, and where they currently resided.

<h2 style="text-align:center">Results</h2>

   Means, standard deviations, and Pearson's correlations are reported in Table 2.1. I created an effect-coded variable to differentiate between participants born in the UK (1) from those who were not (-1). Additionally, to ascertain whether collectivism, family allocentrism, and parental influence contributed to participants' mate preferences over and above whether the participant had any previous experience in choosing a mate, I constructed an effect-coded variable to distinguish participants who had regularly dated (1) from those who had not (-1). Sex (1= male, -1 = female) and age were also included as predictors in the model. I also included parents' awareness of their children's relationship as a control variable in the analysis. However, the results of the analyses were not influenced by this variable, and therefore it was removed from any subsequent mediational models. Finally, I conducted a *t*-test to see whether participants categorized as high in collectivism according to Hofstede's (1980) ratings of nation-level collectivism were indeed more collectivistic than those participants categorized as low in collectivism. The results of the analysis showed that participants who were categorized as high in collectivism (*M* = 29.02, *SE* = 4.94) did in fact score higher in collectivism compared to those who were categorized as low in collectivism

($M = 27.21$, $SE = 3.99$), $t(151) = -2.41$ $p < .02$.[3] For participants who were designated as low in collectivism, 81% were born in the UK, while 19% were not; 21 were also in a relationship (2 married), while 44 were not. From those high in collectivism, 38% were born in the UK, while 62% were born elsewhere; 50 were in a relationship (2 married), while 49 were single. I decided to use the categorical measure of collectivism in for greater clarity of interpretation in the analyses.

For the mediational models, I assessed the association of collectivism with commitment via parental influence and family allocentrism with Preacher and Hayes's (2008) SPSS script for testing multiple mediation effects. Their bootstrap method tests a purported causal sequence in which an independent variable exerts an indirect effect on a dependent variable through a mediating variable (MacKinnon, Fairchild, & Fritz, 2007). When mediation occurs, the *total effect* – which does not control for the mediating variable – should be larger than the *direct effect*, which controls for the mediating variable. In the case of suppression, the inclusion of a mediator results in a direct effect that is *larger* than the total effect (MacKinnon, Krull, Lockwood, 2000), thereby strengthening the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. In the following models, then, collectivism was the independent variable, parental influence and family allocentrism were the mediators, and commitment, passion, and parent-child discrepancy were the respective dependent variables. As seen in Figures 2.1 and 2.2, the regression coefficients for collectivism predicting parental influence and family allocentrism varied slightly depending on the dependent variable. This was due to missing data.

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[3] Individualism was also included in the analyses for all four studies, but because there were no significant findings, it was removed from subsequent analyses.

Table 2.1

Pearson's correlations and descriptive statistics

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Mean	SD
1. Sex	1.00										-	-
2. Age	.21**	1.00									20.77	4.75
3. Regularly Date	.00	.10	1.00								-	-
4. UK Born	.00	-.16†	.00	1.00							-	-
5. Collectivism	.03	-.09	-.26**	-.22**	1.00						-	-
6. Family Allocentrism	-.14	-.15†	-.12	-.15†	.15†	1.00					68.56	10.66
7. Parental Influence	.01	-.11	-.32**	-.22**	.50**	.40**	1.00				18.48	5.96
8. Commitment	.05	.22†	-.17	-.10	.22†	.12	-.10	1.00			28.54	7.39
9. Passion	.15	.15	-.03	-.10	.14	.05	-.19	.82**	1.00		79.03	20.02
10. Parent-Child Discrepancy in Mate Preferences	.11	.11	.21*	-.04	.08	.25**	-.10	.21	.22†	1.00	4.73	4.48

Total participants $N = 154$; Single participants $N = 83$; Participants in a relationship $N = 71$ †$p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

The first model tested Hypothesis 1 – that collectivism would exert a negative indirect effect on commitment through parental influence, but a positive indirect effect through family allocentrism. As seen in Figure 2.1, the direct effect of collectivism on commitment (i.e., controlling for parental influence and family allocentrism) was larger and significant ($b =$ 3.51, $p < .01$) compared to the total effect ($b = 1.89$, $p > .05$). When the independent variable is dichotomous, Preacher et al. (2008) recommend reporting unstandardized regression coefficients. Examination of the 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals (CI) from 1,000 bootstrap samples revealed that the indirect effect of collectivism on commitment through parental influence was negative and significant [$b =$ -1.90 (CI: -3.97, -.34)], partially confirming the hypothesis. The indirect effect through family allocentrism was not significant [$b = .24$ (CI: -.44, 1.19)].
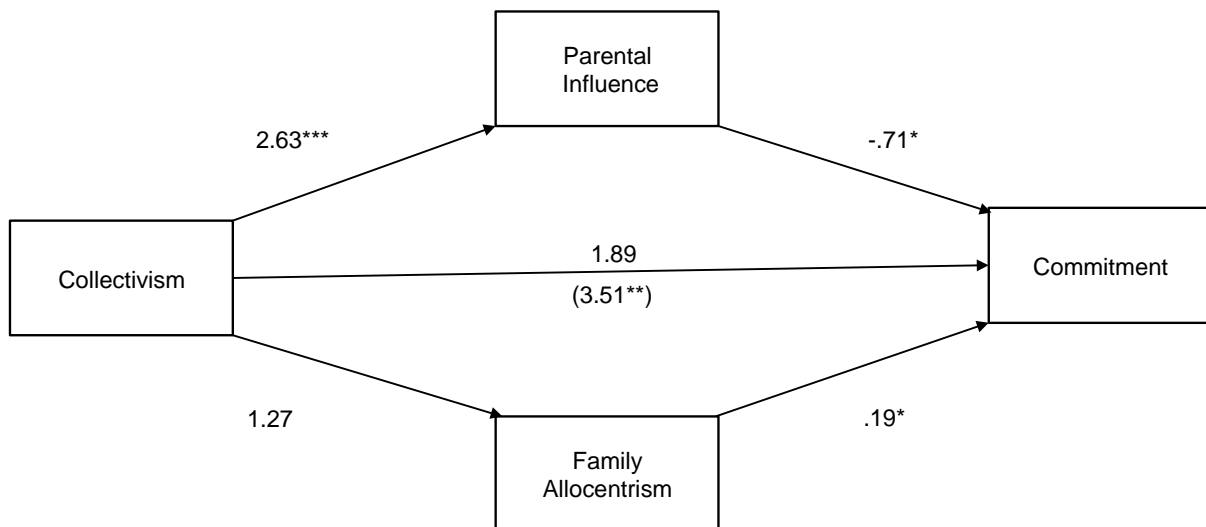
Figure 2.1 *Unstandardized regression coefficients for indirect effects analyses (N=65). Indirect effect of collectivism on relationship commitment through parental influence [$b =$ - 1.90 (CI: -3.97, -.34)] and family allocentrism [$b = .24$ (CI: -.44, 1.19)]. The value in parentheses represents the direct effect, and the value directly above is the total effect. * p < .05, ** p < .01, ***p < .001*

The second hypothesis tested whether collectivism would exert a negative indirect effect on passion through parental influence, but a positive indirect effect through family allocentrism. Paralleling the results for commitment, the direct effect of collectivism ($b = 6.74$, $p < .05$) on passion was significant and larger than the total effect ($b = 2.70$, $p > .05$), partly confirming my second hypothesis (see Figure 2.2). The indirect effect of collectivism on passion through parental influence was negative and significant [$b = -4.42$ (CI: -9.88, -.90)], whereas the indirect effect of family allocentrism was not [$b = .37$ (CI: -.73, 3.14)].
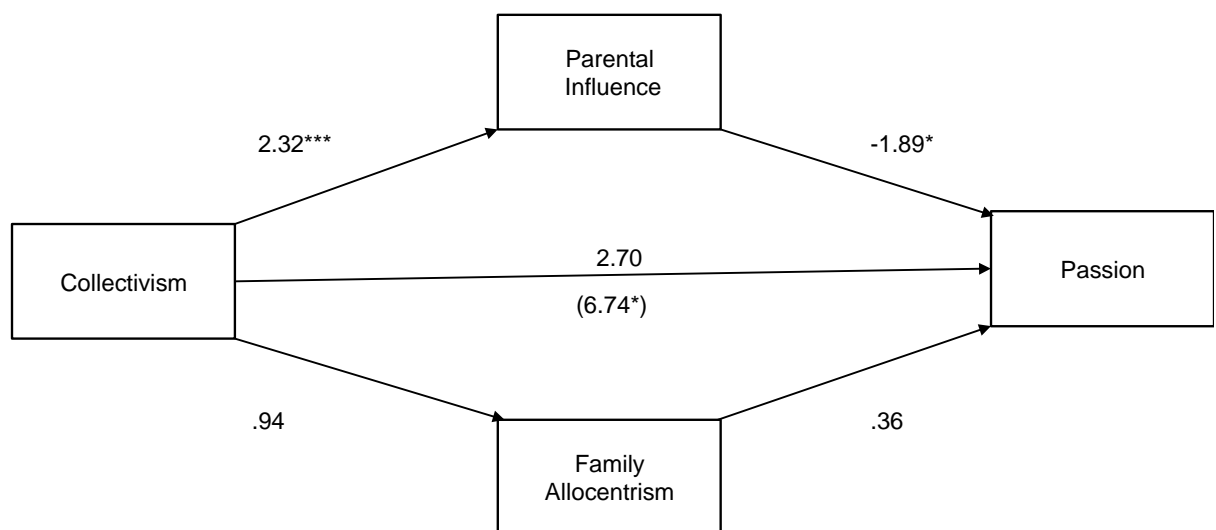
Figure 2.2   *Unstandardized regression coefficients for indirect effects analyses (N=63). Indirect effect of collectivism on relationship passion through parental influence [$b = -4.42$ (CI: -9.88, -.90)] and family allocentrism [$b = .37$ (CI: -.73, 3.14)]. The value in parentheses represents the direct effect, and the value directly above is the total effect. * $p < .05$, ***$p < .001$*

Disconfirming the third hypothesis, neither parental influence [$b = -.04$ (CI: -.50, .56)] nor family allocentrism [$b = -.12$ (CI: -.50, .02)] mediated the relationship between collectivism and parent-child discrepancy in mate preferences.[4]
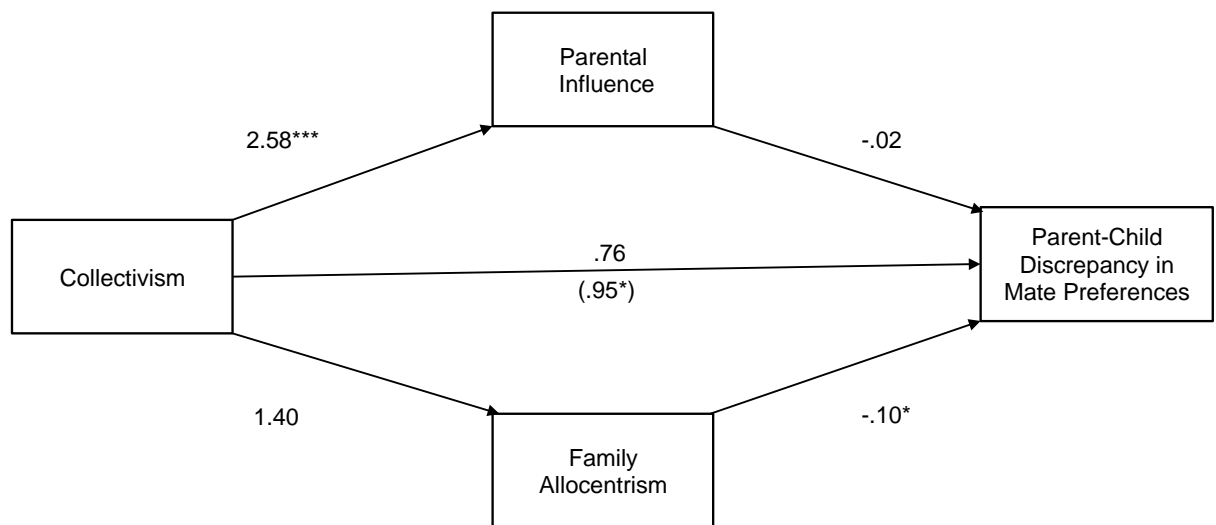
Figure 2.3 *Unstandardized regression coefficients for indirect effects analyses (N=123). Indirect effect of collectivism on parent-child discrepancy in mate preferences through parental influence [b = -.04 (CI: -.50, .56)] and family allocentrism [b = -.12 (CI: -.50, .02)]. The value in parentheses represents the direct effect, and the value directly above is the total effect. * p < .05, ***p < .001*

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[4] It should be noted that for each study, 2 (culture) x 2 (sex) ANOVAs were conducted to test moderation by gender. The dependent variables consisted of each study's respective DVs, along with their mediators. It was found that gender did not reliably moderate the main effect variables in Study 1 or any of the subsequent studies, except for one result in Study 3. Please see the Results section of Study 3 for this finding.

Discussion

Overall, these results partially corroborated my predictions: a positive association of collectivism with commitment and passion was counteracted by collectivists' tendency to experience higher parental influence on their romantic relationships. When parental influence was not accounted for in the model, there was no significant association of collectivism with commitment or passion; when parental influence was controlled, a positive association of collectivism with commitment and passion emerged. Contrary to my predictions, family allocentrism did not account for these positive associations. That collectivism was positively but non-significantly associated with family allocentrism may have been responsible for the inability to support this hypothesis. I sought to confirm the association of collectivism with family allocentrism in Study 2 by sampling from two cultures that more clearly differed in collectivism. Please note that the results and limitations of Studies 1 and 2 are discussed in conjunction in the Discussion of Study 2.

Study 2: Associations of Collectivism with Relationship Commitment, Passion, and Mate Preferences: Opposing Roles of Parental Influence and Family Allocentrism in the United States and India

The aim of Study 2 was to replicate and extend the results of Study 1 in three key ways. First, I collected data from two cultures that more clearly differed in collectivism. A limitation of Study 1 was that all participants were residents of the UK, suggesting that they were all exposed in varying degrees to the British cultural norm of individualism. To more sharply gauge the influence of collectivistic cultural values on relationship quality and mate choice, in Study 2 I collected data from India and the United States. In India, one of the most collectivistic countries in the world (Buss et al., 1990; Hofstede, 1980), parental influence on mate choice is high and arranged marriage still prevalent (Khandelwal, 2009). Alternatively, in the United States – a Western-individualistic country (Hofstede, 1980) – mate decisions are largely left up to individual preferences and parental influence is minimal (Hamon & Ingoldsby, 2003).

A second improvement of Study 2 is that I replaced the Preferred Mate Attributes Scale (Buss et al., 1990) with the Ideal Partner Scale (Fletcher et al., 1999), allowing for a more refined measure of parent-child discrepancy in mate preferences. The Ideal Partner Scale is comprised of three factors that characterize mate preferences: warmth-trustworthiness, status-resources, and vitality-attractiveness. As such, I was able to gauge whether parent-child discrepancy in mate choice differed for each these three factors. Finally, Study 2 improved on Study 1 by recruiting a larger sample of participants who were currently involved in a relationship.

The hypotheses for commitment and passion were the same in Study 2 as in Study 1 (Hypotheses 1 and 2), but my hypothesis for parent-child discrepancy in mate choice was updated to reflect the factors of the Ideal Partner Scale (Fletcher et al., 1999). Inasmuch as

parents and children share genetics, to a great extent, they overlap in their reproductive and heritable interests. However, although reproductive benefits of parents and children can be congruent, they are not exact (Apostolou, 2008). Consequently, while both groups can view certain mate characteristics as proportionately significant for a future marital spouse, it is also the case that one party may deem certain characteristics more favourably than the other (Buunk et al., 2008). For instance, parents and children might both preferably select a partner that is kind and compassionate for the child (Dubbs et al., 2010). However, a spouse with a caring disposition may be comparatively more beneficial to children than to parents. Children spend a greater amount of time with the spouse and rely more heavily on their spouse's emotional support. As a result, traits that promote a harmonious partnership and amicable cohabitation may be more desired by children (Apostolou, 2008). In India, for example, Rao and Rao (1990) found that personality characteristics of a potential partner, compared to traditional traits (e.g., caste, religion, family background), were considered more important by the younger generation of both sexes.

In collectivistic cultures, however, children and parents often live in close proximity to one another – often in extended living households – even after children marry (Bowman et al., 2013). Moreover, it is very important to cultivate good relations with children's spouses and build firm alliances with in-laws. Consequently, insofar as collectivist families are characterized by strong, interdependent ties, it is logical to surmise that both children and parents would agree that warm, trustworthy mates are most desirable, as these traits are likely to reinforce the family unit. Accordingly, I predicted that collectivists' higher family allocentrism, relative to non-collectivists, would contribute to a smaller gap between their own choices for a mate with qualities signifying warmth-trustworthiness versus their perceptions of their parents' choices (Hypothesis 3).

In line with parent-offspring conflict theory, I further postulated that collectivists' higher parental influence, compared to non-collectivists, would contribute to a smaller gap between their choices for a mate with qualities signifying status-resources versus their perceptions of their parents' choices (Hypothesis 4). Parents and children both benefit from the child marrying into a family that has wealth of resources and holds status within the community. However, considering the trade-off, parents may reap greater benefits from this arrangement (Buunk & Solano, 2010). For parents, the greater the resource contribution, cooperation, and investment from the child's spouse and in-laws, the less depletion they experience of their own resources in assisting children with future offspring (Dubbs & Buunk, 2010).

This may be even more applicable for a daughter's choice of a spouse. Females are the ones who bear children and have historically been their primary caretakers, which is often still the case in many collectivistic societies (Bhatnagar et al., 2001). Therefore, a spouse who can supply the necessary resources for a woman to successfully rear offspring is highly valued; otherwise, parents are pressured to carry the burden of responsibility for investing in the daughter's offspring themselves (Perilloux, Fleischman, & Buss, 2008). Moreover, in collectivistic cultures, family reputation within the community and sharing of resources among family members is particularly prevalent. Insofar as parents benefit when their children marry into a family with economic success and strong social standing (Apostolou, 2008), they may pressure their children to marry partners of higher status, especially when it comes to daughters.

Finally, I did not make any predictions regarding mate characteristics denoting vitality-attractiveness. Across cultures, there are mate characteristics that both parents and children endorse because of their importance to both parties. Mates high in attractiveness-vitality signal health and fertility; insofar as these mates are more likely to produce healthy

offspring, the genetic fitness of children and parents alike would benefit (Buunk et al., 2008). However, Apostolou (2008) explains that while children share 50% of their genes with their offspring, parents only share 25%. Consequently, parents profit less from a genetically high quality marital partner in relation to their children, who stand to gain more benefits. As a result, children have evolved to value the physical attractiveness – an agent of genetic fitness – of a potential spouse more highly compared to their parents (Thornhill and Møller, 1997). In the current study, I did not predict a differential influence of family allocentrism versus parental influence on children's preference for a mate with characteristics indicating vitality-attractiveness. In both instances I expected parents and children to exhibit a similar inclination towards these characteristics. Therefore, I did not make specific predictions regarding these traits.

Hypothesis 1: Compared to individuals from non-collectivistic backgrounds, collectivists' higher parental influence on their mate choice would drive their level of commitment to their romantic partner down, while their greater family allocentrism would drive it up.

Hypothesis 2: Compared to individuals from non-collectivistic backgrounds, collectivists' higher parental influence on their mate choice would drive down their feelings of passion toward their romantic partner. No specific predictions were made for family allocentrism.

Hypothesis 3: Compared to individuals from non-collectivistic backgrounds, collectivists' greater family allocentrism would result in a smaller gap between their own choices for a mate with qualities signifying warmth-trustworthiness versus their perceptions of their parents' choices.

Hypothesis 4: Compared to individuals from non-collectivistic backgrounds, collectivists' higher parental influence on their mate choice would result in a smaller gap between their choices for a mate with qualities signifying status-resources versus their perceptions of their parents' choices.

No specific predictions regarding mate characteristics denoting vitality-attractiveness were made.

Method

Ethics Statement

The Brunel University Psychology Research Ethics Committee provided ethical approval for Study 2. Participants gave written informed consent at the beginning of the survey. All responses were confidential and anonymous.

Participants

Three hundred and forty-six participants (160 women and 186 men; $M_{age:}$ 29.35, *SD*: 9.24) were recruited for this study through Amazon's Mechanical Turk. They were paid $0.35 (USD) for completion of the online survey. Of the total sample, 30% of participants indicated they were single and 70% stated they were currently involved in a relationship (dating, cohabitating, engaged, or married). The single participants consisted of 39 women and 63 males ($M_{age:}$ 25.38, *SD*: 6.44). 49% of these participants resided in India and 51% lived in the United States. Of the Indians, 74% identified their ethnicity as South Asian, 14% East Asian, 2% mixed race, 10% as "other "; of the Americans, 79% identified their ethnicity as White/Caucasian, 6% East Asian, 6% African/Caribbean, 6% mixed race, and the remaining 3% identified themselves as "other." On a 5-point Likert scale assessing dating experience (1 = *No, I never or almost never date*, 5 = *Yes, I have had multiple dating partners*), the mean response for single participants was 2.37 (*SD* = 1.30).

Participants who were currently involved in a relationship consisted of 121 women and 123 males ($M_{age:}$ 31.02, *SD*: 9.73). 110 of these participants (58 Indian, 52 American) were married, while the rest were in dating relationships, cohabitating, or engaged. Of the Indians, 56 were in dating relationships, 21 cohabitating, and 7 engaged; of the Americans, 43 were in dating relationships, and 7 engaged. Mean dating experience for these participants was 3.19 (*SD* = 1.32). 44% lived in India and 56% lived in the United States. The ethnicity of Indian participants involved in a relationship consisted of 1% White/Caucasian, 85% South

Asian, 7% East Asian, 1% African/Caribbean, and 6% "other". Their partner's ethnicity

consisted of 2% White/Caucasian, 81% South Asian, 10% East Asian, 1%

African/Caribbean, and 6% "other." American participant's ethnicity was composed of 83%

White/Caucasian, 1% South Asian, 9% East Asian, 2% African/Caribbean, 2% mixed race,

and 3% "other." Their partner's ethnicity was as follows: 82% White/Caucasian, 2% South

Asian, 4% East Asian, 4% African/Caribbean, 2% mixed race, and 6% "other."

Materials

Study 2 employed the same measures as Study 1, apart from the Ideal Partner Scale

(Fletcher et al., 1999) and the continuous rather than categorical measure of dating

experience. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the other scales were as follows: Parental

Influence on Mate Choice (.90), Family Allocentrism (.91), Commitment (.87), and Passion

(.95). Collectivism was operationalized in terms of cultural background, with participants

from India classified as high in collectivism (1) and participants from the United States

classified as low in collectivism (-1). In addition, the Horizontal/Vertical

Individualism/Collectivism Scale (Sivadas et al., 2008) was once again administered to

measure Americans and Indians' level of collectivism. Cronbach's alpha was .82.

Ideal Partner Scale. Eighteen items from the short version of the Ideal Partner Scale

(Fletcher et al., 1999) measure preferences for various mate attributes. The scale is comprised

of three subscales: warmth-trustworthiness (e.g., "supportive", "good listener"), vitality-

attractiveness (e.g., "nice body", "sexy"), and status-resources (e.g., "good job", "financially

secure"). We added four additional items based on measures by Buss and colleagues (1990)

and Lalonde and colleagues (2004) because of their potential significance for choosing a

mate in traditional, collectivistic societies (i.e., "comes from a family with a good

reputation", "favourable social status or rating", "similar religious background" and

"someone my family approves of"). Analogous to Study 1, participants rated the importance

of each attribute for a potential marital partner, and how important it would be to their parents for their potential marital partner to possess these characteristics. Principal components analysis of this scale revealed that Fletcher et al.'s (1999) three-factor structure cleanly emerged across groups for both children's and parents' marital mate preferences. The additional four items fully loaded on the status-resources factor. The three factors together accounted for 65% of the total variance in participants' own mate preferences, and 64% of the variance in perceptions of parents' mate preferences. Cronbach's alphas for participants' own mate preferences were as follows: warmth-loyalty (.90), vitality-attractiveness (.88), and status-resources (.93). Cronbach's alphas for perceptions of parental mate preferences were as follows: warmth-trustworthiness (.91), vitality-attractiveness (.90), and status-resources (.90). Parent-child discrepancy was calculated as the absolute difference between the participant's mate preferences and their perception of their parent's mate preferences for each of the three subscales. Preferences were rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Very Unimportant*) to 7 (*Very Important*).

Results

Means, standard deviations, and Pearson's correlations are reported in Table 3.1. Control variables included sex (-1 = female, 1 = male), age, and dating experience. Similar to Study 1, I included parents' knowledge of their children's relationship as a control variable in the analysis, but again the results were not influenced by this variable, and so it was removed from the following models. Supplementary analyses conducted on the variable assessing dating experience revealed that Indians who had more dating experience were more open with their parents about their dating life compared to Indians who had little dating experience, $r = .49$, $p < .0001$. The association of dating experience with individual-level collectivism was not quite significant, $r = -.14$, $p > .09$.

Table 3.1

Pearson's correlations and descriptive statistics

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Mean	SD
1. Sex	1.00											-	-
2. Age	-.06	1.00										29.35	9.24
3. Regularly Date	.08	.06	1.00									2.95	1.36
4. Collectivism	.12*	-.03	-.30**	1.00								-	-
5. Family Allocentrism	.08	-.11†	-.26**	.54**	1.00							68.99	14.26
6. Parental Influence	.15**	-.05	-.28**	.78**	.64**	1.00						25.09	9.51
7. Commitment	-.20**	.08	-.20**	-.09	.16*	-.14*	1.00					29.57	5.70
8. Passion	-.04	-.01	-.18**	.23**	.30**	.20**	.65**	1.00				83.70	15.91
9. Parent-Child Discrepancy in Mate Preferences for Warmth-Loyalty	-.02	-.08	.06	-.08	-.21**	-.14*	-.07	-.12	1.00			3.95	5.12
10. Parent-Child Discrepancy in Mate Preferences for Vitality-Attractiveness	-.08	.05	.08	-.27**	-.17**	-.28**	.01	-.10	.36**	1.00		5.62	5.10
11. Parent-Child Discrepancy in Mate Preferences for Status-Resources	-.06	.13*	.07	-.36***	-.13*	-.43**	.21**	-.01	.24**	.27**	1.00	10.88	10.66

Total participants $N = 346$; Single participants $N = 244$; Participants in a relationship $N = 102$ † $p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

In addition, I included an effect-coded variable reflecting relationship status (1 = married, -1 = not married) and interactions of this variable with cultural group, parental involvement, and family allocentrism. None of the main effects of relationship status or interactions were significant except for the interaction of cultural group with relationship status on parent-child discrepancy in preferences for mates with status-resources indicating that married Americans had a larger discrepancy between their own and their parents' preferences for mates with status-resources compared to unmarried Americans (Ms = 18.55 and 12.30, SDs = 11.96 and 11.10, respectively), $t(258) = -3.07$, $p < .002$). Given the lack of significant findings for main effects or interactions relevant to the mediational models, I removed these terms from successive analyses.

I also repeated the t-test analysis that was conducted in the previous study to ascertain whether Indian participants (categorized as high in collectivism) were more collectivistic than American participants (categorized as low in collectivism). The results of the analysis confirmed my operationalization of culture: Indians ($M = 31.96$, $SE = 4.35$) scored higher in collectivism than Americans ($M = 25.36$, $SE = 4.35$), $t(323) = -13.24$ $p < .0001$. As in Study 1, Preacher et al.'s (2008) bootstrap method was used to examine the indirect effects of collectivism on commitment, passion, and parent-child discrepancy through parental influence and family allocentrism.

According to Hypothesis 1, collectivism should exert a negative indirect effect on commitment through parental influence, but a positive indirect effect through family allocentrism. Figure 3.1 shows that the total effect of collectivism on relationship commitment was significant ($b = -.84$, $p < .03$), whereas the direct effect of collectivism (i.e., controlling for the indirect effects of parental influence and family allocentrism) was not significant ($b = -.23$, $p > .10$). Confirming Hypothesis 1, the indirect effect of collectivism through parental influence was significant and negative [$b = -1.67$ (CI: -2.66, -.80)], whereas

the indirect effect of family allocentrism was significant and positive [b = 1.06 (CI: .61, 1.77)].
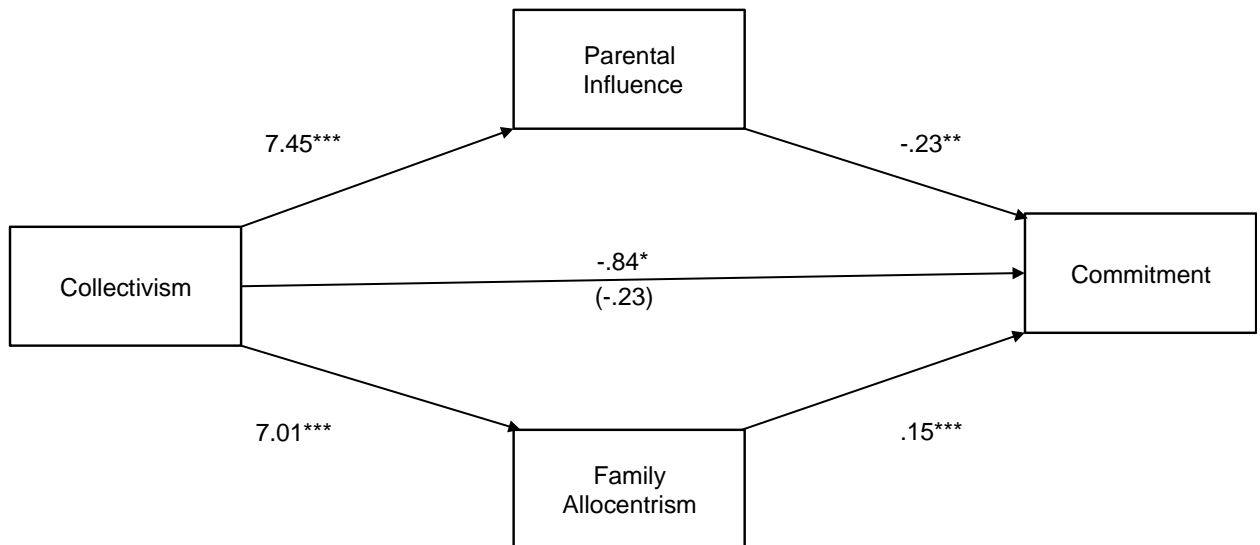
Figure 3.1   *Unstandardized regression coefficients for indirect effects analyses (N=210). Indirect effect of collectivism on relationship commitment through parental influence [b = -1.67 (CI: -2.66, -.80)] and family allocentrism [b = 1.06 (CI: .61, 1.77)]. The value in parentheses represents the direct effect, and the value directly above is the total effect. * p < .05, ** p < .01, ***p < .001*

Hypothesis 2 asserted that collectivism would exert a negative indirect effect on passion through parental influence and a positive indirect effect through family allocentrism. As indicated in Figure 3.2, the total effect of collectivism on passion was significant (b = 2.78, p < .02), but the direct effect of collectivism was not (b = 1.81, p > .10). Partly confirming Hypothesis 2, the indirect effect of collectivism on passion through family

allocentrism was positive and significant [b = 2.12 (CI: .64, 4.53)], whereas the indirect

effect of parental influence was not [b = -1.11 (CI: -3.90, 1.47)].
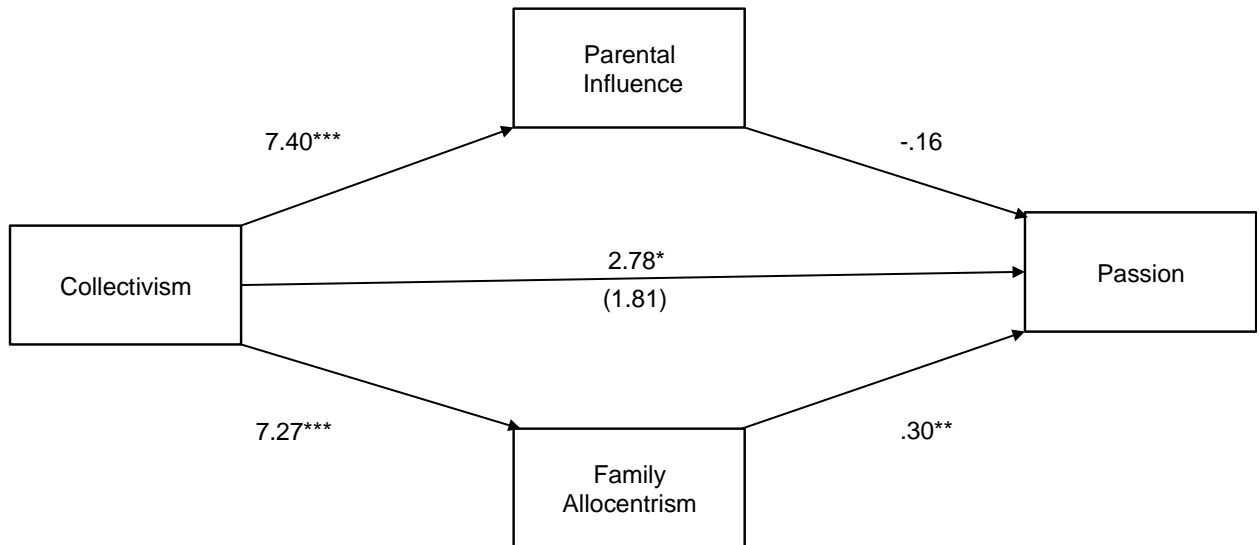
Figure 3.2   *Unstandardized regression coefficients for indirect effects analyses (N=204).*

Indirect effect of collectivism on relationship passion through parental influence [b = -1.11

(CI: -3.90, 1.47)] and family allocentrism [b = 2.12 (CI: .64, 4.53)]. The value in parentheses

*represents the direct effect, and the value directly above is the total effect. * p < .05, ** p <*

*.01, ***p < .001*

Hypothesis 3 postulated that collectivism would exert a negative indirect effect on

parent-child discrepancy in preferences for mates with qualities denoting warmth-

trustworthiness through family allocentrism. As shown in Figure 3.3, this indirect effect was

significant [b = -.61 (CI: -1.41, -.03)], but the indirect effect through parental influence was

not [b = -.10 (CI: -1.55, .83)]. Confirming Hypothesis 4, the indirect effect of collectivism on

parent-child discrepancy in preferences for mates with status-resources through parental influence was significant [b = -3.12 (CI: -4.87, -1.64)], but the indirect effect through family allocentrism was not [b = -.86 (CI: -1.82, .05)] (see Figure 3.4).
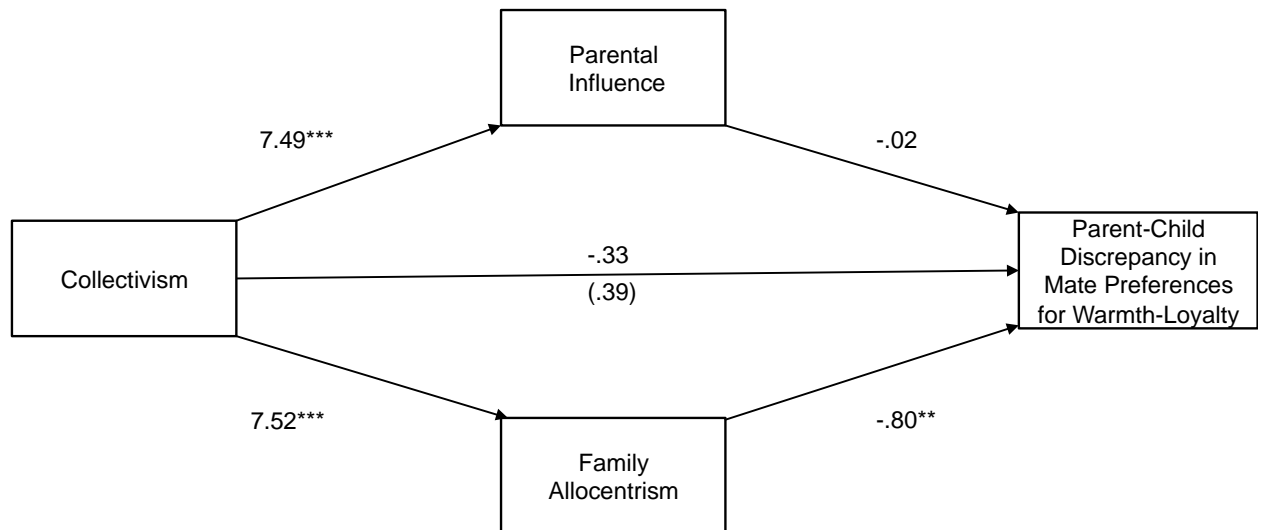
Figure 3.3 *Unstandardized regression coefficients for indirect effects analyses (N=298). Indirect effect of collectivism on parent-child discrepancy in mate selection for qualities signifying warmth-loyalty through parental influence [b = -.10 (CI: -1.55, .83)] and family allocentrism [b = -.61 (CI: -1.41, -.03)]. The value in parentheses represents the direct effect, and the value directly above is the total effect. ** p < .01, ***p < .001*
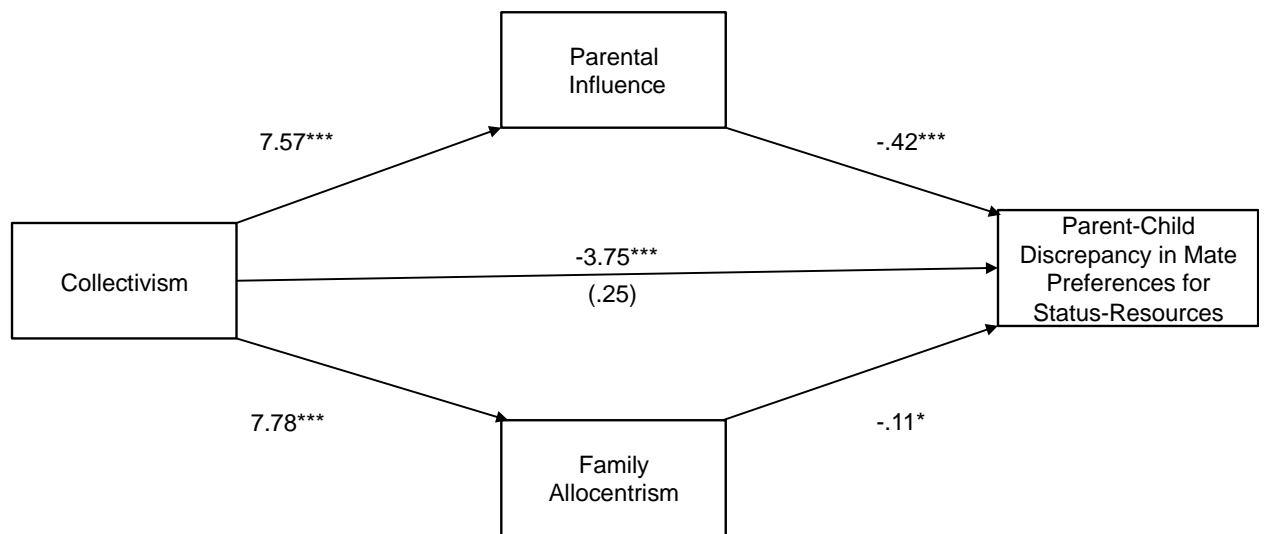
Figure 3.4   *Unstandardized regression coefficients for indirect effects analyses (N=290).*
Indirect effect of collectivism on parent-child discrepancy in mate selection for qualities
signifying status-resources through parental influence [b = -3.12 (CI: -4.87, -1.64)] and
family allocentrism [b = -.86 (CI: -1.82, .05)]. The value in parentheses represents the direct
*effect, and the value directly above is the total effect. * p < .05, ***p < .001*

Finally, the indirect effects of collectivism on parent-child discrepancy in preferences
for mates with qualities representing vitality-attractiveness through parental influence [*b* = -
.40 (CI: -1.18, .51)] and family allocentrism [*b* = .14 (CI: -.39, .56)] were not significant.
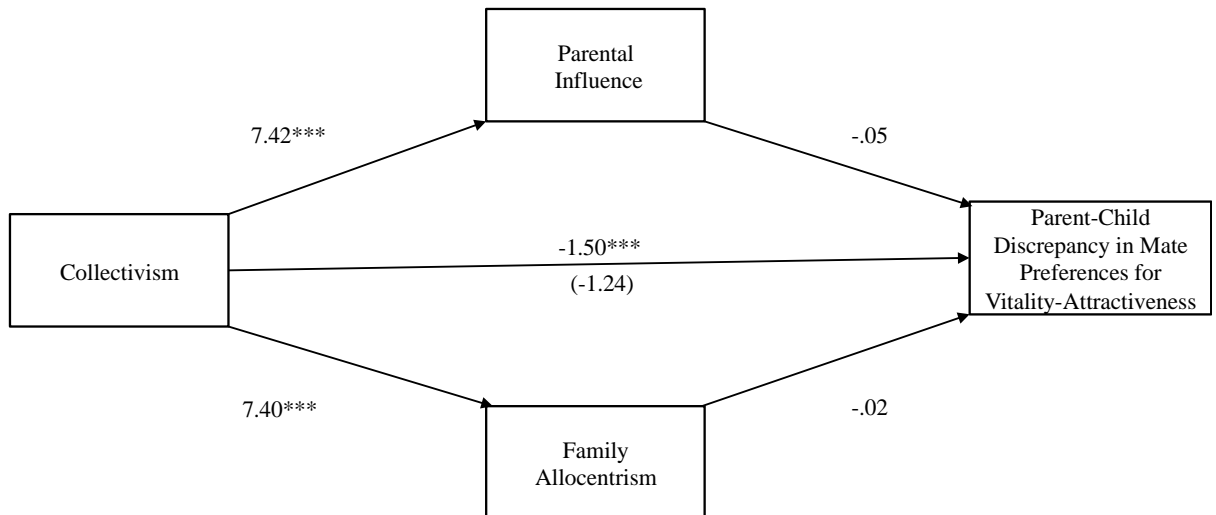
Figure 3.5 *Unstandardized regression coefficients for indirect effects analyses (N=297). Indirect effect of collectivism on parent-child discrepancy in mate selection for qualities signifying vitality-attractiveness through parental influence [b = -.41 (CI: -1.18, .51)] and family allocentrism [b = .14 (CI: -.39, .56)]. The value in parentheses represents the direct effect, and the value directly above is the total effect. ***p < .001*

It is important to note that analyses were also performed which excluded US participants who reported an ethnic heritage that was coded as collectivist in Study 1 (i.e., South and East Asians). A total of 19 participants were omitted; the remaining 327 participants identified as 90% White/Caucasian, 4% as African/ Caribbean, 3% mixed, and 3% other. The results of the analyses indicated that all the associations were still in the same direction with similar *p*-values in accordance with the original results when these participants were removed. The only difference was for the model predicting the dependent variable parent-child discrepancy in preferences for mates with qualities designating warmth-trustworthiness. When South and East Asians were removed from the analysis, family

allocentrism became a slightly weaker predictor of the dependent variable given the smaller sample size – the *p*-value in the first analysis was .004; in the second analysis, it was .01. Therefore, we postulate that the slightly weaker predictive power of family allocentrism, while still significant, may be responsible for the non-significant indirect effect when South and East Asians participants were removed from the study.

Consistent with the findings of Study 1, then, these results showed that the direct effect of collectivism on commitment became more positive after accounting for the downward pressure from parental influence and the upward pressure from family allocentrism. In both studies, the indirect effect of collectivism on commitment through parental influence was negative, while the indirect effect through family allocentrism was positive; only in Study 2, though, was I able to show that the indirect effect through family allocentrism was significant. When family allocentrism is high, family members may feel a sense of closeness and devotion to each other that may allow them to express a similar sense of commitment toward a romantic partner. This sense of closeness may also help to explain why collectivists reported greater passion in their relationship. Nevertheless, as individuals from collectivistic cultures remain dependent on family approval for their mate selection (MacDonald et al., 2012), parental influence may suppress the positive effects of family allocentrism on commitment. Finally, Study 2 found that the smaller gap between collectivists' own preferences for partners demonstrating warmth and trustworthiness and their perceptions of their parents' preferences for these qualities was explained by the closeness and connection shared between family members. Alternatively, the similarity between collectivists' own preferences for a partner with status and resources and their perceptions of their parents' preferences for these qualities was explained by their parents' greater involvement in their love life.

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to test whether collectivism predicted relationship commitment, passion, and parent-child discrepancies in mate preferences because of cultural emphases on parental authority and family allocentrism. In Study 1, I found that individuals from collectivistic backgrounds, compared to those from non-collectivistic backgrounds, accepted higher parental influence on their mate choice, which exerted downward pressure on their level of commitment in a relationship. Study 2 confirmed these findings and further showed that collectivists' greater family allocentrism was likely to apply upward pressure on their commitment. Furthermore, the results of Study 1 suggested that parental influence inhibited collectivists' passion, whereas Study 2 suggested that family allocentrism may enhance it. While I was unable to show that parental influence and family allocentrism applied opposing pressures on passion within a single study, the results of Studies 1 and 2 separately suggested that family allocentrism drives up collectivists' passion, whereas parental influence damps it down. Taken together, the results of both studies demonstrate the prospective latent struggles that collectivists may experience in their romantic relationships as they try to manage these opposing forces. Furthermore, Study 2 revealed that collectivists' tendency to experience higher family allocentrism, relative to non-collectivists, contributed to the smaller discrepancy between their own preferences for a mate with qualities signifying warmth-trustworthiness and their perception of their parents' preferences; meanwhile, higher parental influence contributed to a smaller gap between their own preferences for a mate with qualities signifying status-resources and their perception of their parents' preferences. I discuss these results in greater detail below.

Insofar as collectivists have a strong sense of duty to in-groups and cultivate interdependent ties (Heinke & Louis, 2009), it is logical to presume that they would highly value commitment to romantic partners. Indeed, Luo (2008) found that second-generation

Chinese-American youth negatively perceived American causal dating behaviours, preferring committed relationships instead. In addition, collectivists' greater acceptance of parental involvement in children's mate selection process (Buunk et al., 2010) may sway children's commitment towards a romantic partner based upon the approval or disapproval of parents. Studies 1 and 2 both found that participants from collectivistic backgrounds, relative to those not from collectivistic backgrounds, reported greater parental influence on their mate selection process and, in turn, reported lower levels of commitment. These results are consistent with the findings of MacDonald and colleagues (2012), who found that collectivists facing parental disapproval were less likely to invest in their relationship. This research did not directly measure parental disapproval of the participants' relationship. Therefore, the results indicating that participants were less committed to their partners could stem from other factors such as the length or type of relationship they were in. Further studies need to be conducted that directly measure parental disapproval in order to gain more concrete insights into this area of research.

Alternatively, in Study 2, I found that participants from India, a highly collectivist country, were higher in family allocentrism than Americans; in turn, Indians reported greater relationship commitment, suggesting that family allocentrism and parental influence contributed to commitment in opposite ways. While family allocentrism also encourages involvement of parents in their children's romantic relationships, children may perceive this involvement differently than in the case of direct parental influence. Whereas parental influence highlights the authority parents can have over their children's choices, family allocentrism emphasizes the mutual devotion and attachment family members feel toward one another (Buunk et al., 2010; Lay et al., 1998). Consequently, if individuals experience a higher degree of family allocentrism with their immediate family members, it may be that they desire a similar degree of allocentrism with their romantic partner, contributing to an

elevated degree of commitment in their relationship. These findings may help to explain discrepancies in the current literature on romantic relationships within collectivistic cultures (Luo, 2008; Gao, 2001; Lin & Rusbult, 1995): individuals may experience conflicting pressures on their romantic commitment as a result of inconsistent familial and cultural messages.

Another facet of relationship quality I examined was passion. Consistent with research that has found a negative link between parental influence and romantic beliefs (Buunk et al., 2010), Study 1 found that parental influence was negatively associated with passion, a correlate of romantic beliefs. Insofar as one's family practices greater authority over one's love life, one may attribute less importance to such relationship factors as chemistry or passion. Instead one may deem extra-dyadic factors – such as nurturing a positive bond between one's own and one's partner's family members – to be more vital, mitigating the need for passion within their own romantic relationship (Hortacsu et al., 1994).

Indeed, whereas passionate love is highly valued in individualistic cultures, collectivists may be wary of this type of love, instead preferring companionate love (i.e., warm, friendship-based love; Levine et al., 1995). For instance Shaver, Wu, and Schwartz (1992) reported that Chinese participants expressed negative perceptions of love, associating it with feelings of sadness and jealousy; in comparison, the American participants likened love to happiness. One reason for this may the involvement of kin in the development of romantic relationships for collectivists. With family members engaged in the process of bringing couples together, passionate love may be disrupted and frowned upon from being cultivated between the two individuals, as the results of Study 1 demonstrated.

On the other hand, contrasting the heightened feelings of intense longing and desire characterized by passionate love, companionate love is marked with feelings of intimacy, commitment and close connection to one's partner (Sheets, 2014). To cultivate this type of

love, Kim and Hatfield (2004) emphasis the importance of the time couples spend together and longevity of a relationship. Companionate love, it appears, develops over time as two people spend time together, foster shared values and grow affection for one another, a more accepted articulation of love within collectivistic cultures (Levine et al., 1995). The current studies primarily focused on newly developed premarital relationships compared to long-term marital unions. Therefore, passionate love was a more appropriate variable to examine in this research. However, given the important distinction between these two typologies of love, it would be useful for future studies to further investigate these variables more closely.

On the other hand, Study 2 revealed that young adults from a more collectivistic culture reported greater family allocentrism and, in turn, reported stronger passion in their relationship. If these individuals already sustain strong family relationships, it may be that the bond with their family members has encouraged a desire for a similar connection in romantic relationships, cultivating a stronger sense of passion within their relationship.

Finally, I examined the predictors of preferences for a marital partner. Past research in cross-cultural psychology has explored the desirability of various mate attributes principally within a collectivistic-individualistic context (Lalonde et al., 2004). The aim of these studies was to extend this research by examining whether parental influence and family allocentrism mediated the association of collectivism with discrepancies between parents' and children's preferences for mates. While Study 1 did not demonstrate any significant mediation, this may have stemmed from two factors. First, principal components analysis of the measure of mate preferences utilized in Study 1 yielded only one dominant factor, allowing for a less refined measure of preferred mate characteristics. Additionally, while the group classified as highly collectivistic in Study 1 were from heritage cultures identified by Hofstede (1980) as high in collectivism, these participants were also living in the United Kingdom – an individualistic

society – and may not have experienced the full weight of having to comply with collectivist values and expectations, as did their counterparts in Study 2.

On the other hand, the results in Study 2 indicated that participants from collectivistic backgrounds reported greater family allocentrism and, in turn, reported a smaller gap between their marital mate preferences and their perceptions of their parents' preferences for a mate with qualities signifying warmth and trustworthiness. Family allocentrism generates sentiments of warmth and loyalty between family members; as a result, socialization within such a close family unit may mean that individuals seek equal virtues in a marital partner.

Furthermore, Study 2 revealed that collectivists reported greater parental influence on their mate choice and, in turn, reported a smaller gap between their marital mate preferences and their perceptions of their parents' preferences for a mate with qualities characterizing status-resources. Marriage is a public act, with children's choices in a mate frequently reflecting the reputation of the entire family, especially in collectivistic countries (Dubbs et al., 2010). Consequently, inasmuch as a child's spouse becomes a part of the family unit, it is often important to parents for their children to select a mate who can contribute to the overall well-being and prosperity of the entire family. When parental influence is high, it appears that children may internalize these beliefs, showing a similar interest in mate qualities that denote status and resources in line with their parents' wishes (Levine et al., 1995). As for traits indicating vitality-attractiveness, no significant cultural difference was found in the discrepancy between children and parents' preferences. Evolutionary theory suggests that healthy offspring is the key to genetic fitness (Gangestad et al., 2006). Across cultures, then, both parents and young adults may overlap in their desire to select a mate with traits that connote vitality in an attempt to maximize the health of their children (Buunk et al., 2008; Buss et al., 1990).

Although I was unable to demonstrate in both studies that parental influence and family allocentrism simultaneously exerted indirect effects on the associations of collectivism with all of the dependent variables, I believe this was chiefly due to discrepancies in data collection. As mentioned above, many of the participants in Study 1 were second-generation immigrants living in the UK, whose parents originated from more collectivistic countries. Living among their Western peers, who most likely enjoyed free-choice in their romantic relationships, the participants classified as highly collectivistic in Study 1 may have perceived their own level of parental influence on their romantic relationship outcomes more heavily. In an attempt to gain more freedom and autonomy, like their Western friends, they may have pushed against and sought more distance from their family members, reducing family allocentrism relative to their collectivist counterparts in Study 2. The sharper cultural difference in family allocentrism in Study 2 may explain why the indirect effect of collectivism on relationship commitment and passion through family allocentrism was significant here, but not in Study 1.

Studies 1 and 2: Limitations and Future Directions

Although the findings of these studies have offered important insights into cultural influences on relationship quality and partner selection, they also have certain limitations. Study 1 focused on the influence of collectivistic cultural values among first- and second-generation immigrants in the United Kingdom, but did not take into account the role of acculturation beyond assessing generational status. Future research would do well to assess the influence of acculturation strategies (Berry, 2005) on migrants' perceptions of parental influence on mate choice, family allocentrism, relationship quality, and mate preferences. For example, migrants with assimilationist tendencies who adopt Western-style attitudes towards parental influence on mate choice may report greater commitment and passion in premarital relationships; however, such enhancements may be offset to the extent that they also

experience a reduction in family allocentrism. Another important factor to take into consideration in future studies is the distinction between passionate and companionate love. In the current studies passionate love was more applicable considering the intention of this research. Nevertheless, it would be useful for future studies to examine both types of love cross-culturally.

It is important to note that the results for commitment and passion in Study 1 were based on a small number of people from collectivistic backgrounds. Further empirical research needs to be done to replicate these findings with a larger sample of participants. In addition, the results of Study 2 may not be generalized beyond this particular sample of Indian participants who may have come from predominately middle or upper class backgrounds and potentially experienced increased exposure to individualistic concepts and norms. These individuals spoke English, owned computers, and were more open to conventionally individualistic customs such as dating; that there existed a positive association of dating experience with openness with parents is suggestive of these Indians' more individualistic inclinations (Morgan et al., 2010). However, Indians may be simultaneously high in collectivism and individualism, endorsing each value system depending on context (Sinha, Sinha, Verma, Sinha, 2001). Nevertheless, given the ample differences in religion, language, cast, and socioeconomic status one can find in India, this sample of Indians may not be indicative of the mainstream population of Indian youth. Additional insight might also be gained by sampling participants from a wider selection of cultures that vary in collectivism.

Finally, the positive link between family allocentrism and passion is a bit tenuous because it was non-significant in Study 1, and only a small effect in Study 2. While it is possible to reject that family allocentrism is associated with lower passion (after controlling for parental influence), further research needs to be done to show that family allocentrism

actually leads to more passion. It could be that the positive association of allocentrism with passion in Study 2 simply reflects a third variable, such as intimacy (which is positively associated with both allocentrism and passion). In the end, this positive association was somewhat surprising and simply awaits replication, especially after controlling for intimacy.

Studies 1 and 2: Concluding Remarks

This research sought to disentangle the influence of collectivism on relationship quality and mate preferences by examining the mediating roles of parental influence and family allocentrism. Two studies showed that collectivists experienced upward pressure on their relationship commitment and passion due to their family allocentrism, but they experienced concurrent downward pressure on these relationship outcomes due to high parental influence, potentially creating ambivalence. Additionally, results demonstrated that collectivists' tendencies to experience higher family allocentrism explained their smaller discrepancy in their preferences and their perception of their parents' preferences for a mate possessing qualities of warmth and trustworthiness, while their higher acceptance of parental influence narrowed the gap in parent-child preferences for mates with status and resources. Further research examining the influence of conflicting cultural ideologies on mate preferences and relationship quality may assist practitioners in helping people to resolve personal ambivalence and intergenerational tension.

Study 3: Romantic Ideals, Mate Preferences, And Anticipation Of Future Difficulties In Marital Life: A Comparative Study Of Young Adults In India And America

The focus of Studies 1 and 2 was to deconstruct the collectivist emphasis placed on family involvement (i.e., parental influence and family allocentrism) in children's romantic life, "unpacking" cultural values and examining the influence of important aspects of collectivism on romantic relationships. However, while the previous two studies discussed collectivism at length, it was not directly measured in the analyses; instead, cultural group was utilized as a proxy for collectivism. Betancourt and López (1993) point to the importance of including direct cultural variables in the statistical analyses, which are assumed to be driving significant effects, ensuring that group differences are resulting from said variables. For instance, in the Buss et al. (1990) study on cross-cultural mate preferences, there is an underlying assumption that the individualism-collectivism paradigm may be accounting for some of the outcomes of cultural differences found across nations; a measure of collectivism and individualism was, however, never included in the analyses to validate this conjecture (see Lalonde et al., 2004). To address this issue in the current work, collectivism is directly tested as a mediating variable in Study 3. The study also expanded to include a focus on gender role ideology and, like Studies 1 and 2, it examined the predictors of mate preferences, with the addition of romantic ideals and anticipated future difficulties in marital life as dependent variables. I further discuss the rationale behind the inclusion of these new variables in Study 3 below.

In the previous studies I investigated the discrepancy between parent-child mate preferences as a premise for exploring parent-offspring conflict in mate preferences. Apostolou (2008) explained that parents' regulation of children's mating decisions was an important environmental factor to which children adapted, such that human mating behaviour is partly a co-evolution between parental and offspring mating trade-offs. Similarly, trade-

offs exist between men's and women's sexual reproduction decisions, shaping mating strategies throughout evolutionary history. Women, for instance, have been responsible for birthing offspring and acting as their primary caretaker, while men have historically been in charge of acquiring necessary resources (Wood et al., 2002). Therefore, men and women have engaged in a co-evolutionary process, such that the different reproductive foundations from which each group operated from ultimately lead to gender differences and sex-typed mate preferences (see Buss, 1996).

Social constructionists also note that sex-specific roles and preferences are mediated through the process of socialization, such that individuals can vary in their endorsement of these constructs based on the degree to which they were introduced and socialized to accept traditional or egalitarian values (Johannesen-Schmidt et al., 2002). In line with this premise, research has shown that in societies where traditional gender roles are more strongly endorsed, men and women show increased mate preference for sex-typed characteristics (Eagly et al., 1999; Zentner et al., 2012). Based on these theoretical assertions, I examined cultural differences in participants' preferences for a long-term marital partner and the mediating roles of collectivism and gender role ideology. Given the direction of the current study, a new measure of mate preferences was utilized.

Moreover, staying within the parameters of the previous studies, which looked at passion, Study 3 examined romantic beliefs. While passion is a tenet of romantic beliefs, as discussed in previous chapters, it is a more universal component of relationship bonding, whereas romantic beliefs may show more cross-cultural variability (Medora et al., 2002). Insofar as Indian and American cultural values differ in their sanction of romantic beliefs, it was important to explore to what degree the newer generation of young adults embrace traditional attitudes about romance, especially at a time when global transitions are apparent worldwide.

Finally, Study 3 also examined participants' anticipated difficulties in future marital life. Wood and colleagues (2002) contend that from a biosocial model, which incorporates both evolutionary and social constructionist perspectives, women's reproductive mechanisms significantly influence the division of labour between the sexes, such that the responsibility of pregnancy and lactation has commonly placed certain limitations on women's behaviour and mobility in and out of the home. Throughout history, the conventional social outlook has perpetuated gender differences and the division of labour between the sexes by affirming and pegging men and women in distinguishable, sex-typed roles. Today, societies across the world differ in the degree to which they continue to prescribe to these views (Johannesen-Schmidt et al., 2002).

The current research examines two cultures who vary in their endorsement of the division of labour along traditional, gendered lines to understand how these beliefs may influence people's anticipated difficulties in future marital life. Individuals' attitudes about how they see their future marital life can inform the choices they make today and influence the quality of their current relationship (Hallett et al., 1997). Altogether, Study 3 examined the association of gender role ideology and collectivism with romantic beliefs, mate preferences and anticipated beliefs about future marital life. As in the previous study, I tested my hypotheses on Indian and American participants.

Overview of Study 3

Existing in almost all societies, the marital relationship is an important contributing factor to health and well-being (Williams, Takeuchi, & Adair, 1992). Through this union, new familial dynamics are configured and indelible bonds formed between individuals (Larson & Holman, 1994). Traditionally, marriages were characterized by clearly-defined gender roles: women assumed responsibility over domestic needs, while men were the primary breadwinners. Over the years, however, marital dynamics have shifted. Factors such

as later onset of marriage, increased education, women's mounting independence, and higher

demand for dual-earner households have redefined mate preferences and contributed to a

growing need for changes in marital roles (Wierda-Boer, Gerris, Vermulst, Malinen, &

Anderson, 2009; Zentner et al., 2012).

Cultures vary widely in the norms, attitudes, and customs surrounding marriage and

the roles of husbands and wives. Nevertheless, industrialization and globalization have

increasingly blurred the lines between cultures around the world (Wang, Lawler, & Shi,

2010). More and more of today's young adults are redefining their beliefs about love and

romance, their attitudes toward marital life, and what qualities they are seeking in a lifetime

partner (Buss, Shackelford, Kirkpatrick, & Larsen, 2001). The current study aimed to gain a

deeper insight into these emerging changes and their influence on Indian and American

young adults' expectations for their future marital life. As mentioned previously, India is

considered one of the most collectivistic countries in the world (Buss et al., 1990; Hofstede,

1980), and Indians tend to endorse traditional gender roles (Bhatnagar et al., 2001; Suppal et

al, 1996). In contrast, the United States is highly individualistic (Imada, 2012) and espouses

flexible gender roles that are largely malleable to each couples' needs (Bartley et al., 2005). I

assessed whether collectivism and/or gender role ideology explained potential differences in

American and Indian participants' romantic beliefs, mate preferences, and anticipated future

difficulties in marital life.

Gender Role Ideology

People's attitudes and behaviours are shaped and directed by the norms and customs

prevalent in their particular social milieu (Cialdini et al., 2004). As discussed already, cultural

values – in particular, individualism and collectivism – influence how people define

themselves, relate to others, and interact with their social environment (Triandis, 1995). In

addition to this however, cultural differences in gender role ideology may also influence close

relationship processes.

Gender plays a central role in an individual's identity development and self-perception (Sharepour, 2005). In most societies around the world, men and women are assigned contrasting responsibilities, largely based on the view that each group possesses distinctive qualities particular to their sex (Charles & Hopflinger, 1992; Poortman & Van Der Lippe, 2009; Sharepour, 2005; Wang et al., 2010). While men are often depicted as more dominant, aggressive, and ambitious with an orientation towards success, women are thought to be more emotionally sensitive, nurturing and concerned about the well-being of others (Glick & Fiske, 2001). These beliefs also have an influence on the appropriate behavioural norms allocated to each sex, impacting the way men and women are expected to function and carry themselves in society (Rudman & Glick, 2008).

Many studies have demonstrated that during adolescence – a period of time when gender intensification is particularly strong (Galambos, Almeida, & Petersen, 1990) – males and females begin diverging in their interests and self-perception (Sharepour, 2005). For example, Linn and Petersen (1986) found that males begin to perform better than girls in mathematics – an area of study considered to be a traditionally masculine subject. Girls increasingly start to become more self-conscious and regard themselves in lower esteem compared to their male counterparts (Simmons & Rosenberg, 1975). Moreover, boys also begin demonstrating accelerated development in their masculine behaviour. Some researchers have argued that there may be even more pressure on boys to conform to gender-typed behaviour because masculine traits and qualities are more socially desirable than are feminine ones (Massad, 1981; Mahalingam, 2007).

Nevertheless, these findings are not only confined to American youth, but are prevalent throughout the world. Cross-culturally, there is strong socialization among boys and girls to act in accordance with the expectations of their gender. For example, Sharepour

(2005) found that among Iranian youth there was a strong pervasiveness in gender stereotypes with participants expressing preferences towards exaggerated ideals of men and women. This heightened socialization of gender roles is not only reinforced through adolescent peer groups, but some of the strongest messages to act in socially appropriate ways comes from the influence of parents and teachers, demonstrating the intergenerational dissemination, strengthening, and maintenance of gender role ideals (Huston, 1983).

Gender stereotyping is, therefore, not just confined to the adolescent years, but continues to prevail in adulthood, where it influences the choices people make in important life domains. Social mediums such as the media continue to perpetuate traditional gender stereotypes, shaping the way people view men and women's capabilities (Dill & Thill, 2007; Garst et al., 1997). Movies, television shows, and magazines regularly display images of men and women enacting their traditional roles and engaging in activities consistent with their sex type (Simon & Hoyt, 2012). Females are often depicted as mothers and wives, frequently struggling in low-status jobs and primarily concerned with relationship issues. On the other hand, men are characterized as ambitious, focused on career goals and achievements, and holding high status positions in their line of work.

Despite the barrage of traditional gender stereotypes routinely depicted and reinforced throughout society, support for egalitarian roles between the sexes and increased value of women is also on the rise, albeit primarily in Western society. For example, women have steadily increased their presence in the workforce over the past few decades, such that in America, women account for nearly half of the labour force today (Simon et al., 2012). Women are also graduating from professional and graduate level education at an equal or greater frequency to that of men (Barnett et al., 2001; National Center for Education Statistics, 2000). While women's wages are not yet identical to men's, they are steadily increasing, as men's are steadily declining (Bond, Galinsky, & Swanberg, 1998; Poortman et

al., 2009). Women are also progressively in greater positions of power at work (Barnett et al., 2001). These changes signify prominent shifts in the way society views the relationships between men and women and their roles both at work and in the home.

Predictors of Romantic Beliefs

Studies have shown that gender role ideology and collectivism may exert separate influences on relationship processes, such that gender role traditionalism strengthens romantic beliefs (Peplau, Hill & Rubin, 1993), whereas collectivism weakens them (Medora et al., 2002). Romantic love, also referred to as passionate love, is thought to be a cultural universal (Hatfield & Rapson, 1987). Across cultures, there tends to be more similarities than differences in passionate love (Neto et al., 2000), suggesting that passion may have evolved across cultures to facilitate pair-bonding (Fisher, 2004, 2006). For example, Jankowiak and Fischer (1992) reported the occurrence of romantic love within 89% of their culturally-diverse participant sample. Moreover, some researchers have suggested that attraction and love develop between partners in a complementary manner: people seek partners possessing qualities that they themselves lack, thereby enhancing their sense of wholeness and well-being (Eagly, Eastwick, & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2009; Mathes & Moore, 1985; Richerson et al., 2005).

Similarly, traditional gender roles also emphasize complementarity; men and women are ascribed distinctive, but interdependent responsibilities based on their perceived aptitudes (Wolkomir, 2009). The yin and yang of male and female stereotypes – with men as dominant protectors, and women as sensitive and maternal – meant that heterosexual unions were thought to create an ideal romantic fit. For example, fairy tales, movies, and music often perpetuate the romantic belief that a knight in shining armour should rescue the damsel in distress. Peplau and colleagues (1993), in their 15-year study of dating, love and marriage, found that women who endorsed a more traditional gender role ideology also reported

stronger romantic love towards their partner. They further reported greater respect and admiration for their partners – qualities often associated with beliefs in romantic love.

Inasmuch as traditional gender roles are more readily endorsed in collectivistic cultures (Mahalingam et al., 2007; Sastry, 1999), one might expect that romantic ideals would also be stronger in this cultural milieu. However, many collectivistic cultures do not encourage romantic beliefs as a basis for marital partner selection (Levine et al., 1995). Therefore, romantic beliefs – a personal ideal – are viewed separately from the act of marriage – a social duty. In fact, these beliefs may be discouraged by elders if they threaten to interfere with familial or cultural duties when selecting a partner in line with social standards (Medora et al., 2002).

From an early age, children in collectivist cultures internalize the values of upholding family honour, following tradition, and showing respect to parents (Beilmann, Mayer, Kasearu, & Realo, 2014). As adolescents get older and the prospect of marriage looms closer, they are encouraged to put aside their personal desire for romance and intimacy, and embrace a more practical approach to relationships (Madathil et al., 2008). Given these conflicting ideals, I predicted that Indians would report greater gender role traditionalism than Americans, driving their romantic beliefs up, while their greater collectivism would simultaneously drive it down, creating opposing pressures on their endorsement of romantic beliefs. This was believed to be the case for both men and women based on recent research on contemporary Indian youth. For instance, Henry et al (2010) reported that today's urban Indian men and women both support the notion of romantic happiness as an important basis for marriage. Similarly, Gala and colleagues (2014) found that the majority of their participants, from both sexes, endorsed love as a necessary precursor to marriage.

Predictors of Marital Mate Preferences

People from Western, individualistic backgrounds tend to view a romantic relationship as an exclusive bond, formed between two individuals who share attraction and love, and serving their own personal needs (MacDonald & Jessica, 2006; Moore et al., 2001). As such, the qualities seen as desirable in a partner are a personal matter, arising from one's subjective preferences and ideals. Therefore, Westerners are expected to initiate the process of mate selection themselves, ensuring compatibility and shared interests with their partner.

In contrast, marriage within Eastern, collectivistic cultures helps to reinforce family obligations and parents encourage children to adopt a pragmatic approach to marriage, giving weight to those qualities that are compatible with cultural and familial standards (Levine et al., 1995; Twamley, 2013; Zhang & Kline, 2009). The strong emphasis on family values and conforming to the traditional conceptualization of marriage means that conventional gender roles tend to be endorsed in Eastern, collectivistic cultures (Sastry, 1999). In India notably, given that arranged marriage is especially high compared to other collectivistic nations, culturally sanctioned objective criteria play a particularly instrumental part in choosing suitable marital partners for young adults (Banerjee et al., 2013).

Potential partners are scrutinized in terms of the various roles they will be fulfilling within the marriage: women are largely expected to carry out household and childrearing tasks, whereas men are expected to focus on meeting the financial necessities of the family (Isaac et al., 2004; Suppal et al., 1996). Ultimately, partners are chosen and marital alliances are established on the presumption that each side will fulfil their respective obligations, thereby upholding the marriage and ensuring the smooth running of family life. Lalonde et al. (2004) found that second-generation South Asians living in Canada who were more interdependent desired more gender-traditional mate characteristics, such as a partner who would be a good provider or who possessed childrearing skills. In the same respect, I

predicted that Indians would report greater gender role traditionalism and collectivism than Americans and, in turn, show stronger preferences for mate characteristics that are consistent with traditional gender roles. As detailed above, both Indian men and women are expected to conform to traditional gender roles and evaluate prospective partners along these lines; therefore, I expected these results for both sexes.

Predictors of Anticipated Future Difficulties in Marital Life

A large part of selecting the right marital partner and sustaining long-term relationship satisfaction is ensuring that both individuals can successfully negotiate the roles each one will play in the household (Hallett et al., 1997). In the Western world, women are more educated and career-oriented than in any other generation; they have a strong desire to expand beyond their traditional role as a homemaker (Barnett et al., 2001; Marshall, 2009). Meanwhile, men in Western cultures have progressively assumed responsibility for various domestic tasks that were traditionally undertaken by women. By performing gender-atypical chores, men are challenging their traditional gender roles and spurring the development of more egalitarian ideals (Pitt & Borland, 2008). According to Bianchi, Casper and King (2005), the responsibilities of a couple have shifted immensely since the 1960s, with women cutting the time they spend on household chores by half, while men have nearly doubled their time.

Despite these changes in the Western world, Indian society has retained clear guidelines about the roles that men and women should play in the family (Andrade, Postma, & Abraham, 1999). Household chores are expected to be the wife's duty, while earning a living is considered the husband's role. Childrearing and family decision-making power also follows a traditional arrangement: whereas females are glorified for motherhood and take charge of children's day-to-day activities, fathers are considered the head of the household and take primary responsibility for decision-making on behalf of all family members (Sastry, 1999). These expectations often restrict personal choice and suppress individual ambitions

within marital relationships. Instead men and women are pressured to conform to the gender division of labour, curbing their behaviour to fit along these gendered lines – irrespective of personal desire – thereby permitting society to continue to regulate individual freedom and justify the separation between the sexes (Chafetz, 1990).

Collectivistic family values also encourage deference to older family members, with young couples often living with in-laws in extended family living arrangements (Georgas et al., 2001). While this may be a beneficial in certain respects, allowing for more help with daily activities and chores, it can put additional pressure on young couples to act in accordance with collectivistic cultural standards and customs (Singh, 2008). In India, for example, younger married couples who express a need for closeness and intimacy within the marital relationship are often met with disapproval and resistance by the in-laws they live with (Sandhya, 2009). This conflict, likewise, may evoke disagreement between the couple – especially in cases where one partner takes the in-laws' side (MacDonald et al., 2012). Older family members may feel that the couple's desire to make their own decisions undermines the long-standing authority of elders and disrupts the hierarchy of the household family system (Nath et al., 1999). Sonpar (2005), for example, found that many Indian couples who sought marital therapy were struggling to reconcile their collectivistic value of deference to parents and in-laws with their personal desire to strengthen their marital relationship.

For collectivist newlyweds, the initial stages of married life can be especially challenging for both the husband and wife as they try to adjust to their new roles within the family organization. Often, the new daughter-in-law's place in the familial hierarchy is at the very bottom of the system (Derne´, 1994b). Especially important is her new role as a dutiful and devoted wife. In India this connection of a wife to her husband is regarded as particularly important and expected to endure eternally (Sonpar, 2005). For instance, historically if a husband died before his wife it was not uncommon for a woman to practice Sati – a religious

custom where a wife, in a show of ultimate devotion to her husband, sacrificed herself during her husband's funeral (Harlan et al., 1995). Additionally, though, a newly married woman not only has to adjust to her role as a faithful wife, but she also has to take on the role of an obedient daughter-in-law to her new in-laws (Das, 1979; Medora, 2007). The demands of her new role can be difficult as she becomes primarily responsible for all the chores in the house and the general upkeep of the home. Having to be accountable to her mother-in-law can also be emotionally stressful with little defence from her husband. As one older Indian husband explained in clinical therapy, he felt helpless to step in and offer protection to his wife from the mistreatment she received at the hands of his mother in the early stages of their marital life because it was inconceivable to challenge the authority of parents (Sonpar, 2005).

In addition to these trials and tribulations, the new wife is also expected to taper off the relationship she enjoyed with her family of origin; her husband's household has become her primary family and her in-laws have replaced the parental figures in her life (Das, 1979). The husband, as well, goes through many adjustments; he needs to balance his initial relationship with his parents as a son with his new role as a husband who is starting a family of his own. While he may want to build a close relationship with his wife, he has to be careful not to become too devoted to her and risk hurting his image as a man who is in charge of his family and does not become easily persuaded by his wife's requests (Derne ́, 1994a; Sonpar, 2005).

While Western, individualistic couples have gradually moved away from strictly-defined gender roles, negotiating among themselves what arrangements fit them best, couples from collectivist cultures may still struggle to adjust to established traditional customs, putting aside their own personal needs or desires for their marriage. In India, for example, rigid cultural rules continue to stress conformity to traditional gender roles (Das, 2011), leaving couples with very little room to deviate from conventional patterns as they try to

adapt to marital life. Based on this rationale, I predicted that Indians, due to their stronger endorsement of traditional gender roles and collectivism, would anticipate facing more difficulties in their future marital life than Americans. Moreover, I did not hypothesize any gender differences. While men and women may face distinctive gender-specific challenges in marriage, both groups are under pressure to accommodate their behaviour in accordance with conventional expectations and structure their household to meet traditional standards (Bowman et al., 2013). Consequently, Indian men and women similarly face the difficulty of reconciling their personal needs and desires with that of their elders' expectations.

The Present Study

A considerable body of research has been devoted to understanding cultural disparities in romantic relationships and family structuring (Buunk et al., 2010; Goodwin et al., 2012; Lalonde et al., 2004). While informative, this research has focused on married couples or university students, offering a glimpse into a specific sub-group of people within the wider cultural context. Although the spread of globalization has meant that the younger generation in Eastern, collectivistic societies are increasingly adopting Western notions of love, romance, and family structuring (Marshall, 2010), research based on this participant sample remains sparse. To better gauge these issues, the present study recruited unmarried young adults within two nations that strongly reflect individualistic versus collectivistic ideals and egalitarian versus traditional gender role ideologies – America and India, respectively.

Hypothesis 1: Compared to Americans, Indians' greater gender role traditionalism will drive up their romantic beliefs, while their greater collectivism will simultaneously drive them down.

Hypothesis 2: Compared to Americans, Indians' greater gender role traditionalism and collectivism will mediate their greater preference for a marital partner with traditional characteristics.

Hypothesis 3: Compared to Americans, Indians' greater gender role traditionalism and collectivism will mediate their greater anticipation of future difficulties in marital life.

Method

Ethics Statement

The Brunel University Psychology Research Ethics Committee provided ethical approval for this study. Participants gave written informed consent at the beginning of the survey. All responses were confidential and kept anonymous.

Participants

Two hundred and thirteen participants were recruited for this study (92 women and 121 men; mean age = 25.04, *SD* = 6.53) through Amazon's Mechanical Turk. They were paid $0.35 (USD) for completion of the survey. None of the participants were married, while 45% were dating, 5% cohabitating, 6% engaged, and 44% were single. For Indians, 43 were in dating relationships, 8 engaged, and 56 were single; for Americans, 52 were dating, 11 cohabitating, 5 engaged, and 38 were single. 82% indicated they wanted to get married in the future, while 14% were undecided, and the remaining 4% stated they were not interested in getting married. 69% of participants desired children in the future, 19% were undecided, and 12% did not want children. 51% of participants resided in India; of these participants, only one was not born in India, but had lived there for 20 years. The ethnicity of Indian participants consisted of 1% White/Caucasian and 99% South Asian. 49% of participants lived in the United States; of these participants, only three had been born outside of the US, but had lived there for an average of 28.33 years. American participants' ethnicity consisted of 81% White/Caucasian, 1% South Asian, 5% East Asian, 7% African/Caribbean, 3% mixed race, and 3% "other."

Procedure and Materials

An online survey was generated through a survey-development website (www.surveymonkey.com). Participants first completed demographic questions before moving on to the following measures.

Gender Role Ideology. The 20-item Attitudes Towards Sex Roles Scale (Larsen & Long, 1988) assessed the endorsement of a traditional gender role ideology. Example items include, "In groups that have male and female members, it is more appropriate that leadership positions be held by males" and "Almost any woman is better off in her home than in a job or profession". Participants used a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly disagree,* 5 = *Strongly agree*) to indicate their level of agreement with each item. Cronbach's alpha was .93 for Americans and .64 for Indians.

Collectivism. Eight items from the Horizontal/Vertical Individualism/Collectivism Scale (Sivadas et al., 2008) measured collectivism in two domains: cooperation and dutifulness. An example item is "I would do what would please my family, even if I detested that activity". Responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 *(Strongly disagree)* to 5 *(Strongly agree).* I collapsed across the horizontal-vertical dimension to increase the reliability of the collectivism scale (a = .79 for Americans and a = .82 for Indians).

Romantic Beliefs. The 15-item Romantic Beliefs Scale (Sprecher & Metts, 1989) consists of four subscales: *Love Finds a Way*, *One and Only*, *Idealization* and *Love at First Sight*, each measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly disagree,* 7 = *Strongly agree*). A sample item from the *Love Finds a Way* subscale is, "If I love someone, I know I can make the relationship work, despite any obstacles". Internal consistency for three of the subscales was good, ranging from .83 to .86; however, for the subscale *Love at First Sight* – consisting of three items – internal consistency was only .31 for Americans and .12 for Indians. Given

the low reliability of the *Love at First Sight*, I excluded this subscale and calculated the total

score for the remaining three subscales, utilizing this total score in the analyses. The internal

consistency for this total score was a = .90 for Americans and a = .89 for Indians.

Mate Preferences. The 27-item Essential Characteristics of a Spouse Scale (Gilbert,

Dancer, Rossman, & Thorn, 1991) measured the extent to which a range of mate

characteristics are desirable in a future spouse. Example items include, "Someone who enjoys

the same recreational activities," and "Someone who makes me feel protected and secure".

Five additional items were added because of their potential relevance for choosing a mate in

traditional, collectivistic societies. In accordance with measures of mate preferences by Buss

et al. (1990) and Lalonde et al. (2004), these items were, "Comes from a family with a good

reputation," "Has good financial prospects", "Favourable social status or rating," "Similar

religious background," and "Someone my family approves of". Participants used a 5-point

Likert scale (1 = *Not at all important,* 5 = *Essential*) to indicate their level of agreement with

each item. Principal components analysis with oblique rotation produced a two-factor

solution. The first factor, accounting for 29.4% of the variance, reflected non-traditional mate

characteristics (20 items), while the second factor, accounting for 15.5% of the variance,

reflected traditional mate characteristics (10 items). All items loaded at .35 or higher on their

respective factor. Cronbach's alpha was .91 for Americans and Indians respectively in non-

traditional mate characteristics and .88 for Americans and .84 for Indians in traditional mate

characteristics. Given that none of the independent variables were significant predictors of

non-traditional mate characteristics, I do not discuss this variable further.

Anticipated Future Difficulties in Marriage. Consisting of 16 items, the Future

Difficulties Scale (Gilbert et al., 1991) measured the issues participants anticipated facing in

their future marital life. The measure consists of three subscales: *Childcare*, *Sharing Family

Work*, and *Career Advancement*. Instructions asked participants to reflect on each item and

indicate how likely a barrier or difficulty such a situation might pose in their future marital life. Ratings were made on a 5-point Likert scale *(1 = Unlikely a difficulty for me, 5 = Very likely a difficulty for me)*. Example items include, "Having to work more than I want to for financial reasons" and "Pursuing a career compatible with my interests and abilities despite family demands (financial or otherwise)". Although the internal consistency for each of the subscales was reasonable, ranging from .71 to .83, the overall scale was more reliable (a = .92 for Americans and a = .87 for Indians). Therefore, the total score for anticipated future difficulties was utilized in the analysis.

Results

Means and standard deviations are reported in Table 4.1, and Pearson's correlations are reported in Table 4.2. I created an effect coded variable to distinguish between the two cultural groups (1 = Indian, -1 = American). Age and sex (1 = male, -1 = female) were also controlled in the following models. As in the previous studies moderation with gender was conducted; 2 (culture) x 2 (sex) ANOVAs were run with the following dependent variables: romantic beliefs, traditional mate characteristics, future difficulties, gender role ideology and collectivism. Nothing was found to be significant except for one analysis. The interaction between sex and culture was significant when gender role ideology was entered as the DV. *T*-tests decomposed the simple effects, revealing that Indian men *(M = 61.30, SD = 5.68)* were significantly more traditional in their gender role beliefs compared to Indian women *(M = 56.94, SD = 10.93, $t(37) = 2.10$, $p < .04$*; American men *(M = 48.55, SD = 14.33)* showed the same pattern of results compared to American women *(M = 34.96, SD = 14.86)*, $t(96) = 4.55$, $p < .0001$.

To test the relationship between culture and my respective dependent variables, three analyses were conducted via a bootstrap method for testing multiple mediation effects (Preacher et al., 2008). In these analyses, culture was the independent variable, collectivism

and gender role ideology were the mediators, and romantic beliefs, traditional mate

preferences, and anticipated future difficulties in marital life were the dependent variables.

Table 4.1

Descriptive statistics

	Americans		Indians		$t(213)$
	M	SD	M	SD	
Age	25.60	8.02	24.70	4.68	1.00
Gender Role Ideology	40.79	16.05	59.94	7.87	-10.64**
Collectivism	26.57	5.42	30.22	4.98	-5.10**
Romantic Beliefs	56.78	13.82	63.77	10.81	-4.03**
Traditional Mate Characteristics	28.09	9.16	38.12	6.63	-9.03**
Future Difficulties	37.55	11.08	44.13	8.40	-4.76**

N=106 for Americans; N=107 for Indians **p <.01

Table 4.2

Pearson's correlations for Indians and Americans

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Sex		.02	.26**	-.04	-.15	-.04	.12
2. Age	.04		.03	-.02	.11	.09	.19†
3. Gender Role Ideology	.42**	.06		.02	-.09	.32**	.48**
4. Collectivism	.14	-.06	.37**		.61**	.48**	.31**
5. Romantic Beliefs	.02	-.26**	.15	.33*		.18†	.06
6. Traditional Mate Characteristics	.19†	-.04	.60**	.45**	.24*		.50**
7. Future Difficulties	.03	-.08	.33**	.34**	.07	.43**	

N = 213 Americans' data are presented below the diagonal, and Indians' data are presented above the diagonal. †p < .10. *p < .05. **p < .01.

The first model tested Hypothesis 1 – that Indians would report greater gender role traditionalism than Americans, thereby driving their romantic beliefs up, while their greater collectivism would simultaneously drive these beliefs down. As seen in Figure 4.1, the total effect of culture on romantic beliefs (i.e., not controlling for collectivism or gender role ideology) was larger and significant ($b = 3.70$, $p < .001$) compared to the direct effect ($b = 1.69$, $p > .05$)[5]. Examination of the 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals (CI) from 5,000 bootstrap samples revealed that the indirect effect of culture on romantic beliefs through gender role ideology was not significant [$b = .13$ (CI: -.99, 1.44]. On the other hand, the indirect effect through collectivism was significant [$b = 1.84$ (CI: .96, 3.06)], partially confirming my hypothesis, although not in the direction originally predicted.

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[5] When the independent variable is dichotomous, Preacher and Hayes (2008) recommend reporting unstandardized regression coefficients.
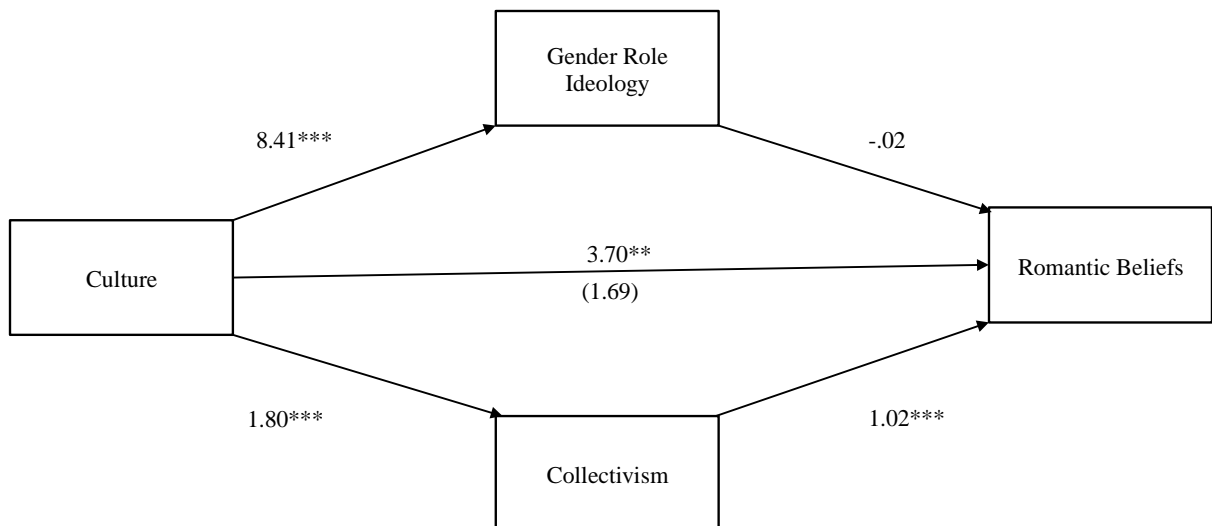
Figure 4.1   *Unstandardized regression coefficients for indirect effects analyses (N=186).*

Indirect effect of culture on romantic beliefs through gender role ideology [b = .13 (CI: -.99, 1.44] and collectivism [b = 1.84 (CI: .96, 3.06)]. The value in parentheses represents the direct effect, and the value directly above is the total effect. ** p < .01, ***p < .001.

The second hypothesis tested whether Indians' more traditional gender role ideology and collectivism would explain why they preferred more traditional mate characteristics than Americans. Partly confirming the hypothesis and demonstrating partial mediation, as reported in Figure 4.2, the total effect of culture on preferences for traditional mate characteristics ($b = 4.93, p < .001$) was larger than the direct effect ($b = 1.54, p < .01$). The indirect effect of culture on traditional mate characteristics through traditional gender role ideology was significant [$b = 2.34$ (CI: 1.60, 3.33)], as was the indirect effect of collectivism [$b = 1.01$ (CI: .60, 1.60)], showing that both mediators exerted separate, positive influences on the relationship between culture and preferences for traditional mate characteristics.
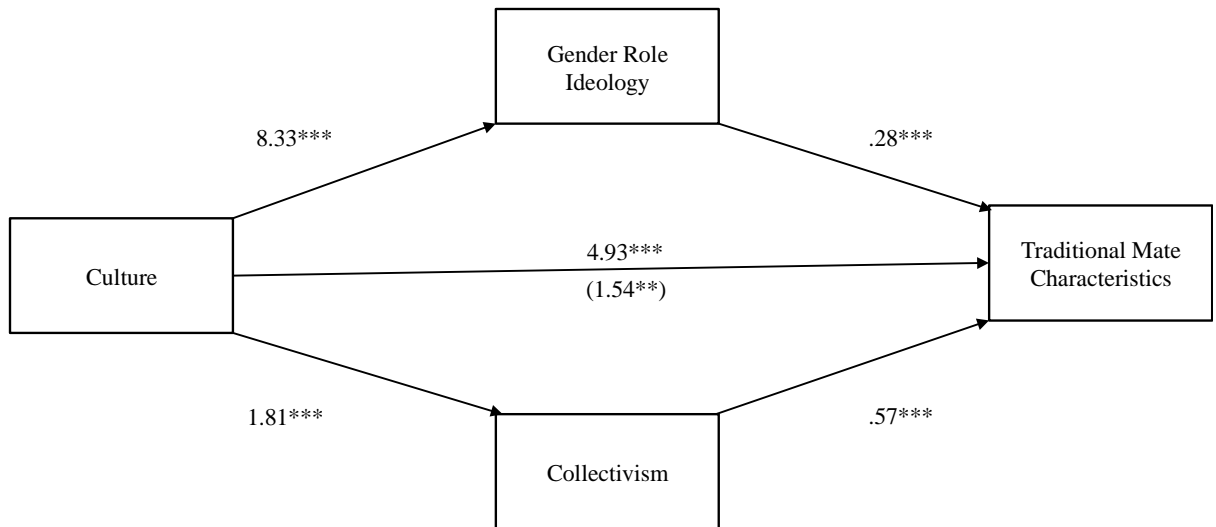
Figure 4.2 *Unstandardized regression coefficients for indirect effects analyses (N=192). Indirect effect of culture on preferences for traditional mate characteristics through gender role ideology [b = 2.34 (CI: 1.60, 3.33)] and collectivism [b = 1.01 (CI: .60, 1.60)]. The value in parentheses represents the direct effect, and the value directly above is the total effect. ** p < .01, ***p < .001*

The third hypothesis proposed that Indians, due to their more traditional gender role ideology and greater collectivism, would anticipate facing more difficulties in their future marital life than Americans. Figure 4.3 shows that the total effect of culture on future difficulties was positive and significant ($b = 3.24$, $p < .001$), whereas the direct effect was negative and not significant ($b = -.12$, $p > .10$). Fully corroborating my hypothesis, the indirect effects of culture on anticipated future difficulties through gender role ideology [$b = 2.32$ (CI: 1.40, 3.52)] and collectivism [$b = .95$ (CI: .52, 1.75)] were both positive and significant.
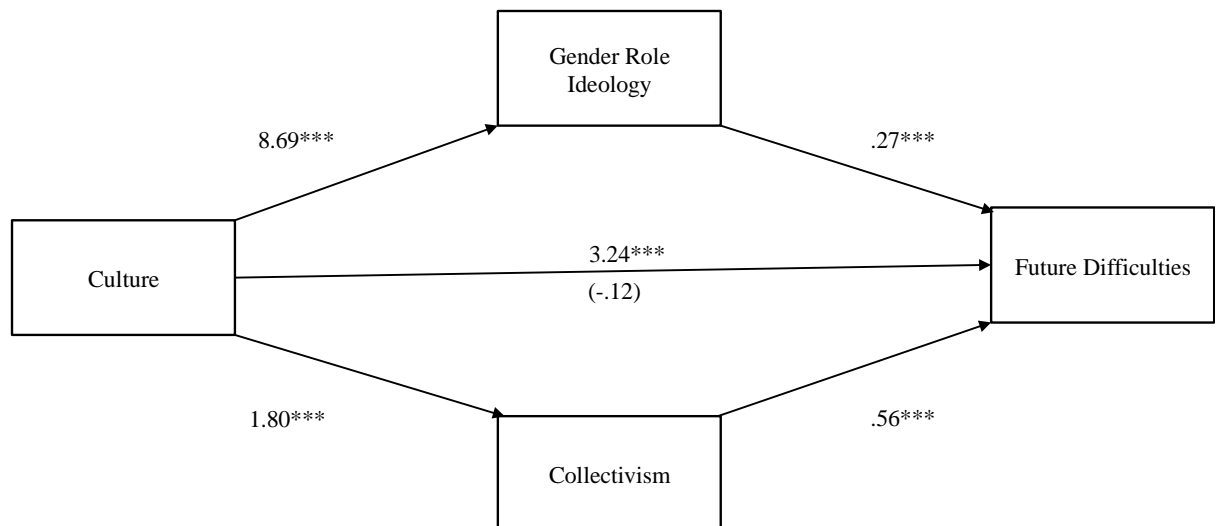
Figure 4.3 *Unstandardized regression coefficients for indirect effects analyses (N=187). Indirect effect of culture on anticipated future difficulties in marital life through gender role ideology [b = 2.32 (CI: 1.40, 3.52)] and collectivism [b = .95 (CI: .52, 1.75)]. The value in parentheses represents the direct effect, and the value directly above is the total effect., ***p < .001*

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to test whether gender role ideology and collectivism mediated the associations of culture with romantic beliefs, mate preferences and future difficulties in marital life. On the whole, I found that Indians reported greater collectivism and, in turn, more romantic beliefs, more traditional mate preferences, and greater anticipation of future difficulties in marriage relative to Americans. Indians also endorsed a more traditional gender role ideology compared to the American group, which explained their stronger preferences for traditional mate characteristics and greater anticipation of future difficulties in their marital life. The main findings of this study add to

the current literature on mate selection and marital relationships by providing evidence that both gender role ideology and collectivism exert unique influences on relationship attitudes and preferences. In the following sections, I discuss these findings in greater detail.

Historically, it was suggested that a successful marriage is rooted in the complementary nature of male and female qualities. For example, Fromm (1956) argued that the frisson generated by masculine and feminine qualities enhanced romantic love and emotional fulfilment in heterosexual relationships. From ancient Sanskrit texts to the love songs of medieval troubadours, from Hollywood to Bollywood, traditional romantic beliefs reflect the trope of the chivalrous male and the receptive female. More recently, however, roles among the sexes have shifted, conceivably redefining the ideals that are sought in a mate. Indeed, Buss et al. (2001) found a notable shift in mate preferences over a 57-year time period. Gender-related traits – such as cooking skills, housekeeping abilities, and chastity – became less important, and men and women increasingly converged in their preferences over time. Buss and his colleagues (2001) also found that mutual attraction became increasingly important to both sexes by the end of the 20th century.

To expand upon this area of research, I examined gender role ideology as a mediator of the association between culture and romantic beliefs. No significant results were found. In past generations, distinct gender roles were strongly emphasized, and men and women were more likely to be venerated for how well they could fill their respective roles (Cherlin, 2005). However, in today's society, notions of masculinity and femininity have shifted, allowing for men and women to abide by less-defined gender roles. Therefore, the ideals of what make a successful union and generates love between two individuals may have also deviated from what was assumed important in past generations.

I also examined collectivism as a mediator of the association between culture and romantic beliefs. In contrast to Western cultures, marriage is often regarded as a necessary

practice in Eastern, collectivistic cultures, and young adults are expected to marry as part of their duty to culture and family (Netting, 2010). Consequently, with the involvement of other family members and the purpose of marriage heavily rooted in family obligations, intimacy between partners is not a necessary requirement of marital bonds (Myers et al., 2009). Nevertheless, while love may not be the primary selection criterion for a marital partner, this does not necessarily dispel the desire for it. Indeed, in many Indian classic folklores and modern Bollywood movies, romantic love is often held in high esteem (Chakraborty, 2010). In these epics, couples who are brought together through romantic love are frequently revered. However, these same stories also warn of the perils of romantic love and its potential to be destructive towards family ties (Gala et al., 2014). Thus, while collectivistic values may emphasize more practicality in marital partner selection and relationship maintenance, actual idealistic views on love and romance may be strongly supported within the cultural milieu. In line with this reasoning, Neto (2007), in his cross-cultural study of love styles, concluded that Indians were higher in pragmatic love, but they also did not differ from Americans or Portuguese in Eros (i.e., passionate love). In a recent study, Gala et al. (2014) found that while commitment to a relationship is very important to emerging adults in Indian, so is love. Indian participants expressed strong support for romantic love and believed it should be an integral part of married life; even in cases of arranged marriage, participants trusted that love would develop between partners over time.

Contrary to my predictions, but consistent with these studies, I found that Indians' stronger romantic beliefs were driven by their greater collectivism. While the purpose of marriage may differ within collectivistic and individualistic cultures, leading collectivists to be more pragmatic in their search for a marital partner (Levine et al., 1995), the actual desire for love may not differ so much from Westerners. Moreover, the cultural sanctions against the expression of romantic love may actually enhance the desire for it relative to Westerners,

who may freely express it without fear of reproach by the community. Note, however, that, I measured the romantic beliefs of unmarried participants, not their actual experience of love within a marital relationship. It may be that the romantic ideals of unmarried Indians may not be realized within an actual marriage, especially if it is arranged. Future studies assessing romantic ideals pre- and post-marriage could help shed further light on this area of study.

I further examined the predictors of spousal preference. The findings showed that Indians reported a more traditional gender role ideology and greater collectivism; in turn, they showed a stronger preference for traditional mate characteristics in a marital partner. As mentioned previously, ideals in mate preferences and what is thought to be necessary for relationship longevity and satisfaction may have shifted over the years (Hatfield et al., 2006; Zentner et al., 2012). For instance, in contemporary India, children more than ever are expressing their desire for a partner who is compatible with them on an individual level. Therefore, among the traditional concerns of selecting someone who is socially suitable, they are also increasingly seeking a mate who can meet their personal needs for connection and intimacy

Nevertheless, while Westernization may be inspiring young adults to take a stronger stance when choosing a personally-compatible partner, this has not necessarily reduced the importance still afforded to traditional criteria. For instance, the caste system, particular to India, is still commonly applied when choosing marital partners (Dhar, 2013). Banerjee et al. (2013) found that within the matrimonial advertisements that are being increasingly used for finding a marital partner, ads are organized under caste headings, allowing those who are seeking a marital mate to, first and foremost, locate someone within their own caste. Providing dowry is also reminiscent of traditional marital considerations when assessing suitable matches. While this practice is no longer considered legal in India today, it is still largely practiced out of social courtesy (Sonawat, 2001). Thus, while individually-calibrated

factors such as personality and charisma are now being incorporated into the partner selection process, cultural and familial input still continues to be very important.

Furthermore, Hinduism endorses a patriarchal belief system and the preservation of family lineage (Netting, 2010). Premarital sex is prohibited and marriage is viewed as the framework for upholding the family structure; accordingly, casual dating is largely considered taboo (Manohar, 2008). Without the opportunity to initiate a personal connection, prospective mates are instead evaluated in terms of multiple pragmatic qualities, such as one's economic, social, and religious background. In line with my results, Buss et al. (1990) also found that Indian participants showed a stronger preference for traditional values such as chastity and the desire for home and children.

Consistent with other research, I found that Indians' collectivism and gender role traditionalism contributed to their greater concerns about future difficulties in their marital life (Suppal et al., 1996; Sastry, 1999). Collectivistic cultural values of family honour and deference to older family members places additional pressure on married couples to maintain traditional gender roles, while economic needs and social advancements may necessitate otherwise. For example, Krishnan et al. (2010) found that despite Indian women's more readily-available job opportunities, they often felt ambivalent about working given the challenge it posed to conventional power dynamics. In fact, 47% of wives stated that they did not work because their husbands would not allow them.

Community pressures may also reinforce traditional conceptualizations of marriages, adding to the difficulty of adjusting to marital life for many Indian couples. George (2006) reported that working class Indian men who did not earn a sufficient income – obliging their wives to work menial jobs and become the household breadwinner – were viewed as "weak" and held in contempt by community members. These men were seen as breaking cultural norms that emphasize the male provider role, thereby bringing shame onto themselves and

their families. In a society where reputation in the community and good family relations are vital, couples who deviate from acceptable role patterns run the risk of alienating family members, losing critical support and being ridiculed in the community. These fears inadvertently place pressure on Indian couples to maintain traditional marital dynamics irrespective of their personal desires.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although the findings of Study 3 offer important insights into cultural influences on romantic beliefs, partner selection, and anticipated future difficulties in marital life, there are several limitations to this study that warrant discussion. While some studies, including my own, have shown that Indian participants express similar or even stronger romantic ideals or passionate love compared to their Western counterparts (Schmitt et al., 2004; Neto, 2007), other research has found otherwise (Medora et al., 2002). For example, irrespective of cultural background, Regan and colleagues (2004) found that 85% of their adolescent participants had experienced romantic love. On the other hand, Twamley (2013) found that Indians were suspicious and disapproving of premarital love that was thought to arise from "love at first sight" and included physical intimacy; however, "pure love" that abided by cultural and familial standards was deemed important and desirable in a relationship, especially within a marital context. Therefore, to clarify the mixed findings on this topic, it would be helpful for future research to take age, marital status, and love styles into account when exploring cultural differences in romantic beliefs and passionate love. Likewise, this research measured romantic beliefs rather than participants' actual experience of romantic love within relationships – a distinction that would be beneficial to consider in upcoming studies.

An additional limitation of this study was that I asked participants to rate their perceptions of how difficult they thought their future marital life would be. Further research

should examine the *actual* difficulties experienced by married couples. Moreover, my research only focused on single participants. Research has shown that spouses who discussed their respective viewpoints on how to manage household labour, career goals, and parenting issues prior to getting married expressed greater satisfaction in their marriage (Hallett et al., 1997). It might also be that instrumental family support, especially for the collectivistic Indian sample, could help offset some of these difficulties. However, without taking these additional variables into account, my participants could only report what they foresaw their future difficulties might be instead of their actual experiences and challenges in marital life.

The researchers also noted the possibility that Indians may have anticipated greater future marital difficulties because they may be less prone to a positivity bias than Americans. However, while Indian participants showed a negative evaluation towards future marital circumstances, they also showed a positive evaluation of romantic beliefs, demonstrating that they are not generally showing a negativity bias by swaying towards bleaker thought or evaluation patterns. Finally, it is important to acknowledge that, similar to Study 2, the sample of Indian participants, given their ability to speak English and have access to computers, may have been more educated and come from higher socioeconomic backgrounds compared to the average Indian living in India. Therefore, the participants in my study may not necessarily represent an accurate reflection of the more general Indian population.

Likewise, the average age of participants in this study was in their mid-twenties. One might expect age to be positively correlated with gender role traditionalism, such that older generations are more traditional than younger generations, however, neither gender role ideology nor collectivism was significantly associated with age in the study. Future research may wish to compare gender role ideology and collectivism among younger and older generations to ascertain the influence of societal shifts on romantic beliefs and relationship dynamics between varying age groups.

Study 3: Concluding Remarks

The current research sought to "unpack" the influence of culture on romantic beliefs, mate preferences, and anticipated future difficulties in marital life by examining the mediating roles of collectivism and gender role ideology. Contrary to past research that deemed romantic love as less important in collectivistic cultures, my findings suggested that today's generation of Indian youth actually possessed *stronger* romantic ideals than did their American counterparts. While it is still crucial for collectivist youth to be pragmatic in their mate choices, this does not detract from their desire for love and romance. I further found that Indians' gender role traditionalism and collectivism were associated with stronger desires for a partner with traditional mate characteristics and greater anticipation of future difficulties in marital life. Future research would profit from examining the ways that Indians' aspirations to abide by cultural customs and choose a marital partner according to family expectations can be reconciled with the demands of globalization, economic development, and political and social reforms in a changing society. These findings can aid in the development of culture-specific marital therapies that are based on the understanding and appreciation of different practices and norms across cultures.

Study 4: The Effect of Priming Gender Role Ideology on Romantic Ideals, Mate Preferences, and Anticipation of Future Difficulties in Marital Life Among Indians and Americans

Study 4 maintained the same focus of the previous study. However, Study 3 was only correlational in design, and could not demonstrate causality among variables. Therefore, a major addition of Study 4 was its experimental design, constructed as a priming study. Research has shown that people's unconscious beliefs can still influence their thoughts and actions (Bargh et al., 1996; Jost and Kay, 2005; Rudman et al., 2010). In the case of gender role ideology, individuals can maintain simultaneous opposing beliefs regarding men and women's roles in society (Glick et al., 2001; Jost et al., 2005). Therefore, through priming different forms of gender ideologies, I was interested to see if individuals' subsequent romantic beliefs, preferences in a mate, or anticipated future difficulties in marital life would be affected.

Benevolent sexism was also added in Study 4 as an additional variable. Gender role ideology and benevolent sexism are positively correlated (Glick & Fiske, 1996, 2001). To broaden my understanding of gender role beliefs and gain a more refined understanding of these issues in society, I included this variable in the current study. Staying consistent with the previous studies, my hypotheses were tested on Indian and American samples.

Overview of Study 4

Over the last few decades, marriage has been in transition and generational differences have become more visible (Perrone-McGovern, Wright, Howell, & Barnum, 2014). Today's couples have increasingly begun to evaluate the quality of their marital relationship based on the fulfilment of their own personal needs rather than through normative, socially constructed ideals (Cherlin, 2004). Therefore, the rewards once sought through marriage have also begun shifting. Rather than reap benefits from fulfilling socially

valued roles – such as the role of a responsible parent or the devoted and loving spouse – the focus now is more on the personalized rewards people can gain as a result of being in a long-term marital relationship, including greater intimacy, personal growth and a deeper understanding of the self (Cherlin, 2005). As a consequence of these changes, the roles of husbands and wives have grown more flexible, leaving couples to negotiate their part in the marriage as they see fit (Cherlin, 2004).

While these developments are largely documented in American families since the 1960s, researchers have also noted increasing changes in family patterns within Eastern collectivistic societies as well (Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Perrone-McGovern et al., 2014). The improvements in living conditions in many countries, as well as economic and technological advancements in recent decades, have helped spread ideas around the world (Kwon & Roy, 2007). Countries such as China and India have been especially influenced by these changes, given their rapid development over the recent years (Wang et al., 2010).

Despite these attitudinal shifts, a separation of roles and responsibilities across traditional gendered lines still continue to prevail cross-culturally (Poortman et al., 2009). Men are still largely expected to be domineering and masculine with their primary responsibility being that of breadwinner, while women are portrayed as more nurturing and gentle with their main task being that of a caretaker for the family and household (Dill et al., 2007; Simon et al., 2012). In sum, today's young adults are routinely exposed to concurrent diverging standards about gender dynamics and ideologies. But to what extent does this information influence people's perceptions about their own lives and choices? How do today's young adults choose a marital partner and envision their future marital life? And can exposure to information that primes a particular gender role ideology produce subsequent shifts in individuals' attitudes towards romantic relationships as well?

The current study aimed to shed light on these questions. Past research has shown that priming can activate a person's most salient beliefs (Oyserman & Lee, 2008). Therefore, by priming participants with traditional, egalitarian or benevolent ideals about men and women's roles in a marital relationship, I aimed to understand whether subsequent shifts in preferences for a marital partner, romantic beliefs and anticipated future difficulties in marital life would follow. To further understand these dynamics in two contrasting cultures, I continued to test my hypotheses on both American and Indian participants.

Priming Effects

Priming studies refer to wide-ranging experimental designs in which participants are exposed to some sort of basic stimuli such as words or pictures and any subsequent behavioural shifts are evaluated (Pashler, Coburn, & Harris, 2012). Perceptual priming studies, within cognitive research, have been particularly successful. In these studies, participants are usually exposed to words, then shown target letter strings and asked to identify them as actual words or non-words. In cases where the prime is related to the target letter string, participants have a quicker response rate (Harris, Coburn, Rohrer, & Pashler, 2013). These types of perceptual priming studies have been replicated many times with robust results.

In the last few decades, therefore, priming methods have gained popularity in many areas of research, including social psychology (Harris et al., 2013). However, unlike the perceptual priming effects, which have been replicated many times across various research labs and have received consistent results, priming effects in social psychology have generated inconclusive results and mixed success (Cesario, 2014; Harris, et al., 2013). With this said, however, there have also been some interesting findings that have resulted from social psychology priming studies. For instance, in a number of social psychology research studies, examination of priming techniques have demonstrated that priming a concept within a

research setting can potentially influence people's thoughts and behaviour in the same way that a real life, authentic situation can (Aarts & Dijksterhuis, 2003; Hundhammer & Mussweiler, 2012). Consistent with this notion, research by Bodenhausen, Schwarz, Bless and Wanke (1995) showed that exposing participants to positive role models of African American celebrities subsequently influenced their self-reported racial attitudes. For the purposes of this study, I tested whether priming different types of gender role relations and sexist attitudes had an impact on perceptions of romantic beliefs, mate preferences, and anticipated future marital difficulties.

People can commonly hold paradoxical views on gender stereotyping. For instance, it is frequently the case that individuals' explicit assessment of women is positive, yet the consequence of these beliefs leads to biased and unequal treatment (Glick et al., 1996). Moreover, attitudes towards gender roles are not implacably fixed, but may be malleable due to external factors (Rudman et al., 2010). Consequently, depending on whether individuals are exposed to gender typical or atypical roles, they can potentially be influenced by these social cues, activating more traditional or egalitarian attitudes towards the sexes (Garst et al., 1997; Smith, 1992). Geis, Brown, Walstedt, and Porter (1984), in their study of how television commercials impacted women's achievement scripts, concluded that women who watched commercials that depicted traditional gender roles were more likely than men who viewed the same commercials to discuss themes that dealt with homemaking versus achievement topics. However, those women who viewed commercials in which men and women reversed their conventional gender roles expressed stronger achievement ambitions compared to the women in the traditional condition. Thus, individuals' gender-related thoughts, actions and beliefs have the potential to be cued through priming methods.

Finally, experimental research also offers researchers the opportunity to study whether outcomes prevalent in one cultural group have the potential to occur in another

culture when primed with the same concept (Oyserman et al., 2008). For example, the US is often thought of as supporting stronger egalitarian beliefs between the sexes compared to India (Sastry, 1999). However, can priming Indian participants with more egalitarian views produce similar gender beliefs as those held by Americans? Alternatively, can priming Americans with sexist or traditional attitudes towards gender role relations generate more conventional beliefs about men and women's roles that are in line with Indian cultural norms? The following sections outline theory and research on gender role ideology and sexism in greater detail.

Gender Role Ideology

As discussed in the previous chapter, gender role ideology refers to socially constructed beliefs about men and women's ideal characteristics, responsibilities, and conduct (Claffey et al., 2009). An egalitarian gender role ideology emphasizes similarity between the sexes, whereas a traditional gender role ideology emphasizes differences (Stanik et al., 2012). Aggregating the personal beliefs held by individuals, cultures also vary in gender role ideology, influencing the way communities view men and women (Perrone-McGovern et al., 2014). These cultural norms can play a key role in marital relationships, shaping the ways that spouses behave toward each other, perceive the quality of their relationship, and divide up family responsibilities (Perry-Jenkins & Crouter, 1990).

Ambivalent Sexism

In spite of global shifts towards increasing gender egalitarianism, the patriarchal system active in many societies and the process of gender differentiation between the sexes has been supported and endorsed through a set of conflicting ideologies directed towards women (Jost et al., 2005). This system of beliefs seeks to simultaneously prize and devalue them – a paradox known as ambivalent sexism (Glick et al., 2000). Ambivalent sexism consists of two dimensions: benevolent and hostile sexism (Glick et al., 1996). Hostile sexism

aims to dominate women, impressing upon them an inferior position in society to that of men; through exerting power and control and imposing stereotypical gender roles, hostile sexism further strengthens men's dominance over women. However, over the decades as women have gained more equality and women's rights have been increasingly gaining traction, male power has come under threat. Therefore, hostile sexism has been principally directed towards female groups who are challenging the status quo, such as feminists and ambitious career-oriented women (Exposito, Herrera, Moya, & Glick, 2010). By overtly trying to punish and ridicule women who decline and are unwilling to subordinate to conventional gender standards, hostile sexism attempts to preserve men's position of power and control.

Nevertheless, while men seek to control women, in many respects they are also dependent on them. Men's reliance on women to meet their sexual and emotional needs, as well as to birth and care for offspring and undertake domestic tasks, also facilitates the desire to cultivate a close and intimate relationship between the sexes (Guttentag & Secord, 1983). Accordingly, this necessity fosters a seemingly positive idealization and treatment of women, while also reinforcing women's secondary position in society – a phenomenon termed benevolent sexism (Glick et al., 2000). As a result, a patriarchal sexist view of women is still preserved, which reinforces the notion that women require men to look after them by protecting and providing for them. However, at the same time, Glick et al. (2000) explain that from the perspective of the dominant group, this ideology appears positive given that women are depicted as compassionate, empathic, and affectionate, with men as their noble protectors, deficient in many regards without the love of a woman. If women are characterized as more tender and moral, then men bear the responsibility of gallantly protecting these virtues and drawing upon them for love and strength. Consequently, benevolent sexism is a subtle form of prejudice that insidiously works to maintain the traditional status quo between men and women's roles (Glick et al., 2001). In Western society today, when women's rights are being

progressively acknowledged and women more valued, hostile sexism may be increasingly rejected and deemed socially unacceptable, while benevolent sexism is overlooked. As such, gender inequality continues to colour peoples' perceptions about men and women's relations with one another.

In Eastern, collectivistic cultures where traditional gender roles are widespread and gender stratification common, both forms of sexism may be particularly salient. For instance, Pek and Leong (2003) reported that traditional Chinese beliefs that promote patriarchal ideology and female submissiveness predicted both hostile and positive sexist views towards women. Contrarily, modern or 'westernized' beliefs that encourage egalitarian attitudes and equality between the sexes did not show similar patterns of association with sexist attitudes. In another study, Glick, Sakalli-Ugurlu, Ferreira, and de Souza (2002) measured these constructs in two nations considered high honour cultures where traditional gender roles are the norm and a man's right to exert dominance over his wife is part of his identity as a husband and a man – Turkey and Brazil (Cohen, Nisbett, Bowdle, & Schwarz, 1996; see Glick et al., 2002). They found that hostile sexism strongly predicted attitudes that legitimatized abusive behaviour towards one's wife by both men and women; men were more likely to commit these acts, while women were more likely to permit their occurrence. Benevolent sexism also showed a similar pattern of results. However, when hostile sexism was controlled for in the analysis, benevolent sexism no longer uniquely predicted attitudes that condoned wife abuse.

Indeed, Glick et al (2004) have found that hostile and benevolent sexism work together as complementary ideologies to maintain discrimination towards the sexes. They reason that, in nations where hostile sexism is more blatantly endorsed, benevolent sexism is more commonly supported as well. In a cross-cultural study of 19 nations, Glick et al. (2000) found that in the countries with the highest mean score of sexism (Botswana, Cuba, Nigeria,

South Africa), women's endorsement of benevolent sexism exceeded even that of men's. The researchers argued that this phenomenon is most likely due to women's need for protection and self-defence. In cultures where overall levels of sexism are high, violence and mistreatment of women is also more prominent, leaving women in greater need of protection and safeguarding (Glick et al., 2001; 2004). Therefore, women are faced with a conundrum: reject all forms of sexism and be met with hostility and resentment – potentially risking one's safety – or accede with traditional female roles and gain the acceptance, affection, and protection of men's benevolence. Consequently, it is no wonder that women willingly accept and act in accordance with prescribed gender roles and the ideology (i.e., benevolent sexism) that supports and reinforces gender stratification. For instance, Derne ́'s (1994b) analysis of Indian households found that often a wife's position of power in joint family settings is at the very bottom, where she is frequently overburdened with household tasks and has to submit to other people's expectations of her. However, instead of rejecting this role and risking penance (i.e., hostile sexism), she instead tries to cultivate a closer, more affectionate relationship with her husband, relying on him to negotiate her welfare and position in the home on her behalf (i.e., benevolent sexism). In this way, benevolent sexism can outwardly appear to bring couples closer together by generating complementary roles that seemingly benefit both – the tender, loving wife and the protective, observant husband – while inwardly it continues to keep both sexes bound to their roles, superseding their rights in a relationship.

Therefore, the present study paid particular attention to benevolent sexism for its ability to go undetected, likely influencing romantic beliefs and relationship ideals. Glick et al. (1996) argued that while other sexism measures may be more predicative of more broad political opinions on gender issues, ambivalent sexism may better capture unequal gender-based in interpersonal relationships between men and women. More specifically, in this study I was predominantly interested in examining romantic relationship ideals and quality –

subject matter that is especially relevant to benevolent sexism. For example, when it comes to formulating relationship ideals, Glicke et al. (2001) reasoned that benevolent sexism can be particularly disarming and persuasive to both sexes (Glick et al., 2001). For women, it not only characterizes them in a positive light, but it also presents them with the potential opportunity to utilize men's power and protection for their own gain, if only they are able to attract a high quality male partner. At the same time, men who believe in the benevolent sexist ideology are more likely to strive to meet the image of a chivalrous protector, preferring women who demonstrate vulnerability and behave in traditionally gender-appropriate ways (Viki, Abrams, & Hutchison, 2003). Therefore, benevolent sexism may continue to influence men's and women's choices in a marital partner and shape romantic ideals, even without realization of the discriminatory nature of this ideology and its impact on promoting traditional gender roles.

Predictors of Romantic Beliefs

Similar to the effects of traditional gender role ideology, discussed in the previous study, benevolent sexism endorses a complementary view of gender role relations (Jost et al., 2005). By personifying women as refined, moral, and gracious, and men as assertive providers and protectors, benevolent sexism generates an intimate interdependence between the sexes – much the same way traditional notions of romance does (Duran, Moya, & Megias, 2011; Robnett & Leaper 2013). The knight in shining armour, a token symbol of romantic idealization, personifies the notion of paternalistic chivalry often venerated in benevolent sexist ideology. Equally so, as discussed in Study 3, romantic beliefs frequently depict women as sweet, virtuous, but often naïve, misguided individuals who require the assertive direction of a man to feel complete (Viki et al., 2003). For example, Reik's (1957) complementary theory of love postulated that individuals experience discontentment when they recognize they are lacking qualities they wish to have, but have been unable to acquire.

Romantic love forms between two people who each possess the qualities the other is seeking, cultivating a sense of unity and well-being. In this way, romantic beliefs stress the co-dependent nature of a heterosexual relationship, portraying each sex as requiring the love of the other to feel whole and complete. Consequently, the power of the union is emphasized by portraying the couple as a natural fit with one another, generating love, absolving whatever qualms each may have been facing alone, and bringing about a sense of on-going happiness.

In Study 3, I did not find that traditional gender role ideology significantly mediated the association between culture and romantic beliefs. However, research has shown that benevolent sexism is positively correlated with romantic ideals and chivalrous paternalism – attitudes and beliefs that appear to express care and consideration of women, while hampering the role they play during courtship or dating – for both sexes (Viki et al., 2003). For instance, Good and Sanchez (2009) found that priming communal (sensitive and caring) stereotypes of women resulted in men showing greater interest in romantic ideals and family investment. In the same regard, traditional gender roles and benevolent sexism share a similar ideological foundation regarding men and women's relational dynamics. Both constructs impose an expectation of how each sex should treat the other and the role a man or woman should play in a relationship.

Traditional gender roles and benevolent sexism are more strongly advocated in India than in the United States (Mahalingam et al., 2007; Sastry, 1999). Moreover, while love is not typically the basis for marriage in collectivistic cultures, the cultural value placed on marital relationships may serve to heighten the desire for it. Neto (2007) found that Indians show a strong affinity towards love. This study examined whether this might also be a consequence of India's robust support of men and women's separate roles in society. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, many Indian epics praise romantic love, honouring it as one of the highest possible ideals individuals can reach (Punja, 1992). In today's generation of Indian young adults, Gala

et al. (2014) found that individuals hope for and strive towards this ideal, viewing it as a fundamental component of long-term relationship satisfaction, even in marriages that have been arranged by family. Based on the rationale that romantic beliefs have been shown to have a positive correlation with biased attitudes towards the sexes (Good et al., 2009; Peplau et al., 1993) , I predicted that Indians and Americans primed with a traditional gender role ideology and benevolent sexism, but not egalitarian beliefs, would show a stronger endorsement of romantic beliefs. While I postulated that the primes would have an effect in both cultures, I expected the effects to be stronger for Indians.

Predictors of Marital Mate Preferences

As discussed previously, traditional gender roles promote customary patterns of role division between the sexes, with women being associated with domestic tasks, while men are associated with the responsibilities of a provider (Glick et al., 2001). Evolutionary psychology provides insight as to why men and women may have developed to have these differences in the first place. Buss (1995) explained that men and women have evolved similarities in areas where they were confronted with similar adaptive problems, while they differ in areas where they were persistently faced with varying adaptive challenges. Sexual reproduction is a key area in which men and women, in large part due to their genetic makeup, have faced different adaptive problems in evolutionary history. For instance, pregnancy and lactation – metabolically and physically taxing activities – have presented unique adaptive challenges for women. Men, on the other hand, have faced the predicament of paternity uncertainty and the risk of investing in non-biological offspring (Buss et al., 2011). As a result of these differences, men and women have, over time, evolved to express sex-differentiated behavior (e.g., caretaker, resource provider); likewise, this has lead to the desire for varying mate preferences between the sexes such as men seeking younger, fertile women, while women desire men with greater resources (Buss, 2003; Buss et al., 2011).

It is important to note, however, that evolutionary psychology does not contend that certain preferences and behavioral characteristics are only exclusive to men and others only to women, nor does it assert that these preferences are fixed and inflexible. Evolutionary psychology acknowledges the influence of complex, multifaceted environmental and social contingencies that continue to act on the adaptive sexual strategies of men and women (Buss, 2003). For instance, in some cultures these differences in mate preferences and gender roles are more strongly endorsed and supported, while in others, they are increasingly becoming less important and more flexible.

Nevertheless, to the extent that individuals continue to actively seek a marital partner based on these qualities, traditional gender roles continue to be reinforced and perpetuated throughout society (Eastwick et al., 2006; Johannesen-Schmidt, et al., 2002). Accordingly, a cyclical dynamic is established wherein the endorsement of conventional gender roles facilitates the preferences for a marital partner and vice versa. Social role theorists support this perspective; they reason that a society's norms regarding individuals' marital, family, and work roles will subsequently influence people's preferences for a potential partner (Eagly, Wood, & Diekman, 2000; Eastwick et al., 2006). Through the drive to fulfil these roles, people often strive to cultivate personal characteristics that are in sync with societal standards and endeavour to find a partner that also fits within these normative ideals. For example, in many societies, gender roles frequently assert that men should be the primary breadwinner; therefore, men who strive to become resourceful, competent at work, and earn a good living will be particularly attractive to a potential mate (Eagly, Wood, & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2004). Consequently, societal ideals regarding appropriate gender and marital roles will frequently inform individuals about the value of their own qualities, while also guiding their preferences in a marital partner.

Accordingly, when traditional gender roles of the female caretaker and the male provider are endorsed, each sex can maximize their personal interest by seeking a mate that fits within these conventional roles (Eagly et al., 2009). Women can gain the most benefits from attracting a mate that is financially resourceful, thereby procuring a good provider, while men can maximize their benefits by seeking a female that is skilled at domestic responsibilities, thereby procuring a good homemaker (Wood & Eagly, 2007). These complementary mating preferences tend to be true cross-culturally (Buss et al., 1990). In countries where there exists a strong patriarchal society and the division of labour between men and women is strongly supported, people express a greater interest in a partner with more traditional characteristics (Eagly et al., 1999; Wood et al., 2002).

As discussed in earlier chapters, India continues to support strong patriarchal beliefs, expecting individuals to follow the course of traditional gender roles. Men and women are obliged to behave in accordance within the scope of their respective roles (Bhatnagar et al., 2001; Hudson et al., 2004). Collectivistic cultural values, likewise, reinforce the importance of basing a marital partner selection on familial and cultural commitments that give credence to traditional gender roles, rather than on emotional intimacy (Suppal et al., 1996). Therefore, insofar as abiding by traditional gender roles is a large part of what makes young men and women attractive to a prospective partner, choosing a marital partner according to these traditional standards increases the chances of a reputable marriage in Indian society (Dhar, 2013); this serves to further perpetuate and strengthen the division of roles between men and women (Mahalingam et al., 2007). Therefore, I predicted that Indians and Americans primed with a traditional gender role ideology and benevolent sexism, but not egalitarian beliefs, would report stronger preferences for traditional mate characteristics; the effects should be stronger for Indians.

Predictors of Anticipated Future Difficulties in Marital Life

It is frequently the case that people's ascribed gender roles may play an important role in the expectations they hold for their relationship (Perry-Jenkins et al., 1990). Some researchers have suggested that men and women who endorse traditional gender roles may experience more harmony and stability in their relationship (Becker, 1981; Deal, Wampler, & Halverson, 1992; Durkheim, 1960). This perspective reasons that the complementary nature of traditional gender roles may decrease the overlap of responsibilities and the need to juggle work and family obligations. This asymmetrical exchange of responsibilities between partners may help generate mutual dependence and stability, reducing the stress associated with striving for work-family balance that is frequently prevalent for egalitarian couples (Barnett et al., 2001). Additionally, the similarity in attitudes about each partner's role in the family may help reduce friction and misunderstanding between the husband and wife.

Social studies within the last few decades, however, are increasingly challenging this perspective (Oppenheimer, 1994; Stanik et al., 2012). For example, Ickes (1993) refutes the view that couples who ascribe to traditional gender roles enjoy increased marital satisfaction. Instead, he argues that these couples have less commonality and shared interests between them – the husband is predominately involved in the career world, and the wife in the routines of home life. Given their varying interests and focus in different areas of life, these couples often have a harder time finding common ground and regularly face disagreements and miscommunication in their relationship (Oppenheimer, 1997). Not surprisingly, many of these couples have described their relationship as unsatisfying (Antill, 1983; Lamke, 1989).

In addition, deriving satisfaction from fulfilling one's respective gender roles is becoming less important in today's marriages than in the past (Cherlin, 2004). Women are increasingly entering the workforce and society is changing to accommodate the shifts in men and women's daily responsibilities. However, when individuals' perceptions about

conventional gender roles remain constant while behavioural and societal shifts take place, the conflict between the varying positions can create negative outcomes. For example, there is a growing discontentment among women who still identify with traditional gender roles and retain their homemaker role, while also increasingly taking on the responsibility of a paid job (Stanik et al., 2012). Given the strain of modern responsibilities in relationships where the traditional division of household labour is still rigidly endorsed, there is a growing link to poor relationship quality for couples and an increase in health problems for wives (Frisco & Williams, 2003). These results have been found in American couples, as well as couples from around the world (Khawaja & Habib, 2007; Orbuch & Eyster, 1997). In countries such as India, where economic growth is especially rapid, couples may experience a particularly difficult time incorporating new attitudes with traditional values (Carson & Chowdhury, 2000; Natrajan & Thomas, 2002). Indeed, Natrajan et al. (2002) have reported that the need for counselling and talk therapies has expanded in India, especially among the middle class as a result of the accelerated changes the country is undergoing. They reason that individuals are increasingly struggling to cope with the changes to marriage and family life these advances have amassed, while traditional gender roles and collectivistic values continue to be enforced. Based on this rationale, I predicted that Indians and Americans primed with a traditional gender role ideology and benevolent sexism, but not egalitarian beliefs, would anticipate facing more difficulties in their future marital life. Similar to the previous two predictions, I expected the effects to be stronger for Indians.

The Present Study

A set of guiding principles – gender-role ideology and benevolent sexism – frequently goes hand-in-hand with the separation of attitudes and behaviour across gendered lines cross-culturally. At the same time, whilst gender disparities are still prevalent, beliefs about what constitutes an ideal man or woman and what responsibilities they should each hold in and out

of the home are also in transition (Buss et al., 2001; Barnett et al., 2001). As a result, people are regularly exposed to both contemporary and traditional gender roles in society.

Moreover, social stereotypes tend to be formidable scripts that can shape individuals' belief systems and behaviours. This can happen whether or not the individual is consciously aware of these influences or even whether or not they support these views (Jost et al., 2005). Therefore, to expand upon this area of research, the overarching objective of this study was to test whether activating sexist or egalitarian gender role ideology would lead American and/or Indian participants to express differences in romantic beliefs, preferences for a marital partner and anticipated difficulties in future marital life. This experimental method builds on the previous three studies, which were correlational and could not demonstrate causality.

Hypothesis 1: Indians and Americans primed with a traditional gender role ideology and benevolent sexism, but not egalitarian beliefs, would show a stronger endorsement of romantic beliefs; the effects were expected to be stronger for Indians.

Hypothesis 2: Indians and Americans primed with a traditional gender role ideology and benevolent sexism, but not egalitarian beliefs, would report stronger preferences for traditional mate characteristics; the effects were expected to be stronger for Indians.

Hypothesis 3: Indians and Americans primed with a traditional gender role ideology and benevolent sexism, but not egalitarian beliefs, would anticipate facing more difficulties in their future marital life; the effects were expected to be stronger for Indians.

Method

Ethics Statement

The Brunel University Psychology Research Ethics Committee provided ethical approval for this study. Participants gave written informed consent at the beginning of the survey. All responses were confidential and kept anonymous.

Participants

Three hundred and fifteen participants took part in this study (123 women and 192 men; mean age = 28.01, *SD* = 8.27) through Amazon's Mechanical Turk. They were paid

$0.35 (USD) for completion of the survey. 42% of participants were single, 48% were in dating relationships, 6% were cohabitating with their partner, and 4% were engaged; individuals who were married were excluded from taking part in the study. The relationship breakdown of Indian participants was as follows: 74 dating, 5 engaged, and 70 were single. For Americans 78 were dating, 20 cohabitating, 7 engaged, and 61 were single. Of the total participants, 78% wanted to get married in the future, 5% did not, and 17% were undecided. Additionally, 65% of participants desired children in the future, 15% did not, and 20% were undecided. 47% of participants were born and currently lived in India, and the rest were born and currently resided in America The ethnic composition of Indian participants consisted of less than 1% White/Caucasian and the rest were South Asian. The ethnicity of American participants was comprised of 84% White/Caucasian, 1% South Asian, 5% East Asian, 7% African/Caribbean, and 3% mixed race.

Procedure

An online survey was created through a survey-development website (www.surveymonkey.com). To begin, all participants provided responses to demographic questions. They then went on to completed the following scales: Attitudes Towards Sex Roles Scale (Larsen et al., 1988)**,** Horizontal/Vertical Individualism/Collectivism Scale (Sivadas et al., 2008), and the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; Glick et al., 1996). Participants were then randomly assigned to read one of three vignettes and answer the manipulation check questions. Last, participants completed the dependent measures, which included the Romantic Beliefs Scale (Sprecher et al., 1989), the Essential Characteristics of a Spouse Scale (Gilbert et al., 1991), and the Future Difficulties Scale (Gilbert et al., 1991)

Materials

Experimental primes. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the three experimental conditions. Each vignette described a hypothetical husband's egalitarian gender

role beliefs, traditional gender role beliefs, or benevolent sexism. I decided to focus on a husband's perspective because research has shown that it is primarily the husband's decision-making processes that determine the degree of equality in the home (Ball, Cowan, & Cowan, 1995; Bartley et al., 2005). Husbands have utilized their position of power in either overt or more discrete ways to sway their wives' attitudes and behaviour in a direction that fits them best (Sprey, 1979; Zvonkovic, Schmiege, & Hall, 1994). Fox and Murray (2000) have found that even when couples perceive their marriage as an equal partnership and believe their roles to be egalitarian, husbands are still more likely enjoy an upper hand in overall decision-making processes in the home. Therefore, based on this research, I expected that a husband's hypothetical beliefs, in contrast to hypothetical wife's beliefs, would be a stronger prime for the purposes of the study.

To ensure that participants were unaware of the true purpose of the vignettes and prevent them from providing socially desirable answers, I provided them with the following prompt: "We are currently working on compiling a new study and would like to request your help to finalize the project. The following is a vignette and questions we are considering using in the next study. Please take a few minutes to read the vignette and answer the questions."

Items from the Attitudes Towards Sex Roles Scale (Larsen et al., 1988) inspired the creation of the egalitarian and traditional gender role primes, and items from the benevolent sexism subscale of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; Glick et al., 1996) inspired the construction of the benevolent sexism vignette. The name Jay was used because it represented a common name in both the United States and India. The primes are presented below, verbatim.

Egalitarian Gender Role Prime:

> Jay is a modern man regarding the roles each member of the couple should play. He
> thinks there should be equality in a marriage and that the husband and wife should

participate equally in family decisions, as well as in taking care of the home and the children. Jay believes times have changed and therefore both members of the couple should bring money home and jointly provide for the family's finances.

Traditional Gender Role Prime:

Jay thinks that, as a man, he possesses strong leadership qualities and should primarily be responsible for the economic support of the family. He wants to provide the means for his spouse to be able to stay at home because he believes that almost any women is better off in her home than in a job or profession. Although he thinks it is good for both husband and wife to express their opinions, Jay believes that as head of the household, he should get the final say in family matters.

Benevolent Sexism:

Jay is a man who thinks that no matter how accomplished he is, a man is not truly complete as a person unless he has the love of a woman. He thinks that every man should have a woman whom he adores and is happy with. He thinks that women should be cherished and protected by men, and he puts his wife on a pedestal, because he thinks that, like other women, she has a quality of purity few men possess.

Manipulation Check. Following exposure to the prime, all participants were asked to answer six questions to check whether the experimental manipulation was effective. The questions consisted of the following: "I had a hard time clearly understanding the vignette"; "The vocabulary/words used in the vignette were too difficult or complex"; "Do you think Jay holds a positive attitude towards women?"; "Do you think Jay holds a negative attitude towards women?"; "Marriage should not interfere with a woman's career any more than it does with a man's"; "Women should be allowed the same sexual freedom as men". Participants used a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly disagree,* 5 = *Strongly agree*) to indicate their level of agreement with each item. The first two items were included to be consistent with the cover story given to participants regarding the purpose of the study. The next two items were taken from a priming study on benevolent sexism conducted by Duran et al. (2011). The last two items were taken from the Sex-Role Ideology Scale by Kalin and Tilby (1978). It was important that the manipulation check items were different from the previously administered questionnaires to prevent item overlap.

Measures. With the exception of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; Glick et al., 1996), Study 4 utilized the same measures as Study 3. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the other scales were as follows: Attitudes Towards Sex Roles Scale (Indians .71, Americans .92), Collectivism (Indians .82, Americans .78), Romantic Beliefs (Indians .86, Americans .89)[6], Traditional Mate Preferences (Indians .82, Americans .85), Anticipated Difficulties in Future Marital Life (Indians .89, Americans .85).

In accordance with Study 3, a factor analysis was conducted on the Essential Characteristics of a Spouse Scale (Gilbert et al., 1991). Similar to the previous study, principal components analysis with oblique rotation produced a two-factor solution. The first factor, accounting for 28.0% of the variance, reflected non-traditional mate characteristics (19 items), while the second factor, accounting for 12.6% of the variance, reflected traditional mate characteristics (10 items). This solution emerged for the total sample; however, when I factor analysed the scale for Americans and Indians separately, similar solutions emerged. All items loaded at .35 or higher on their respective factor. For non-traditional mate characteristics Cronbach's alpha was .89 for Americans and .90 for Indians. Cronbach's alpha for traditional mate characteristics is reported above. Given that none of the independent variables significantly predicted non-traditional mate characteristics, this variable will not be discussed further.

Ambivalent Sexism. 11 items from the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; Glick et al., 1996) assess participants' endorsement of benevolent sexism. Example items include "No matter how accomplished he is, a man is not truly complete as a person unless he has the love of a woman" and "Men should be willing to sacrifice their own well-being in order to provide financially for the women in their lives". All items are statements to which participant are

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[6] Similar to Study 3, internal consistency for the subscale *Love at First Sight* was low (Indians .32, Americans .48). Given the low reliability of the *Love at First Sight*, consistent with the previous study, I excluded this subscale and calculated the total score for the remaining three subscales; these are the figures that are reported. I then utilized this total score in subsequent analyses.

asked to indicate their level of agreement by using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly disagree,* 5 = *Strongly agree*). Cronbach's alpha was .85 for Indians and .93 for Americans.

Results

Means and standard deviations are reported in Table 5.1, and Pearson's correlations are reported in Table 5.2. I created an effect coded variable to distinguish between the two cultural groups (1 = Indian, -1 = American). Age and sex (1 = male, -1 = female) were controlled in the following models. To test the effectiveness of the manipulation check questions, I began by reverse scoring manipulation check question 4 and conducted a reliability test with manipulation check question 3. Cronbach's alpha was .83, therefore these two items were combined into a single score and labelled as manipulation check 1. Higher scores indicated that the hypothetical husband held more positive attitudes towards women. I also conducted a reliability test for manipulation check questions 5 and 6 (manipulation check 2). Cronbach's alpha was .57. The two items remained in their raw form in the analysis, such that higher scores indicated greater egalitarianism. I then conducted a reliability test for manipulation check questions 3, 4, 5, and 6 together. However, because Cronbach's alpha was only .51, manipulation checks 1 and 2 were analysed separately. Cronbach's alpha for manipulation check 1 was .88 for Americans and .76 for Indians, indicating good reliability for both samples.

Table 5.3 shows the means and standard deviations of each cultural group for manipulation checks 1 and 2 separately. I conducted two-way ANOVAs with experimental condition and cultural group as the independent variables and each manipulation check variable as the dependent variable. For manipulation check 1, there was a significant main effect of experimental condition, $F(2, 306) = 55.12$, $p < .0001$. *T*-tests with a Bonferroni correction revealed that participants who were exposed to the benevolent sexism prime were significantly higher on manipulation check 1 ($M = 7.60$, $SD = 2.08$) compared to participants

exposed to the traditional gender role ideology prime ($M = 5.38$, $SD = 2.11$), $t(203) = -7.53$, $p < .0001$; participants who were exposed to the egalitarian prime ($M = 8.15$, $SD = 1.63$) were also significantly higher on manipulation check 1 compared to participants exposed to the traditional gender role ideology prime ($M = 5.38$, $SD = 2.11$), $t(164) = -10.12$, $p < .0001$. Participants exposed to the egalitarian prime and to the benevolent sexism prime did not significantly differ from one another once the Bonferroni correction was applied $p = .03$; in administering the Bonferroni correction, the regular p-value of .05 was divided by three, so that the p-value for the t-test needed to be less than .017 for it be considered significant.

The main effect of culture on manipulation check 1 was not significant; however, the interaction of culture and the experimental condition was significant, $F(2, 306) = 5.15$ $p < .006$. One-way ANOVAs tested the simple effects for each cultural group separately. The first analysis showed that there were significant differences between priming groups for Indians, $F(2, 143) = 15.18$ $p < .0001$. T-tests with a Bonferroni correction revealed that Indians primed with benevolent sexism were significantly higher on manipulation check 1 compared to those primed with traditional gender role ideology, $t(93) = -4.46$, $p < .0001$; those primed with egalitarian gender role beliefs were also significantly higher on manipulation check 1 compared to those primed with traditional gender role ideology , $t(80) = -4.75$, $p < .0001$. Indians exposed to the egalitarian prime and to the benevolent sexism prime did not significantly differ from one another, $p = .94$.

The second analysis showed that there were significant differences between priming groups for Americans too, $F(2, 163) = 44.45$, $p < .0001$. T-tests with a Bonferroni correction revealed that those primed with benevolent sexism were significantly higher on manipulation check 1 compared to those primed with traditional gender role ideology, $t(108) = -6.39$, $p < .0001$. Similarly, Americans primed with egalitarian gender role beliefs were significantly higher on manipulation check 1compared to those primed with traditional gender role

ideology, $t(98) = -10.37$, $p < .0001$. Finally, Americans primed with egalitarian gender role beliefs were significantly higher on manipulation check 1 compared to those primed with benevolent sexism, $t(116) = 2.88$, $p < .005$.

A second two-way ANOVA revealed a main effect of culture on manipulation check 2, $F(1, 309) = 29.13$, $p < .0001$. A t-test revealed that Indian participants were higher on manipulation check 2 ($M = 4.51$, $SD = 1.48$) compared to American participants ($M = 3.51$, $SD = 1.81$), $t(313) = -5.18$, $p < .0001$. The main effect of the priming condition on manipulation check 2 was not significant, nor was the interaction effect.

Furthermore, to ascertain whether gender or relationship status could be acting as possible moderators, three ANOVAs were run with each respective dependent variable (i.e., romantic beliefs, traditional mate characteristics, future difficulties). The independent variables consisted of experimental condition, culture, gender and relationship status. Relationship status was operationalized as 1 = single, -1= in a relationship (dating, cohabitating, engaged, married). In all instances, none of the analyses yielded significant interactions effects. For all three analyses only the main effect of culture was significant.

Table 5.1

Descriptive statistics

	Americans		Indians		$t(311)$
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	
Age	29.65	9.58	26.13	5.96	-3.90**
Gender Role Ideology	38.97	14.48	58.12	8.84	13.86**
Benevolent Sexism	27.99	10.67	41.48	7.02	13.18**
Collectivism	26.90	5.27	31.31	4.75	7.65**
Romantic Beliefs	54.63	12.84	65.19	10.73	7.80**
Traditional Mate Characteristics	27.78	8.33	37.53	6.61	11.48**
Future Difficulties	35.65	9.44	43.51	9.90	-7.04**

N = 166 for American; N = 145 for Indians **$p < .01$

Table 5.2

Descriptive statistics for meditators and dependent measures of Americans by experimental condition

	Traditional Gender Role Ideology		Benevolent Sexism		Egalitarian Gender Role Ideology		
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*F-Values*
Age	28.91	7.96	29.44	10.28	30.49	9.98	.35
Gender Role Ideology	37.77	14.65	40.87	15.43	37.77	13.18	.84
Benevolent Sexism	28.21	10.72	26.35	10.55	29.78	10.69	1.54
Collectivism	26.84	4.58	26.54	5.76	27.39	5.21	.39
Romantic Beliefs	56.88	13.86	54.76	13.21	52.64	11.39	1.31
Traditional Mate Characteristics	28.68	9.29	26.61	8.20	28.47	7.62	1.11
Future Difficulties	35.72	8.97	34.39	10.02	37.11	9.03	1.25

N = 44 Traditional Gender Role Ideology, N = 67 Benevolent Sexism, N = 55 Egalitarian Gender Role Ideology

Table 5.3

Descriptive statistics for meditators and dependent measures of Indians by experimental condition

	Traditional Gender Role Ideology		Benevolent Sexism		Egalitarian Gender Role Ideology		
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	F-Values
Age	26.02	6.11	25.64	4.77	26.67	6.84	.37
Gender Role Ideology	56.71	10.12	58.51	8.49	58.90	8.06	.76
Benevolent Sexism	40.98	7.63	41.31	6.82	42.06	6.79	.30
Collectivism	30.98	5.40	31.65	4.44	31.27	4.54	.23
Romantic Beliefs	64.67	12.80	65.39	9.75	65.47	9.77	.08
Traditional Mate Characteristics	36.91	6.48	37.10	8.21	38.42	4.91	.76
Future Difficulties	40.49	11.03	45.64	9.91	44.02	8.33	3.16*

N = 45 Traditional Gender Role Ideology, N = 49 Benevolent Sexism, N = 53 Egalitarian Gender Role Ideology

Table 5.4

Pearson's correlations for Indians and Americans

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Sex		.07	.23**	-.01	.04	-.01	.01	-.13
2. Age	-.02		-.14	$-.16^{\dagger}$	.03	.02	-.01	. -09
3. Gender Role Ideology	.31**	-.06		.01	-.11	-.29**	.25**	.41**
4. Benevolent Sexism	.12	.13	.54**			.62**	.46**	.22*
5. Collectivism	.07	.08	.04	.19*		.61**	.41**	.11
6. Romantic Beliefs	-.05	-.02	.09	.25**	.27**		.42**	.06
7. Traditional Mate Characteristics	-.15*	.03	.45**	.52**	.16*	.26**		.41**
8. Future Difficulties	-.01	-.19*	.17*	.22**	.09	-.05	.34**	

N=315 Americans' data are presented below the diagonal, and Indians' data are presented above the diagonal.
$^{\dagger}p < .10.$ $*p < .05.$ $**p < .01.$

Table 5.5

Results of Manipulation Checks

	Americans			Indians		
	M	*SD*	N	*M*	*SD*	N
Manipulation Check 1						
Traditional Gender Role Ideology	4.86	1.92	44	5.89	2.18	45
Benevolent Sexism	7.50	2.24	66	7.74	1.87	50
Egalitarian Gender Role Ideology	8.50	1.58	56	7.76	1.61	51
Manipulation Check 2						
Traditional Gender Role Ideology	3.16	1.72	44	4.68	1.84	44
Benevolent Sexism	3.78	1.94	67	4.44	1.40	50
Egalitarian Gender Role Ideology	3.46	1.69	56	4.43	1.52	54

*Manipulation Check 1 indicates positive attitudes towards women. Manipulation Check 2 indicates more egalitarian beliefs.

Analysis of Results for Participants for Whom the Manipulation Worked

The analyses were redone with participants for whom the manipulation appeared

to have worked, as gauged by their scores on manipulation check 1. Manipulation check

2 assessed egalitarianism; by excluding participants who scored high on egalitarianism

after exposure to the traditional or benevolent sexism primes, I may have risked

excluding participants who were simply habitually egalitarian in their beliefs. I began by

examining the frequency distributions within each experimental condition and cultural

group. The cut-off point was set for one standard deviation above the mean. One standard

above the mean for participants assigned to the traditional and benevolent sexism

conditions meant that they thought that the character in the prime held very positive

attitudes towards women, contrary to the purpose of the prime; one standard deviation

below the mean for participants assigned to the egalitarian prime meant that these

participants thought the character held very negative attitudes towards women, also

contrary to the purpose of the prime. These participants may not have been duly

influenced by the prime or did not understand it, and therefore, they were excluded from

the subsequent analyses.

I reran two-way ANOVAs with experimental condition and cultural group as the

independent variables and manipulation check 1 as the dependent variable. Paralleling my

original results, I found a significant main effect of experimental condition, $F(2, 264) =$

159.32, $p < .0001$. T-tests with a Bonferroni correction revealed that participants who were

exposed to the egalitarian prime $(M = 8.58, SD = 1.25)$ were also significantly higher on

manipulation check 1 compared to participants exposed to the traditional gender role

ideology prime $(M = 4.94, SD = 1.82)$, $t(133) = -14.97$, $p < .0001$. Furthermore, those who

were exposed to the benevolent sexism prime were significantly higher on manipulation

check 1 $(M = 8.23, SD = 1.49)$ compared to participants exposed to the traditional gender role

ideology prime ($M = 4.94$, $SD = 1.82$), $t(175) = -13.25$, $p < .0001$. Participants exposed to the egalitarian prime and to the benevolent sexism prime did not significantly differ from one another $p = .08$.

While the main effect of culture on manipulation check 1 was not significant, the interaction of culture and the experimental condition was, $F(2, 264) = 11.84$ $p < .0001$. One-way ANOVAs tested the simple effects for each cultural group separately. Analysis for Indians showed that there were significant differences between priming groups, $F(2, 125) = 41.53$ $p < .0001$. T-tests with a Bonferroni correction revealed that Indians primed with benevolent sexism were significantly higher on manipulation check 1 compared to those primed with traditional gender role ideology, $t(68) = -7.59$, $p < .0001$; those primed with egalitarian gender role beliefs were also significantly higher on manipulation check 1 compared to those primed with traditional gender role ideology, $t(68) = -6.99$, $p < .0001$. Indians exposed to the egalitarian prime and to the benevolent sexism prime did not significantly differ from one another, $p = .43$.

Analysis for Americans revealed that there were significant differences between priming groups as well, $F(2, 139) = 138.85$, $p < .0001$. T-tests with a Bonferroni correction showed that those primed with benevolent sexism were significantly higher on manipulation check 1 compared to those primed with traditional gender role ideology, $t(92) = -12.17$, $p < .0001$; those primed with egalitarian gender role beliefs were significantly higher on manipulation check 1compared to those primed with traditional gender role ideology, $t(83) = -18.65$, $p < .0001$; those primed with egalitarian gender role beliefs were significantly higher on manipulation check 1 compared to those primed with benevolent sexism, $t(96) = -3.28$, $p < .005$. There were no significant interaction effects between culture and experimental condition on the three dependent variables. Therefore, these have not been reported.

Effect of Priming Conditions on Dependent Variables

I conducted hierarchical regression analyses to assess the effect of the primes on participants' romantic beliefs, traditional mate preferences and anticipated future difficulties in marital life. I created two contrasts: the first contrast (traditional = 1, benevolent = 0, egalitarian = -1) compared traditional with egalitarian gender role ideology; the second contrast (traditional = 0, benevolent = 1, egalitarian = -1) compared benevolent sexism with egalitarian gender role ideology.

Hierarchical regression analyses were conducted to test the predictors of each of my respective dependent variables. Control variables were included in Step 1 (sex, age, culture), and main effects for continuous gender role attitude and value scores in Step 2 (attitudes towards sex roles, ambivalent sexism, collectivism). Step 3 consisted of the prime condition contrasts, and Step 4 included the interaction between the prime contrasts with culture and sex. Results showed that the experimental manipulations did not yield any significant effects on the dependent variables. I subsequently ran additional hierarchical regression analyses using the same model that removed the culture x prime condition interactions and included interactions between the prime condition contrasts and sex in Step 4. Again, the analyses did not yield sufficient significant results for the priming conditions and interactions except for one effect. The main effect of prime contrast 2 on traditional mate preferences was significant, indicating that participants primed with benevolent sexism relative to those primed with egalitarianism preferred marital partners with less traditional characteristics. However, the hierarchical regression, as seen in Table 5.4, showed that there were significant cultural differences in the dependent variables. Indians showed a stronger preference for marital partners with traditional characteristics and anticipated greater difficulties in future marital life than did Americans. Given that the primes did not yield the anticipated effects, I therefore proceeded forward by testing whether the continuous gender role attitude and value

scores entered in Step 2 mediated cultural differences in the dependent variables. These

analyses therefore tested whether the mediational models from Study 3 replicated in Study 4.

Table 5.6

Standardized regression coefficients for the predictors of romantic beliefs, traditional mate preferences, and anticipated future difficulties in marital life.

Predictors	Romantic Beliefs	Traditional Mate Preferences	Anticipated Future Difficulties in Marital Life
Step 1			
Sex	-.06	-.08	-.08
Age	-.01	.03	-.12*
Culture	.40	.59***	.38***
Step 2			
Traditional Sex Roles	-.15*	.31***	.28**
Benevolent Sexism	.36**	.35***	.11
Collectivism	.28**	.14**	.07
Step 3			
Prime Contrast 1	.08	.06	-.05
Prime Contrast 2	-01	-.10*	-.01
Step 4			
Prime Contrast 1 × Culture	-.04	-.03	-.12†
Prime Contrast 2 × Culture	-.03	.01	.10
Prime Contrast 1 × Sex	-.10	.06	.13†
Prime Contrast 2 × Sex	-.06	-.08	-.05

Reports are based on data from 247 to 261 participants (*df* varied slightly across the analyses given missing data for some variables) $^{\dagger}p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Mediational Models

To test the indirect links between culture and the dependent variables, three analyses were conducted via a bootstrap method for testing multiple mediation effects (Preacher et al., 2008). The mediational models were composed of the following: culture as the independent variable, collectivism, gender role ideology and benevolent sexism as the mediators, and romantic beliefs, traditional mate preferences, and anticipated future difficulties in marital life as the respective dependent variables.

The first mediational model tested whether Indians would report greater gender role traditionalism, benevolent sexism and collectivism than Americans, thereby driving their romantic beliefs up. The total effect of culture on romantic beliefs (i.e., not controlling for collectivism or gender role ideology) was larger and trending towards significance ($b = 2.22$, $p < .10$) compared to the direct effect ($b = .10$, $p > .95$),[7] as shown in Figure 5.1. Examination of the 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals (CI) from 1,000 bootstrap samples revealed that the indirect effect of culture on romantic beliefs through gender role ideology [$b = -.94$ (CI: -3.13, 1.41] and benevolent sexism was not significant [$b = 1.89$ (CI: -.04, 4.26]. On the other hand, the indirect effect through collectivism was significant [$b = 1.17$(CI: .06, 2.72)]. Both Study 3 and 4 corroborated these results – that Indians' greater collectivism explained their greater romantic beliefs.

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[7] When the independent variable is dichotomous, Preacher and Hayes (2008) recommend reporting unstandardized regression coefficients.

Figure 5.1   *Unstandardized regression coefficients for indirect effects analyses (N=104).*
Indirect effect of culture on romantic beliefs through collectivism [b = 1.17(CI: .06, 2.72)],
gender role ideology [b = -.94 (CI: -3.13, 1.41] and benevolent sexism [b = 1.89 (CI: -.04,
4.26]. *The value in parentheses represents the direct effect, and the value directly above is*
the total effect. * *p < .05, ** p < .01, ***p < .001.*

The next hypothesis proposed that Indians, given their more traditional gender role
ideology, benevolent sexism and collectivism, would prefer more traditional mate
characteristics than Americans. Showing partial mediation (see Figure 5.2), the total effect of
culture on preferences for traditional mate characteristics ($b = 5.31, p < .0001$) was larger and
showed stronger significance than the direct effect ($b = 1.49, p < .001$), confirming my
hypothesis. The indirect effect of culture on traditional mate characteristics through
traditional gender role ideology [$b = 1.55$ (CI: .95, 2.40)] and benevolent sexism [$b = 1.79$

(CI: 1.11, 2.55)] was significant, as was the indirect effect of collectivism [b = .47 (CI: .13, .84)], showing that all three mediators exerted separate, positive influences on the relationship between culture and preferences for traditional mate characteristics. These results also fully confirmed the findings from Study 3 demonstrating that Indians' more traditional gender role attitudes, benevolent sexism, and collectivism accounted for their preference for more traditional mate characteristics.
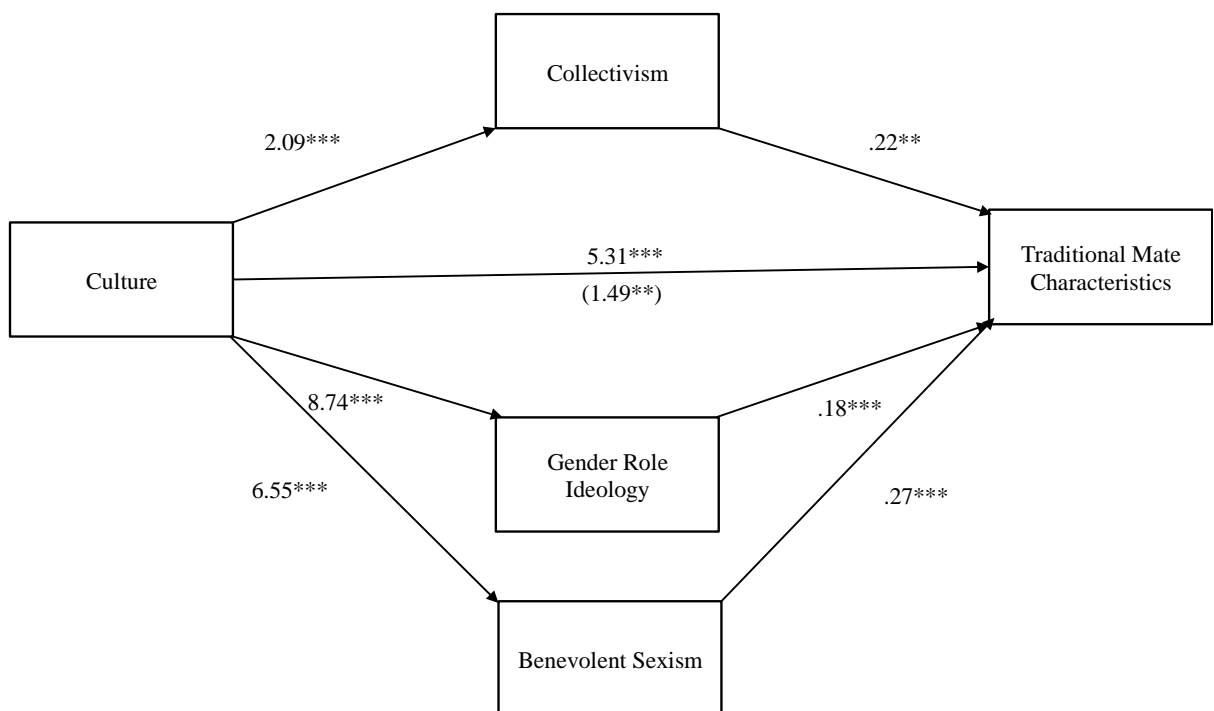
Figure 5.2 *Unstandardized regression coefficients for indirect effects analyses (N=165). Indirect effects of culture on preferences for traditional mate characteristics through collectivism [b = .47 (CI: .13, .84)], gender role ideology [b = 1.55 (CI: .95, 2.40)] and benevolent sexism [b = 1.79 (CI: 1.11, 2.55)]. The value in parentheses represents the direct effect, and the value directly above is the total effect. ** p < .01, ***p < .001*

The final model tested whether Indians, due to their more traditional gender role ideology, benevolent sexism and greater collectivism, would anticipate facing more difficulties in their future marital life than Americans. The total effect of culture on future difficulties was significant ($b = 3.92$, $p < .0001$) while the direct effect was not ($b = 1.43$, $p < .07$), as shown in Figure 5.3. Partially corroborating the hypothesis from Study 3, the indirect effect of culture on anticipated future difficulties through gender role ideology was significant [$b = 1.61$ (CI: .48, 2.90)]; however, the indirect effect through benevolent sexism [$b = .61$ (CI: -.47, 1.94)] and collectivism [$b = .26$ (CI: -.36, .92)] were not significant, which partly reflected the findings from Study 3 that Indians' more traditional gender role attitudes explained their greater anticipated difficulties in future marital life.

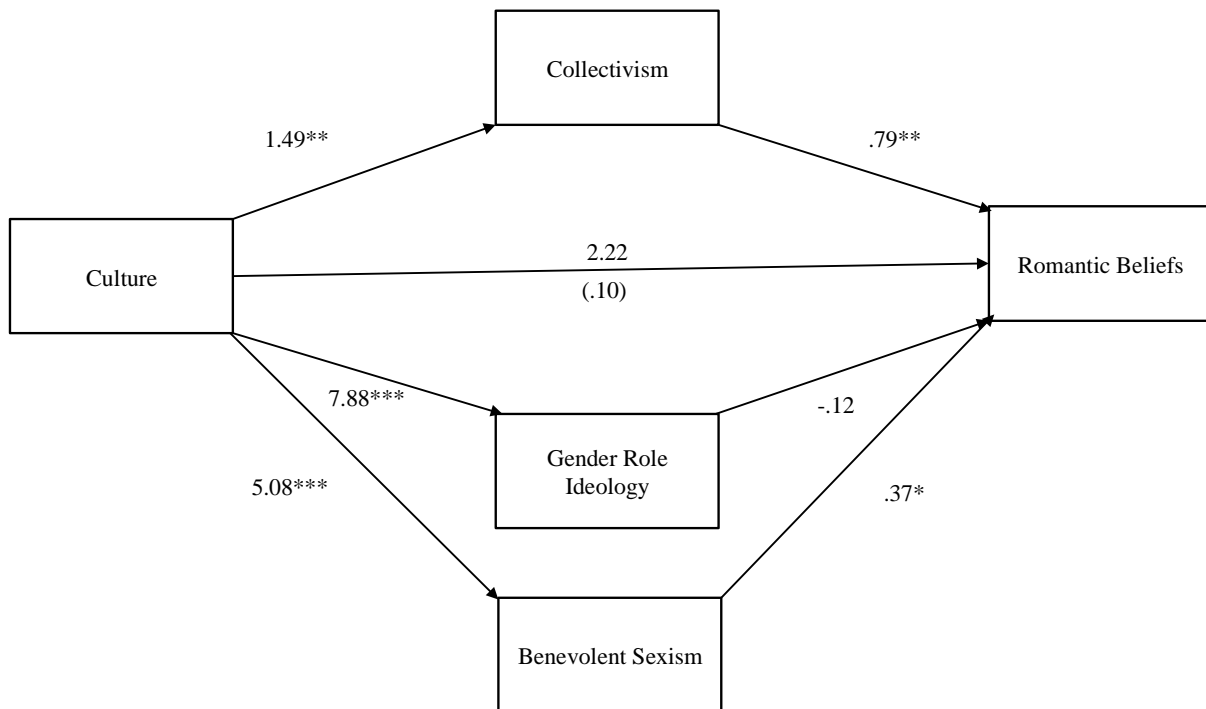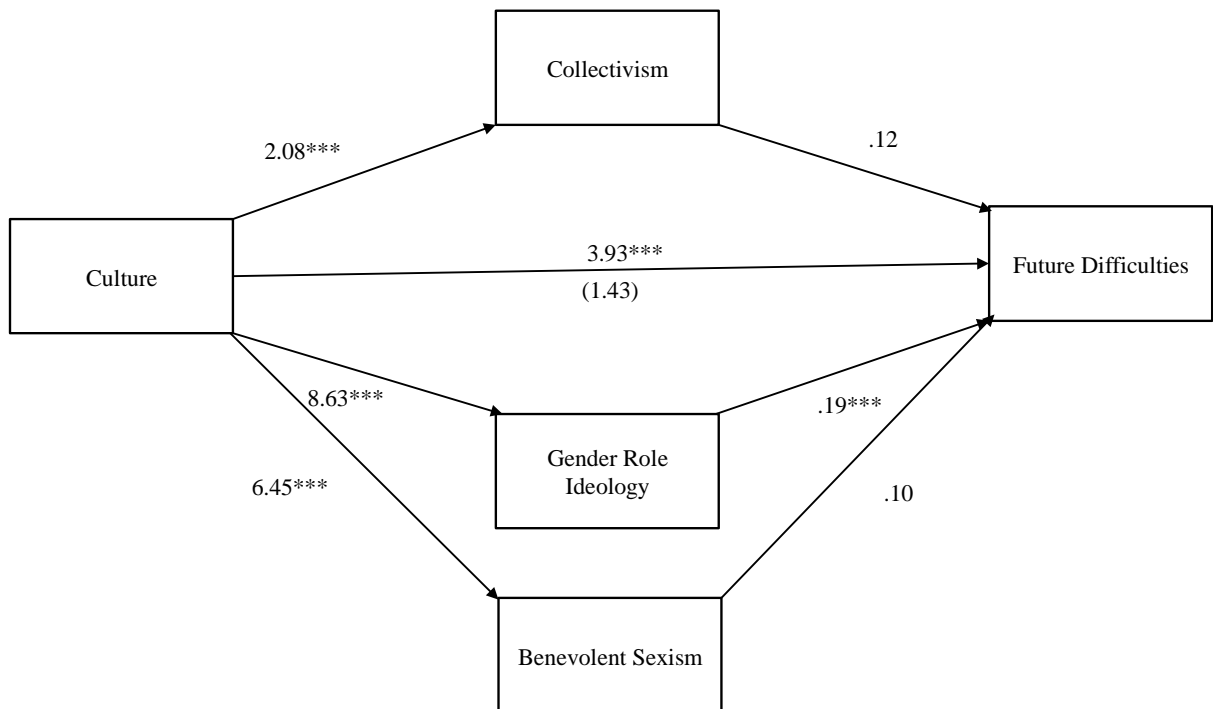**Figure 5.3** *Unstandardized regression coefficients for indirect effects analyses (N=259).*

Indirect effects of culture on anticipated future difficulties in marital life through collectivism

[b = .26 (CI: -.36, .92)], gender role ideology [b = 1.61 (CI: .48, 2.90)] and benevolent

sexism [b = .61 (CI: -.47, 1.94)]. The value in parentheses represents the direct effect, and the

*value directly above is the total effect. ***p < .001*

Discussion

The purpose of Study 4 was to test whether exposure to one of three priming

conditions – traditional gender role ideology, egalitarian ideology, and benevolent sexism –

would affect participants' endorsement of romantic beliefs, marital mate preferences, and

anticipated difficulties in future martial life. On the whole, the priming conditions did not

have any effect on these dependent variables expect for prime contrast 2 on traditional mate

preferences, which showed that those primed with benevolent sexism expressed less desire for marital partner with traditional characteristics. Given that the priming conditions did not yield sufficient significant results, I instead replicated the meditational models tested in Study 3 and found the results to be almost entirely consistent. Thus, Indians, given their greater collectivism than Americans, showed a stronger endorsement of romantic beliefs, while their more traditional gender role ideology lead them to anticipate greater difficulties in their future marital life. Finally, due to both their greater collectivism, more traditional gender role ideology and benevolent sexism Indians showed stronger preferences for traditional mate characteristics compared to Americans. The next section further discusses why the experimental primes may not have been successful in Study 4.

Inconclusive Results in Priming Studies

As mentioned earlier, within the realm of social psychology research, priming studies have produced ambiguous findings, making it difficult to gauge their validity and soundness of results (Simmons, Nelson, & Simonsohn, 2011). Pashler and colleagues (2012) explain that complex priming studies conducted within the social sciences have seldom been directly replicated. Moreover, from the few published attempts to directly replicate these studies, many have been unsuccessful in reproducing the original results in their entirety or even in part (see also Klein et al., 2014). Simmons et al. (2011) point to Type 1 errors as possible culprits for the conflicting results found in published findings within social psychology. They explain that ambiguity in data outcomes and the researcher's own desire to find statistically significant results may lead some researchers to publish findings that are not entirely accurate or show very low statistical power.

Other researchers have attributed inconsistent effects to scientific journals' propensity to publish positive results compared to negative ones (Ioannidis, 2005). Papers that have been published and therefore made public can paint an erroneous picture of the totality of

findings in priming studies as Ioannidis (2005) points out. Harris et al. (2013) reason that consistent failures to replicate original priming effects in published papers may point to a more pervasive problem in this area of research. It may be the case that for every significant priming study that is published, there are many more non-significant findings that have been filed away, unable to be made public because of journals' tendency to favour publishing significant results. Known as the file drawer problem, studies which render non-significant results are filed away by researchers and not seen by other researchers or the public, given the inability to get published (Rosenthal, 1979).

Regardless of their shortcomings, priming methods have also been reported to work (Aarts et al., 2003; Bargh et al., 1996; Nosek & Smyth, 2011), even though outcomes can vary widely. Given the difficulty in controlling confounding variables in higher-level priming effects – often tested in the social sciences – results can sometimes be unreliable (Klein, et al., 2014). For example, effects in perceptual priming are much more simple and direct (Pashler et al., 2012). On the other hand, in addition to the priming condition itself, many other variables can also influence the outcomes of social priming studies. These variables can range from the experimenter conducting the study, the interaction between experimenter and participants, the sample the data is collected from, the state of mind the participants are in during testing, and procedural variations (Klein, et al., 2014). In the current study the manipulation checks were not significant. I believe that the lack of significance in the study was perhaps related to the various factors discussed, but most notably, it was likely the result of a weak prime.

While the social cognition literature suggests that semantic priming can automatically occur – i.e., outside of the participants' conscious awareness – research in cognitive neuroscience offers contrary evidence (Bargh, 2006; Doyen, Klein, Pichon, & Cleeremans, 2012). Literature in this area of study cites two factors – attention to the prime by participants

and strength of the prime itself – which need to be present in order for semantic priming to have a significant effect (Dehaene, Sergent, & Changeux, 2003; Dehaene, Changeux, Naccache, Sackur, & Sergent, 2006). In Study 4, the prime may not have been strong enough and participants may not have paid enough attention to the primes. Future studies would benefit from including attention check questions to ensure that participants carefully read the primes (e.g., "In your own words, briefly describe Jay's attitudes towards women"). Therefore, Study 4 fell short of meeting these conditions under which the priming effect would be effective enough to produce significant results.

Results of the Mediational Analyses

While the results of the experimental primes were not supportive of the hypotheses in this study, I was instead able to replicate many of the findings from Study 3. I began by examining gender role ideology and benevolent sexism as mediators of the association between culture and romantic beliefs. Consistent with the results of Study 3, no significant results were found. As discussed in Study 3, cultural norms about what qualities are ideal in a long-term partner and what constitutes a loving relationship are changing (Perrone-McGovern, et al., 2014). Gerson (2010) found that today's generation of men and women are reshaping their perceptions about gender relations and family dynamics. For example, women reported that their ideal male partner would actively participate in the children's caretaking needs, while men described their ideal female partner as someone who would strive towards establishing a successful career and maintain financial stability. These new preferences no longer fit into the traditional conceptualization of gender dynamics nor out-dated romantic beliefs in the damsel in distress and the knight in shining armour. Instead, today's generation of singles may be redefining their partner ideals and their feelings towards what constitutes a successful relationship, thereby also changing their perceptions regarding romantic notions and how love is cultivated between two people.

I also examined collectivism as a mediator of the association between culture and romantic beliefs. Consistent with the findings of Study 3, I found that, relative to Americans, Indians' stronger romantic beliefs were motivated by their greater collectivism. Some scholars have taken India's arranged marriage culture to be an indication of a lower endorsement of romantic beliefs among its people (see Medora, et al., 2002). However, recent research is presenting a different viewpoint; it may not necessarily be the case that romantic love is less desired in Indian culture, but instead that romance is construed in a different way than Western conceptualizations (Gala et al., 2014).

For Indian youth, the collectivist values of commitment and self-control may have been adapted and related to the notions of romantic ideals (Abraham, 2002). It may be that a specific component of collectivism, i.e. family allocentrism, may actually drive up commitment and passion in romantic relationships – results obtained in Studies 2. The closeness Indian youth feel towards their parents and family members may inadvertently influence how they conceptualize love and romance with a romantic partner. For instance, Gala et al. (2014) reported that India's emerging adults, while embracing the concept of romantic love, also found spontaneous relationship choices based on sexual attraction and impulsive feelings as self-serving and meaningless. Instead, they believed these types of relationships did not embody the ideals of true romance. For Indian young adults, romantic feelings towards a potential partner are taken very seriously and indulging in them is an important indication of the long-term potential of a relationship (Abraham, 2002).

Therefore, while globalization has helped Indian youth express romantic beliefs more openly, these beliefs have been reconstructed and linked to the importance attached to establishing a marital relationship. As Gala et al. (2014, p. 138) explained, "not only is marriage the goal of romantic relationship but the 'fruit' of marriage, even when it is arranged, is romantic love". Within the context of a collectivistic value system, Bollywood

movies routinely emphasize the importance of romantic love in a happy marital relationship, thereby heightening Indian youths' beliefs in romance. When marriage is a significant goal in a culture, the groundwork that is set in the lead-up to the marriage can become equally important (Bowman et al., 2013). Therefore, by associating romantic ideals with marriage, the significant collectivist value placed on matrimony may overflow onto the strong endorsement of romantic beliefs by Indian youth, possibly even more so than Americans, as both Studies 3 and 4 have shown. Furthermore, in Study 2 I also found that family allocentrism, which characterizes collectivists, may encourage closeness and commitment between husbands and wives. Consequently, the collectivistic cultural emphasis on family allocentrism coupled with the importance of marriage in the cultural milieu may create an atmosphere in which individuals feel especially susceptible to romantic beliefs.

In line with the findings of Study 3, Study 4 showed that compared to Americans, Indians' stronger preference for traditional mate characteristics in a spouse was driven by their more traditional gender role ideology, benevolent sexism, and greater collectivism. Eagly and colleagues (1999) found that in countries where the traditional division of labour is emphasized, individuals express a greater interest in partners that abide by conventional gender roles; women show a stronger preference for an older husband that can be a good provider for the family, whereas men show a stronger interest in younger women who demonstrate good domestic skills. These preferences are also in line with those affirmed by benevolent sexism. Countries in which the division of labour is most prominent are also the ones that most strongly endorse benevolent sexism (Glick et al., 2000; 2001). Therefore, an emphasis on traditional gender ideology and benevolent sexism may cultivate a stronger desire for traditional mate preferences in a potential partner (Johannesen-Schmidt et al., 2002).

Williams et al. (1994) measured gender role ideology across 14 nations and found

that the strongest patriarchal belief system existed within India, Nigeria and Pakistan. In line with this research, Bowman et al. (2013) conducted a study on marital couples in India who expressed a high degree of marital satisfaction. They found that when these couples were initially searching for a spouse, evaluating potential suitors based on conventional gender roles was an important part of their selection process. The couples used what they regarded as an objective, practical approach to find a suitable spouse, instead of following their hearts' desire. The participants wanted to ensure that cultural customs were upheld by looking for someone who was a good horoscope match, came from a family with a respectable reputation, and shared the same religious and caste background.

In addition, participants also looked for pragmatic qualities in a spouse that indicated how well they would be able to fulfil their respective gender roles and build a family based on conventional cultural norms. Some of the qualities they assessed included genetic and health fitness, educational achievements and financial disposition, virtue, character, and understanding of duty and loyalty to a marriage, family and elders. While Indians seem to be favouring a pragmatic approach that emphasizes traditional mate characteristics, this seems somewhat at odds with their strong romantic beliefs. It may be likely that they are simultaneously endorsing two different love styles: pragma and eros (Neto et al., 2000). It would be useful for future research to explore the possible latent contradiction between Indians' romantic beliefs and their pragmatic search for a partner.

Collectivistic beliefs regarding commitment and loyalty to family can further heighten people's preferences for a mate that embodies traditional gender roles (Gala et al., 2014). For example, Bowman et al. (2013) found that when participants were asked to discuss what expectations they had for their spouse before getting married, the most common response referred to familial and religious issues. In accordance with the collectivistic value placed on family, both partners had wanted to find a spouse that would defer to the elders'

authority in the family and act within the boundaries of their traditional gender roles.

Unlike the finding in Study 3, the current results did not show that Indians' higher degree of collectivism mediated their increased concerns about future marital life. However, while the findings were not statistically significant, they were nonetheless trending towards significance. I believe there was insufficient statistical power to uncover a possible effect.

Finally, in line with Study 3, I found that Indians' more traditional gender role ideology explained their greater concerns about future difficulties in their marital life, but benevolent sexism did not. Similar to traditional gender roles, benevolent sexism also differentiates between men and women's place in society (Duran et al., 2011). However, benevolent sexism is more insidious, making it appear as if this distinction is not only legitimate, but helpful and necessary for the benefit of both sexes. Through complementary roles, men and women are made to feel that they each have vital, but distinct roles to play in maintaining harmony and a positive relational dynamic between the sexes (Jost et al., 2005). On the other hand, gender roles – while they may help men and women define their purpose and place in a partnership more clearly – can simultaneously feel confining.

American culture has evolved to become more lax in its views on traditional gender roles, allowing greater flexibility to couples who want to negotiate their marital dynamic between themselves (Bartley et al., 2005). Indian culture, on the contrary, takes a more firm approach to complying with these roles (Suppal et al., 1996). As mentioned previously, given that Indian culture is considered to be a tight culture compared to American culture, which is considered to be loose, Indians expect greater gender role conformity than do Americans (Gelfand et al., 2006). For example, most wives in Indian households have various restrictions and expectations placed on them because of their sex (Bhatnagar et al., 2001). They are expected to manage most of the household and child-rearing tasks and abide by their mother-in-law's rules. Additionally, their freedom is often moderated – limiting the

places they are allowed to go, the people they are permitted to socialize with and their general interaction with the outside world (Derné, 1994). For husbands, gender roles may limit their contact with their wives and carry the burden of family responsibilities, holding them accountable for providing for their wife and children, along with fulfilling their duties towards their parents and siblings (D'Cruz, et al., 2001; Derne ́, 1994a). Therefore, for Indian young adults, envisioning these responsibilities and anticipating the challenges of living up to their gender-specific obligations can cause them to expect greater difficulties in their future marital life compared to Americans.

Limitations and Future Directions

While this study makes important contributions to the literature on relationship and mating preferences among young adults in India and America, it is also constrained in its method of self-reporting. Similar to Study 3, participants were limited to reporting what they envisioned their future marital life would be like and the characteristics they explicitly preferred in a mate. Future research would benefit from a broader methodology that utilizes other indices, such as behavioural indicators, to explore this area of research. For instance, it would be useful to examine whether participants' traditional preferences in partner characteristics or anticipated future difficulties in marital life would correlate with their *actual* marital partner choice, experience of marriage, and its longevity.

It would also be helpful if future studies took into account Indians who wanted to participate in an arranged marriage versus marriage of choice. Literature on this area of study has shown that marital satisfaction and relationship ideals between these two groups can vary widely due to multiple factors such as family involvement, cultural sanctions and social support (Madathil et al., 2008; Myers et al., 2005). Furthermore, as already discussed in the previous two studies, because the study was conducted in English, the Indian sample used in this study may not be representative – e.g., more educated and urban than most Indians

residing in India. Future research should translate the measures into Hindi and try to collect data from a more diverse group of Indian respondents.

In spite of their shortcomings, priming methods may help to establish the effects of culture on attitudes, values, and behaviour. These studies help to show whether priming effects are only significant within a particular cultural group or whether the effects of the prime can be generalized to different cultures (Aaker & Lee, 2001; Lee, Aaker, & Gardner, 2000; Oyserman et al., 2008). For example, can cuing a traditional gender role ideology produce similar preferences in a marital partner in American and Indian participates?

While I attempted to tackle some of these questions in my study, I believe my prime was not strong enough to have an effect on participants. Future research would benefit from using stronger primes that have been tested cross-culturally in India and America. When a particular construct is primed, the hope is that an affiliated concept in one's memory will also be activated, helping researchers gain better insight into individuals' thinking processes (Oyserman et al., 2008). In cross-cultural research, it is especially critical to create primes that are culturally pertinent, ensuring participants are able to relate and accurately interpret the content presented.

Vignettes should be created utilizing the insight of cultural insiders (i.e. Americans and Indians) and subjected to extensive pretesting by running pilot studies on samples of Americans and Indians. If manipulation checks do not support the validity of the primes, then the vignettes can be revised until pilot testing reveals they are, in fact, priming the attitudes they were intended to prime. While a similar vignette to the one used in this study was employed on a sample of Spanish participants (Exposito et al., 2010), ultimately the primes were based on Western measuring instruments and may have lacked reliability and/or validity in non-Western samples such as Indians. Therefore, this shortcoming should be taken under consideration in future studies by subjecting the primes to more rigorous pretesting

with both American and Indian samples. It is also worthwhile to consider other priming techniques beyond subjecting participants to different vignettes (e.g., subliminal priming in which participants are briefly exposed to words or pictures that connote a traditional, benevolent, or egalitarian gender role ideology). Additionally, it is important to include a neutral control condition in any future studies.

It is also important to keep in mind that individuals' self image or perception about themselves can guide the level of impact and direction of the priming effect (Hundhammer et al., 2012). The active self, Wheeler, DeMarree and Petty (2007) explained, is a subset of one's self-concept; it encompasses the knowledge or self-image accessible to an individual about him or herself in any given moment. In priming studies, the prime can be a consistent or inconsistent fit with one's active self, thereby differentially affecting one's behaviour and the outcome of the prime. For instance, research by Aarts et al. (2003) showed that priming effects have a higher likelihood of occurring if the individual's self-concept corresponds with the stereotype being primed.

Wheeler and colleagues (2007) contend that under conditions where there is an increased probability that an effect will contrast with one's self-concept, there is also an increased probability of a resulting contrast in behaviour. Therefore, the behavioural and psychological outcome of the priming effect can vary from one person to another, based on the ways that individuals self-associate with the prime. In the current study, it is possible that in some instances participants' personal, conscious attitudes about men's and women's roles conflicted with the experimental condition they were exposed to (e.g., a participant is exposed to the traditional gender role prime when he/she holds egalitarian views). Consequently, rather than evoking beliefs consistent with the prime, the opposite effect could have occurred, such that the prime may have induced an unresponsive or aversive reaction from the participant – contradicting what was originally hypothesized. Future studies would

have to account for this possibility.

Finally, a more controlled experimental environment, such as having the study take place face-to-face in a laboratory setting, may be preferable. Online studies can have a number of drawbacks: participants may be side-tracked with other tasks and may not fully engage in the study; they may complete the questionnaires too quickly in order to receive payment and, consequently, not pay attention to the primes; without the presence of the researchers, they may not take the study seriously. It is also not possible to control for noise or other distractions when participants are taking an online study. Therefore, it is advisable to take these issues into consideration in any future studies.

Concluding Remarks

Past research has shown that romantic beliefs are more strongly endorsed within Western, individualistic cultures compared to Eastern, collectivistic ones, especially when it comes to long-term partner selection (Medora et al., 2002). The conventional wisdom was that Westerners primarily rely on their feelings of love to guide them in choosing a marital partner, whereas Easterners take a more practical approach to this process by chiefly trusting family expertise and evaluating pragmatic qualities of potential suitors (Madathil et al., 2008). Whether or not romantic beliefs play a functional role in marital partner selection, the results of Study 3 and 4 showed that Indian participants actually endorsed *stronger* beliefs in romance compared to American participants. On the other hand, they also preferred more traditional characteristics in a marital partner. It would be helpful for future research to examine how Indians reconcile their greater romantic beliefs with their choice in a partner who possesses more traditional characteristics.

Additionally, the findings of Study 4 suggested that societal shifts from traditional to more egalitarian gender role ideologies can have opposing positive and negative influences on today's generation of young adults in collectivistic cultures. While on the one hand,

egalitarian beliefs can help foster more equality between the sexes, they can also conflict with conventional cultural norms. In India specifically, where ideals about masculine and feminine qualities are firmly held, as men and women try to practice more flexibility in their traditional roles, they may simultaneously feel pressure to conform to traditional standards by elders who disapprove of this shift (Mahalingam et al., 2007). Therefore, it is important for the cross-cultural psychology to not only examine conventional cultural ideals in different societies, but also to examine how modernizing trends of gender equality, romance, and personal choice intersect with traditional beliefs to influence the way in which today's generation of young adults around the world select a romantic partner and perceive romantic relationships.

General Discussion

These studies were conducted to assess mate preferences and relationship outcomes within a cross-cultural paradigm. My aim was to go beyond a focus on romantic partners to explore how other external influences (i.e., culture, family, gender role ideology) can impact romantic relationships. Some findings were consistent with past research in this area, while others were unexpected and warrant further empirical research to draw definitive conclusions. Consistent with predictions, I found that collectivists' greater family allocentrism and parental influence explained the quality of their romantic relationships and their mate preferences (Studies 1 and 2). In addition, I discovered that Indians' endorsement of traditional gender roles and collectivistic values enhanced their beliefs in romance, while contributing to greater apprehensions about future difficulties in marital life (Studies 3 and 4). In this final chapter, I begin by summarizing the main findings of Studies 1-4, then I will proceed to explain each finding in greater detail, while drawing possible conclusions for therapeutic work and future studies in the final section of this chapter.

In Study 1, my goal was to gain a better understanding of how family dynamics play a mediating role in cultural differences in romantic relationships and preferences for a marital partner. More specifically, I examined the mediation of parental influence and family allocentrism on the association of collectivism with commitment, passion and discrepancy in parent-child mate preferences. I found that collectivists' greater parental influence on their mate choice contributed to their decreased feelings of commitment in a romantic relationship and subdued their feelings of passion towards their partner. Results showed that while there was a positive association between collectivism, passion and commitment when parental influence was controlled for in the mediational model, this relationship disappeared when parental influence was not accounted for in the analysis. Study 1's findings confirmed my assumptions that parents play an active role in collectivists' romantic preferences and

outcomes. To further investigate these findings, in Study 2 I replicated the mediational models with two cultural groups that more strongly varied in collectivistic values – Indians and Americans.

Congruent with Study 1 results, Study 2 showed that collectivists' greater acceptance of parental influence on their mate choice exerted downward pressure on their degree of commitment in a relationship. Additionally, I also found that their higher experience of family allocentrism exerted the opposite influence by boosting their feelings of passion towards a romantic partner. Study 2 also revealed that collectivists' propensity to experience greater family allocentrism explained their smaller discrepancy between their own preferences for a mate with qualities signifying warmth-trustworthiness and their perception of their parents' preferences. On the other hand, their increased parental influence resulted in a smaller gap in their own preferences versus their parents' preferences for a mate with qualities signifying status-resources. That high parental influence contributed to decreased levels of commitment towards one's romantic partner did not come as a surprise. When parental influence is high in one's mate selection and romantic relationship, as is the case for collectivists, parents can become the primary driving force behind how the relationship proceeds, rather than the partners involved. This, in turn, can dampen down the degree of commitment two people feel for one another. An unexpected finding of Study 2 was that collectivists' higher family allocentrism lead to greater feelings of passion in the relationship. I will go into greater detail about this finding in succeeding sections.

In Study 3 my primary focus remained on romantic relationships and cultural influences; however, I moved away from the ways that familial dynamics can influence relationship outcomes and mate preferences, and instead examined the association of gender role ideology with these variables. Specifically, I found that Indians reported greater collectivism, which in turn was associated with their greater endorsement of romantic beliefs

and preferences for a marital partner with traditional qualities. In addition, Indians reported a more traditional gender role ideology compared to Americans, which lead to their stronger preferences for traditional mate characteristics and greater anticipation of future difficulties in marital life.

Study 4 carried over the theme of Study 3, however it was constructed as a priming study. The three experimental primes (traditional and egalitarian gender roles, and benevolent sexism) were not successful. Therefore, I replicated the analyses conducted in Study 3. Consistent with the previous findings, I also found that Indians, due to their greater collectivism compared to Americans, reported stronger romantic beliefs, whereas their more traditional gender role ideology was associated with their greater anticipation of future difficulties in marital life. Last, their greater collectivism, more traditional gender role ideology, and support of benevolent sexism lead Indians to express stronger preferences for traditional mate characteristics compared to Americans.

Collectivistic Values and Romantic Relationships

The reproductive attributes and other asymmetrical features of men and women presented various trade-offs and adaptive strategies for each sex throughout evolutionary history. For instance, as mentioned previously, pregnancy and lactation is metabolically costly for women, while men have to deal with the concern of paternity uncertainty. These adaptive challenges and their interaction with environmental contingencies has lead to the evolved dispositions of men and women's mate preferences and sex differences of today (Buss et al., 1993). Nevertheless, while there is a biological basis to mating strategies, evolutionary psychology also notes that human mating patterns are not deterministic or obligatory. Instead, it contends that behavioural and psychological adaptations are flexible and their expression contingent on social and environmental factors (Buss et al., 2011).

Many studies have noted that Western, individualistic cultures and Eastern,

collectivistic cultures vary greatly in their norms surrounding romantic relationships (Medora et al., 2002; Nesteruk, 2012; Neto et al., 2000). A number of proximal, mediating mechanisms have been identified as responsible for cultivating differences in mate preferences and romantic relationship ideals across cultures (Wood et al., 2002). In this dissertation I explored a number of such variables such as parental influence and gender roles, taking a particularly close look at the cultural values and relationship outcomes of collectivism.

Therefore, one of the primary threads of commonaliy that ran through all four studies is the influence of collectivistic values on romantic relationships. Central to collectivistic principles is the value afforded to group connection and cohesion (Heinke et al., 2009). Within this cultural milieu, importance is placed on being able to adjust one's behaviour to fit the expectations of the in-group. Fulfilling one's designated role and the demands of others is essential to maintaining harmony among in-group members (English et al., 2007). Overall, collectivistic values engender a social outlook that stresses the importance of taking the needs of the collective group into consideration instead of focusing on fulfilling personal desires or goals (Schwartz et al., 2010). This outlook is especially extended to the mate selection process and maintaining romantic relationships over time (Shukla et al., 2007). Therefore, what constitutes selecting the right marital partner or what is required of a romantic relationship can vary greatly between collectivistic and individualistic cultures (Sandhya, 2009). The results of this dissertation showed this to be the case; in all four studies, collectivistic values significantly influenced mate preferences and relationship quality. In particular, the family plays an especially prominent role in these processes within collectivistic cultural settings.

Studies 1 and 2 attempted to deconstruct the collectivist emphasis placed on family involvement (i.e., parental influence and family allocentrism) in children's romantic life. In

collectivistic cultures, family allocentrism is highlighted, emphasizing family closeness and strong familial ties (Sato, 2007). However, at the same time, the notion that 'parents know best' – i.e. parental influence – is also stressed (Kapadia et al., 2005). The premise of Studies 1 and 2, therefore, was to explore whether these two constructs, while both tenets of collectivism, could exert differential effects on a young adult's experience of romantic relationships and preferences for a mate. In line with this assumption, the results of the analyses showed that whereas parental influence and family allocentrism were positively associated with collectivism, they showed differential associations with the respective dependent variables. This is explained in greater detail in the following sections.

Association of Parental Involvement in Collectivistic Cultures with Relationship Outcomes and Mate Preferences

In collectivistic cultures, individuals are largely thought to have a self that is oriented within the family (Schwartz et al., 2010). Therefore, their needs and wants are often inextricably interrelated to those of other family members (Medora, 2007), often influencing the quality of relationship one has within their romantic relationship or the characteristics they find desirable in a marital partner. This is not to say that in individualistic cultures, such as the United States, individuals do not experience interdependent relationships, where they might be open to the influence of close others in their mate selection processes, but an important distinction between collective and relational self-construal should be made. In the *relational–interdependent self-construal,* individuals define themselves through singular, close relationships such as that with a friend or parent; in the *collective-interdependent self-construal,* individuals define themselves through more general group orientations, rather than individual relationships. The two terms make a distinction between whether the focus of attention is aimed at close relationships or group memberships (Cross, Hardin, & Gercek-Swing, 2011). The collective-interdependent self-construal is often associated with East Asia,

where following group norms set by cultural guidelines and expectations is highly valued (Cross & Madson, 1997). This is especially important when it comes to mate selection processes.

In this cultural milieu, marital selection has traditionally included parental involvement, consisting of short courtship periods and resulting in marriage (De Valk & Liefbroer, 2007; Hortaçsu, 2007; Zaidi et al., 2002). Once approval was granted, it was expected that the couple would get married and preparations for the wedding would begin soon after familial endorsement of the relationship (Hart, 2007; Zaidi, et al.,2002). Lengthy periods of courtship were discouraged for fear that the couple would engage in sexual activity before marital commitments were formally made (Dasgupta, 1998; Hart, 2007). Indeed, following the guidance of parents and making a commitment towards a romantic relationship is widely accepted and commonly practiced in collectivistic cultures, with prospective partners sometimes pledging to ensure the longevity of marital ties, even before they have met one another (Mace & Mace, 1960; Yelsma & Athappilly, 1988; Zaidi et al., 2002). Inasmuch as commitment is highly valued in collectivistic cultures, I explored the possibility that the sense of commitment and obligation individuals feel towards their family members may engender a similar sense of commitment towards their romantic relationship, but not necessarily towards a specific romantic partner. Can commitment towards family foster commitment towards one's romantic relationship?

The results of Studies 1 and 2 – that collectivists' higher parental influence contributed to lower levels of commitment in their romantic relationship – may initially appear at odds with previous literature on this topic. However, for Eastern collectivists, commitment in a romantic relationship may not be confined to the romantic partner, but may be a much broader virtue within the cultural milieu – extending to include close others (Gala et al., 2014). For instance, consider the possibility that insofar as marriage for collectivists is

not solely the fulfilment of personal desires, but an outcome of family obligations, mate selection and the sentiment one harbours for a future spouse may not necessarily be a reflection of the commitment one feels towards the romantic partner, but towards one's family of origin.

The merits of commitment are often taught in the home – through acts of loyalty and devotion one receives and is expected to give to members of the family (Gala et al., 2014; Nath et al., 1999). Making a commitment to a romantic relationship, likewise, can be a means of showing respect to cultural values and family honour. Therefore, a distinction should be made regarding *personal versus moral commitment* in a relationship. Whereas in personal commitment one wants to remain in the relationship based on personal desires, in moral commitment one stays in the relationship out of a sense of obligation or responsibility. A large source of one's sense of moral commitment can stem from the accountability one feels towards close others, such as family, to ensure the long-term success of a relationship (Kapinus & Johnson, 2002).

In families where parental influence is high, children may feel especially liable towards family obligations and inclined to demonstrate their commitment towards family and cultural traditions by accepting to marry someone their parents approve of – finding joy in their parents' selection. Therefore, I entertained the possibility that while commitment for collectivists may exist towards the premarital relationship, it may not necessarily stem from an individual's feelings toward the romantic partner, but how committed one feels towards his or her family members. Insofar as I measured commitment towards one's romantic partner, rather than towards the relationship in general, I believe that the pattern of results in Studies 1 and 2 may be indicative of this phenomenon.

Alternatively, Study 2 also showed that within collectivistic cultures, experiencing stronger family relationships – i.e., greater family allocentrism – lead to stronger feelings of

commitment towards one's romantic partner. Research has shown that a significant contributor to children's motivation to internalize parental and cultural values is the quality of relationship they share with their parents (Schonpflug, 2001; White, 2000). In families where there exists a stronger bond between its members and a sense of closeness and intimacy within the parent-child relationship, children are increasingly more open to accept the values parents strive to pass on to their children (Knafo & Assor, 2007; Schonpflug, 2001). Therefore, in collectivistic families, where commitment and loyalty are important cultural ideals, a stronger connection with family members may similarly lead to a stronger connection and commitment towards one's romantic partner.

While commitment is an important collectivistic cultural value, the expression of passion in relationships is often discouraged and repressed given the risk it possess to disrupt the familial hierarchy (Netting, 2010; Sandhya, 2009). However, the new generation of collectivists may increasingly desire love and the expression of passion within their romantic relationships (Henry et al., 2010). I propose that the emphasis on family allocentrism in collectivist cultures, coupled with the importance of marriage in this cultural milieu, may create an atmosphere in which romantic relationships are elevated in value, leaving individuals susceptible towards the idealization of romantic or passionate love.

In Study 2 I indeed found that collectivists, due to their higher family allocentrism, showed a stronger affinity towards passion in their relationship. Family allocentrism imparts the significance of family togetherness and devotion to close others (Lay et al., 1998). Feeling close to family members can create a stronger desire to please them. Collectivist cultural values also stress the importance of marriage and devoting oneself to one's romantic partner (Dhar, 2013; Sheela et al., 2003). For instance, in India marriage is considered one of the most significant milestones in a person's life (Netting, 2010). Viewed as an important social duty, it can significantly contribute to the well-being and status of the entire family

(Caldwell et al., 1983; Mueller, 2008).

For collectivist youth, finding a marital partner – especially one that is agreeable to family – may be perceived as an important contribution to the greater good of the family (Netting, 2010). This, in turn, can create a sense of infatuation with the relationship and heighten feelings of romantic love or passion towards it by venerating the relationship as a means of increasing overall familial happiness and closeness. Indeed, Neto (2007) found that Indian participants were preoccupied with romantic relationships, demonstrating a manic love style. In another study, Schmitt et al. (2004) reported that Asian participants were more fixated on romantic attachments. Therefore, in collectivistic cultures, the closeness individuals feel towards their family members may increase the importance they attribute to their romantic relationship's ability to strengthen family ties. As a result, individuals may cultivate increased feelings of love and passion towards their partner or relationship as a whole.

Another possibility for Indians' higher feelings of passion compared to Americans is that passion may bring about greater expenditure of energy and investment of time in relationships, an inconvenience in short-term dating situations more common in the United Stated than India. Ratelle, Carbonneau, Vallerand, and Mageau (2013) explained that passionate love can be linked to a fixation on the relationship, creating a strong internal drive to pursue a romantic partner. However, they further contend that passion not only generates an intense longing towards a partner, but it cultivates the desire to invest time and energy into the relationship, elevating the level of importance of the romantic relationship in the individual's life.

 In India, where romantic relationships are more highly regarded and the importance of its long-term continuance stressed (Gala et al., 2014, Medora, 2007), passion may help further strengthen the bond between individuals, bolstering investment in the relationship.

Given that the entire family's reputation is subject to children's romantic relationship outcomes, those who experience high family allocentrism may feel especially liable for the family's wellbeing by ensuring the relationship endures, disposing them to increased feelings of passion towards the romantic partner and greater investment in the romantic relationship. In the United States, however, where unrestricted sociosexuality is more prevalent, parents are less involved in their children's dating habits, and the prospect of casual, lower-investing relationships more readily available (Fong et al., 2010), passion may be deemed unnecessary or a deterrent from the pursuit of the shorter-term duration of a relationship. Ultimately, though, as discussed in the "Limitations and Future Direction" of Study 2, the positive association between family allocentrism and passion was somewhat nebulous and awaits further replication.

The substantial focus on family needs in place of individual desires in collectivistic households also carries strong implications for the mate selection process in this cultural milieu. A number of researchers have conducted studies on children's versus parents' mate preferences, indicating that there exists a difference between the two based on the evolutionary need and fitness of each group (Apostolou, 2008; Buunk et al., 2010; Dubbs et al., 2010). Given these findings, I was particularly interested in testing whether family dynamics can have varying influences on the discrepancy between parent-child mate preferences, such that certain familial conditions could increase this gap while others reduce it. Study 1 was unable to find any such differences; however, as explained in greater detail in a previous chapter, I believe this was primarily due to discrepancies in the measure and sample of participants used in the study.

In Study 2, on the other hand, I was able to find that greater family allocentrism in collectivistic cultures contributed to a smaller gap between parent-child preferences for qualities in a mate that denote warmth and trustworthiness. This finding comes as no surprise

as parents and children who share a great deal of closeness and intimacy with one another will most likely value the same qualities in a future marital partner. The next finding, that greater parental influence on mate choice for collectivists contributed to a smaller discrepancy for qualities in a mate signifying status-resources, was equally expected. In more traditional Eastern, collectivistic cultures, the connection between couples is less emphasized as a basis for marriage while assets that can contribute to a higher quality of life for couples are more valued (Myers et al., 2005; Udry, 1974). This is not only beneficial to the couple getting married, but also positively contributes to the overall status of the entire family (Mueller, 2008). Therefore, it is no surprise that parents and children alike would prefer a mate with grater status and resources.

In Studies 1 and 2, my primary focus was to explore how familial dynamics and parental involvement influence people's choices in mate selection and experience of a romantic relationship. In Studies 3 and 4, I wanted to move beyond the family and examine how macro level variables such as societal standards and cultural expectations impact romantic relationships and mate preferences. I was specifically interested in looking at the influence of traditional gender roles and collectivistic values on emerging adults' romantic beliefs and vision of future marital life. I wondered, can enacting prescribed gender roles ever benefit a relationship?

The Influence of Gender Roles and Collectivistic Values on Mate Preferences, Romantic Beliefs and Anticipation of Future Difficulties in Marital Life

Ickes (1993) has reasoned that in the initial stages of meeting one another, enacting one's respective gender roles may actually appear to be beneficial for a relationship. By abiding by society's standards of what constitutes ideal qualities for each sex, a potential suitor who fits these ideals may appear particularly appealing and desirable; this can also lead to heightened feelings of romantic love or attraction. However, by selecting a marital partner

according to these standards and endorsing these roles, Ickes (1993) further explained that couples may limit their freedom and choices in the relationship. In time this could hinder closeness, eroding communication and intimacy between partners.

In Indian society, where arranged marriage is prevalent, gender roles still strongly endorsed, and dating virtually non-existent, often the primary qualities individuals have to assess in another for marital purposes is how well each party lives up to his or her respective gender roles in society (Isaac et al., 2004; Mullatti, 1995; Netting, 2010). Therefore, men and women are both aware of what is expected of them and their partner in a marital relationship and do what they can to showcase these qualities in order to appear attractive to a prospective suitor (Bhatnagar et al., 2001; Bowman et al., 2013). Similarly, they also look for qualities in a marital partner that are in line with traditional gender roles. Studies 3 and 4 showed that both collectivism and traditional gender roles exerted separate, positive influences on Indians' preferences for a mate with traditional characteristics compared to Americans; Study 4 also showed this to be the case for the additional meditator of benevolent sexism. However, interestingly enough, while Indians frequently evaluate and select a partner in line with these standards, the results of this research also showed that they may not necessarily believe enacting these roles will cultivate love in the relationship. Studies 3 and 4 demonstrated that Indians' endorsement of traditional gender roles and benevolent sexism did not lead to increased romantic beliefs. Therefore, taken together, the findings of these studies may reveal that Indians themselves may realize that differentiating between men's and women's roles can inhibit closeness and the development of romantic beliefs, but they may be, nonetheless, bound by cultural expectations to select a partner in accordance with these standards.

While gender roles and benevolent sexism did not mediate Indian's romantic beliefs, their collectivistic values did. Studies 3 and 4 both showed that Indians, as a result of their collectivistic values, strongly endorsed romantic beliefs. More and more in contemporary

Indian society, younger adults are favouring less parental influence on their mate choice with a stronger desire to select their own partner based on feelings of love and companionship. Henry et al. (2010) explained that romance is idealized among Indian youth who think that romantic love is the chief criteria required for marriage. Consistent with this assertion, Studies 3 and 4 both showed that Indians, due to high collectivism, endorsed stronger romantic beliefs, compared to Americans. While romantic love has been idealized in Indian mythology, historically it has been paid little attention to in mate selection and romantic relationships. However, in recent decades there has been a steady growth of relationships based on romantic love in India (Gala et al., 2014). Increasing anonymity in cities, more prevalent opportunities to interact with the opposite sex, and Western ideals have lead emerging adults in India to seek out relationships based on romantic ideals (Abraham, 2002). Gala et al. (2014) reported that the majority of participants in their study believed that it was necessary to develop love between partners before getting married or else the long-term survival of the relationship would be jeopardized. However, at the same time, while romantic beliefs are strongly endorsed by emerging adults in India as important criteria for marriage, longstanding social rules and cultural sanctions may prevent these ideals from being actualized in marriage, as the result of Studies 3 and 4 suggest.

As discussed previously, romantic beliefs may be discouraged by elders if they threaten to interfere with familial or cultural duties when selecting a partner in line with social standards (Netting, 2010). Consequently, while I found that collectivistic values may heighten romantic beliefs, for Indians, marriage is not based on these ideals. Instead, the marital union is viewed as an obligation and often arranged. Therefore, although Indian youth may harbour romantic feelings, they do not necessarily act on them when choosing a partner or envisioning their future marital life. That endorsement of romantic beliefs and anticipation of future marital difficulties were not significantly correlated in Study 3 may

(see Table 4.2) suggest that people can hold these seemingly contradictory beliefs simultaneously. If collectivists endorse stronger romantic beliefs, is it reasonable to assume that they will envision a more blissful marital life? The findings of the dissertation do not point to this conclusion.

Collectivistic values centre on marital longevity and family togetherness; therefore, from a very young age, Indian youth are taught about marital life. They are socialized about their role in a marriage, what to expect from a spouse and in-laws and how to appropriately behave within the context of marital life (Bowman et al., 2013). With this understanding in mind, it can be reasoned that Indians may be equipped with greater knowledge and feel more prepared to manage their future marital circumstances compared to Americans, who may receive less marital preparation. Indeed, when Ruvolo and Veroff (1997) examined ideal versus real expectations of marital life in newlyweds, they found that a discrepancy between these two factors was negatively correlated with marital satisfaction. However, the results of Studies 3 and 4 may refute this theory.

It is plausible that being cognizant of the restrictions and challenges one may encounter in married life may actually increase apprehensions of married life for Indian youth. Indian youths' awareness of the substantial gender role expectations placed on them when married may create angst and fears about living up to these standards. Residing in joint-family settings may further inflate these concerns because they not only have to live up to their partner's expectations, but also those of their in-laws. For instance, D'Cruz et al. (2001) explained that Indian women enter into their marital home as virtual strangers and have to conform to fit the expectations of their in-laws without any opposition. Indians' anticipation of difficulties in future marital life may, therefore, also be magnified by collectivistic values. In this cultural milieu, the emphasis placed on marital deference and harmony and the importance of maintaining familial honour may inadvertently amplify the

pressure Indian youth feel about living up to the ideals of a good wife or husband. If they cannot meet these standards, Indian young adults may fear they will bring shame or dishonour to their elders.

Moreover, divorce in collectivistic cultures is strongly frowned upon; therefore, separating is generally not an option (Mulatti, 1995; Singh, 2010). That the majority of Indian marriages are arranged and young adults do not commonly have the opportunity to intimately get acquainted with their marital partner before marriage, can already be an intimidating situation (Netting, 2010; Uberoi, 2006); However, bearing in mind that once married they enter into a joint-family living arrangement and lack the option of leaving if the marriage does not work out, can make the prospect of getting married a daunting experience. Therefore, Indian youth are well aware that they will have to work hard to make their marriage work – no matter what challenges they face (Bowman et al., 2013). It is natural, therefore, to expect that these pressures can increase feelings of apprehension about future difficulties in marital life. How these fears actually manifest in marriage is an interesting topic that warrants further research.

Interestingly enough, while benevolent sexism and traditional gender role ideology showed a strong positive correlation, benevolent sexism did not mediate Indians' greater anticipation of marital life in Study 4. Given the strong correlation between these two variables, gender role ideology may have absorbed all of the variance in the analysis, overshadowing the influence of benevolent sexism. Moreover though, as explained previously, while traditional gender role ideology and benevolent sexism both differentiate between men and women's roles, benevolent sexism casts a positive light on this distinction (Glick et al., 2004), offering clarity to individuals about their particular responsibilities in a relationship and abating concerns about role overlap or conflict in future marital life. This

understanding, in turn, probably leads to decreased feelings of overload or strain in managing future work-home life.

Implications for Therapeutic Counselling with Indian Young Adults and Directions for Future Research

While sex differences were not the primary focus of this dissertation, they were examined on a preliminary bases, although virtually no significant findings were found. This may have been in part due to the methodology used in the studies. As pointed out in previous research parents tend to me more vigilant over daughters choices in mate selection as opposed to sons, which can lead to stronger conflicts or larger discrepancies in mate preferences between the two groups. In this dissertation, however, I did not assess for the degree or intensity of conflict between parents and children's choices in mate choice, just whether there were any anticipated differences. Furthermore, this was only from the perspective of children as they rated their own mate preferences and their parents' perceived choices for them.

The results of this dissertation raise many questions about the current state of romantic relationships within an Indian, collectivistic context. As the interface of older customs encounter contemporary ideals, a number of new concerns come to light for counsellors working with Indian emerging adults; similarly, for researchers, new directions for future studies emerge.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

One of the main areas of interest the findings of this dissertation point to is Indians' increasingly strong endorsement of romantic beliefs. While on the one hand, feelings of love and romance can facilitate a stronger sense of closeness and desire for one's partner, researchers also caution against heightened romantic idealization, which can lead to relationship conflict and disillusionment (Baucom & Epstein, 1990; Medora et al., 2002).

Within the Indian context, in particular, Henry et al. (2010) reason that while shifts in marital selection have helped young people gain a stronger say in who they marry, they also stand in contradiction to customary mate selection practices which emphasize heavy parental involvement and downplay feelings of passion or love. They explain that once the intensity of romantic feelings and attraction begin to dim, couples in love marriages are susceptible to disenchantment and feeling disappointed with their relationship. Therefore, it may be the case that in these types of contemporary marriages, the frequency of marital dissatisfaction and conflict is relatively high, particularly when compared to traditional types of arranged marriage.

Moreover, choosing to marry out of love can alienate parents and other family members who may be angry at the couple's choice to go against traditional customs. With little parental input, parents may also be unhappy with their child's choice in a mate, further aggravating familial relationships (Sonpar, 2005). Whereas in traditional Indian arranged marriages children tend to receive a great deal of practical and emotional support after they get married from the extended family network, in love marriages they may lack these provisions, further inflating marital conflicts (Henry et al., 2010; Sonpar, 2005).

The current research attempted to tackle some of these issues by examining the influence of parental involvement on Indians' mate choices and their evolving beliefs regarding passion and romance. To continue this line of study, the premise of future research can explore how Indians' romantic beliefs influence not only their choice in a mate, but the quality of their marital life. Longitudinal studies can measure how engaged couples in the process of getting married rate their romantic beliefs, relationship satisfaction and positive outlook about their relationship versus how they measure on these variables a year or so after their marital vows. Additionally, research that more specifically looks at Indian arranged marriages in comparison to those in love marriages and how these couples communicate,

cope with conflict, and manage marital expectations versus reality can all help shed further light on this topic.

As Indian youth are increasingly adopting more egalitarian beliefs, the emphasis on traditional gender roles in this cultural milieu and the value placed on a prospective marital partner based on these roles can also present challenges (Gala et al., 2014; Shukl et al., 2007). In these cases, a number of other merits that an individual possesses can be overlooked or discarded. Individual personality traits can be suppressed to fit into conventional roles; this can not only influence the relational dynamics of men and women in the relationship, but also affect individuals' perceptions about themselves and their sense of self (Nath et al., 1999; Sonpar, 2005). For instance, irrespective of employment status, Dutta (2000) reported that wives still continue to perform the majority of domestic chores, emphasizing their principal role as homemakers and adding to their workload and level of stress. In another example, Bowman et al. (2013) reported that all of the Indian wives in their study, regardless of advanced educational background or work opportunities, labelled themselves and their chief occupation as housewife. The researchers reasoned that this could be a symptom of a deeper, underlying problem of gender bias and oppression within society that is reinforced through self-directed sexism and compliancy with prejudice. So how is gender stratification and traditional roles between men and women maintained in society?

The existing conditions of injustice in society are maintained when stereotypes are supported by both the advantaged and disadvantaged groups (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004). Gender roles, and more specifically benevolent sexism – by cultivating the belief that men and women have different strengths, which serve to mutually benefit one another – allows gender inequality to frequently go unchallenged. This rationalization of gender role relations overshadows the seeming inequality between men and women's position in society, instead of engendering an attitude of fairness and justification for the system of unequal gender

stratification among the sexes. While research has shown that gender roles are strongly endorsed in India (Isaac et al., 2004; Sastry, 1999), to date the research conducted in this dissertation is the first to examine benevolent sexism in relation to mate choice and romantic relationships in India. Given the study's exploratory nature, it would be useful to continue further empirical research on benevolent sexism in India and its role in preserving traditional relationship practices; studies should both be experimental and longitudinal in methodological design.

Additionally, it would be important for future studies to also include measures of hostile sexism. Ambivalent sexism works by casting both positive and negative views towards women, categorizing them into two groupings of "good" or "bad", depending on whether they follow sex-typed expectations in society (Jost et al., 2005). Therefore, hostile and benevolent sexism work in tandem with one another to preserve and perpetuate male dominance in society (Glick et al., 1996, 2001). Consequently, it is important that work in this area examines both types of sexism – hostile and benevolent – to gain a more in-depth understanding of men's and women's issues in today's societies around the world.

Accordingly, a more comprehensive examination of gender and how it relates to parental involvement and mate preferences in romantic relationships would also be useful in future research. In the current studies, sex differences – while not the primary focus – were examined on a preliminary basis, and almost no significant findings were revealed. However, this may have been due, in part, to the methodology used in the studies. As pointed out in previous research, parents tend to me more vigilant over daughters' choices in mate selection as opposed to sons, which can lead to stronger conflicts or larger discrepancies in mate preferences between the two groups (Dubbs et al., 2010; Espiritu, 2001; Perilloux, et al., 2008). In this dissertation, however, I did not assess the degree or intensity of conflict between parents' and children's mate choices, just whether there were any significant

differences.

Furthermore, this was only from the perspective of children as I asked participants to rate their *perceptions* of their parents' marital preferences for their children rather than obtain ratings from the parents themselves. However, one could argue that it is the participants' perception of their parents' preferences that may be most predictive of the dependent variables. Studies have shown that there are frequently incongruities between parents' reported personal values and their socialization values – the values that parents ultimately transmit to their children (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994; Knafo & Schwartz, 2001). Indeed, a number of researchers have shown that it is children's *perception* of parents' beliefs and not necessarily the parents' *actual* beliefs – acquired through parental self-reports – that are most predictive of children's own value formation in the family (Knafo & Schwartz, 2003; Okagaki & Bevis, 1999; Smith, 1982; Whitbeck & Gecas, 1988). Parent-child value transmission has been conceptualized as a two-pronged process; the first noteworthy step is children's perception of parental values and the second is their willingness to accept parental messages (Barni et al., 2011). Nevertheless, it would be worthwhile for future research to collect data directly from parents to more accurately gauge parent-child discrepancies in mate choice. Additionally, further studies should examine parental influence not only from one's own family of origin, but also from one's *partner's* family. A person's investment in a relationship may waver, not only because of their own family's disapproval, but also because of their partner's family's disapproval (MacDonald et al., 2012).

While traditional values continue to be sanctioned in Indian society, researchers have also noted the steady changes in Indian family arrangements that are evolving out of industrialization, economic growth, and legal amendments (Dutta, 2000). These changes have worked to help improve living conditions; however, they have simultaneously challenged long-standing customs central to Indian cultural traditions by placing a heavy

strain on couples as they attempt to adapt their conventional relational dynamics to fit the changing times. For example, Krishnan et al. (2010) found that Indian women's increasing employment status boosted household income and enhanced women's self-esteem, but it also increased the risk of domestic violence. Violence in the home also increased when men experienced instability in their jobs. Krishnan et al. (2010) noted that financial insecurity coupled with feelings of inadequacy and frustration at not being able to fulfil the primary breadwinner role were possible precursors for domestic violence.

While Western, individualistic couples are increasingly negotiating among themselves what arrangements fit them best, couples from collectivist cultures may struggle to amalgamate established traditional customs with the demands of contemporary society. In India, especially, rigid cultural rules continue to stress conformity to traditional customs (Das, 2011), leaving couples with very little room to deviate from conventional patterns as they try to adapt to societal change. Given that these shifts are fairly new, an idea for future exploratory research is to conduct a qualitative study using grounded theory. Semi-structured interviews with Indian newlyweds can help researchers begin to get a deeper understanding of the specific struggles they face in their relationship while they try to join new and old customs.

Finally, one of the strengths of the current studies is that it examined emerging views of young adults from both sexes in Indian society. However, as discussed previously, India is a country of diversity with vast regional differences in religion, language, caste, class etc. (Medora, 2007). Likewise, the United States is ethnically diverse, with a large immigrant population (Foner & Bertossi, 2011). While the studies did not target a specific population of Indians or Americans, in light of the manner in which data was collected (i.e., MTurk), participants may not have been an accurate reflection of greater Indian or American society. Therefore, one must be careful about the generalizability of these findings and future

research should collect data from a larger population of Indians and Americans, using a wider range of sources.

Moreover, the studies' predominant focus on Americans and Indians may be unrepresentative of other collectivistic and individualistic cultures, limiting applicability of results. Consequently, it would be best to test these findings on a variety of different cultural groups that vary in collectivism and individualism to draw more robust conclusions. The first three studies were also correlational in nature and, while Study 4 attempted to determine causality with an experimental design, the priming did not work. Therefore, the findings of this dissertation were based on correlational analyses and could not ascertain causality, an important aim for future studies to explore.

Therapeutic Implications

The global shift from collectivistic ideals to more Western, individualistic values has facilitated many new challenges for Indian families and increased the need for mental health services within this community (Bhat et al., 2001; Natrajan et al., 2002). To ensure therapy is effective, it is important for therapists treating Indian families to be aware of the many significant nuances that are particular to the collectivistic, Indian cultural context. I will discuss two of these unique challenges here that relate to Indian family structure and marital dynamics.

Given the increase of Western values worldwide, young adults in India are gaining a stronger voice in how they construct their lives and romantic relationships (Henry et al., 2010). At the heart of many conflicts experienced by Indian families is the disruption to the hierarchical structure of the family system that these changes may bring (Natrajan et al., 2002). It is important to keep in mind that in spite of the growing trend towards the nuclearization of Indian family structures among the younger generation of Indians, living in joint-family networks and maintaining close emotional ties with other family members is still

the preferred, dominant norm (Bhat et al., 2001; Nath et al., 1999). Irrespective of the conflictual or tense relationships that may be presented in the therapy setting between Indian family members, collectivistic values reinforce a strong sense of duty and commitment towards family members (Nath et al., 1999). Whilst roles may need to be redefined and positions shifted in the home, the goal should be to resolve the conflict while continuing to nurture and maintain close family ties, instead of encouraging new couples to separate and/or disengage from the family system – as may be the case in nuclear family settings.

Another key issue to keep in mind while providing therapy to Indian couples is that marital ties are not exclusive to the couple in the relationship, but may be heavily influenced by other members of the family (Sonpar, 2005). This can both be beneficial or disruptive to the couple dyad. Newlyweds, especially, may feel they have a lack of privacy and experience difficulty in building intimacy within their relationship. Their attempts at spending more time alone together may be met with intrusion and disapproval, aggravating family relations between the couple and in-laws (Nath et al., 1999). While having to account for how their relationship affects others in the family system can sometimes be strenuous on the marital dyad, relationships with other members of the family may also help to stabilize the couple's bond with one another (Sonpar, 2005). For instance, Sonpar (2005) explains that the relationship between a daughter and mother in-law may help to compensate for the intimacy needs that couples in Western marriages may expect to fulfil exclusively through their romantic partner. Therefore, in marital therapy, for Indian couples, a weakened marital relationship may require more than a focus on the two partners involved. A therapist working with Indian couples must be cognizant of intergenerational relationships and the input of extended family members when treating the marital dyad (Natrajan et al., 2002).

Concluding Remarks

Taken together, these studies reinforced the importance of understanding collectivists' integration of the self within the family unit and synthesis of traditional gender roles and collectivistic ideals in the area of romantic relationships. Studies 1 and 2 showed that, while parental influence and family allocentrism are positively associated with one another and both facets of collectivism, these two constructs can evoke different psychological responses in individuals – affecting relationship outcomes in varying ways. While parental influence may dampen collectivists' commitment and passion in relationships, family allocentrism may enhance it. These constructs similarly played a role in parent-child preferences for a mate; family allocentrism decreased the gap between parent-child preferences in a mate with warmth and trustworthiness, whereas parental influence showed the same pattern of results for a mate with characteristics that denote status and resources.

The focus of Studies 3 and 4 on collectivistic values and gender role ideology highlighted Indian emerging adults' ambiguous opinions about romantic beliefs and visions about future marital life. While Indians endorsed strong romantic beliefs, they simultaneously anticipated greater future difficulties in their marital life. These findings can be indicative of global changes that may be taking place across Eastern, collectivistic cultures in which contemporary ideals are progressively trying to be amalgamated with traditional customs. Overall, these series of studies highlighted the importance of taking a comprehensive approach to studying romantic relationships and mate selection in collectivistic cultures by recognizing that these issues are taken very seriously by the entire family and not generally left to individual decision-making processes. Therefore, taking a Western approach by primarily focusing on the individual's experience – in isolation of familial and cultural influences – may inhibit a deeper, more rich understanding of these

areas of study. This is particularly useful in the therapy context where viewing Indian family dynamics and romantic relationship patterns through a Western lens may erroneously give the impression of dysfunctionality or enmeshment between family members.

It is important to note that construction of romantic relationships and normative familial dynamics are cultivated through culturally-specific attitudes regarding the interplay of many variables (e.g., sexuality, interactional patterns between family members, expressions of affection, and power dynamics between elders and youngsters in the community). This research offered a glimpse into the complexities of romantic relationships across cultures. It encourages researchers and therapists alike to take an integrative approach to understanding Indian family structures and decision-making processes from the perspective of the people involved, ensuring that the insights gained are accurate and effective when applied to collectivistic cultural contexts.

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Appendix

<u>**Studies 1-4**</u>

14-item IND-COL Scale (Sivadas, Bruvold, & Nelson, 2008)

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the statements below. Use the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree				strongly agree

1. My happiness depends very much on the happiness of those around me.
2. I would do what would please my family, even if I detested that activity.
3. I usually sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of my group.
4. I enjoy working in situations involving competition with others.
5. The well-being of my co-workers is important to me.
6. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many ways.
7. Children should feel honored if their parents receive a distinguished award.
8. I often "do my own thing."
9. Competition is the law of nature.
10. If a co-worker gets a prize, I would feel proud.
11. I am a unique individual.
12. I would sacrifice an activity that I enjoy very much if my family did not approve of it.
13. Without competition it is not possible to have a good society.
14. I feel good when I cooperate with others.

Collectivism: 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 12, 14
Individualism: 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13

<u>**Study 1**</u>

Preferred Mate Attributes Scale (Buss et al., 1990)

Please rate each of the following 18 characteristics on how important or desirable it would be to you in choosing a ***marriage partner***. Use the following scale.

1	2	3	4
Irrelevant Unimportant			Indispensable Very Important

Good Cook and Housekeeper
Pleasing Disposition
Sociability
Similar Education
Refinement, Neatness
Good Financial Prospect

Chastity (no previous experience in sexual intercourse)
Dependable Character
Emotional Stability and Maturity
Desire for Home and Children
Favorable Social Status or Rating
Good Looks
Similar Religious Background
Ambition and Industrious
Similar Political Background
Mutual Attraction-Love
Good Health
Education and Intelligence

Now take a moment and think about your ***parents***, if they were to choose a mate for you, please rate each of the following 18 characteristics, ***from their point of view***, on how important or desirable it is for the potential mate to possess. Use the following scale.

1	2	3	4
Irrelevant			Indispensable
Unimportant			Very Important

Good Cook and Housekeeper
Pleasing Disposition
Sociability
Similar Education
Refinement, Neatness
Good Financial Prospect
Chastity (no previous experience in sexual intercourse)
Dependable Character
Emotional Stability and Maturity
Desire for Home and Children
Favorable Social Status or Rating
Good Looks
Similar Religious Background
Ambition and Industrious
Similar Political Background
Mutual Attraction-Love
Good Health
Education and Intelligence

<u>**Study 1 and 2**</u>

Triangular Theory Love Scale-R (TTL; Sternberg, 1997)

Please rate the following on a 1 (not at all) to 9 (extremely) scale

Passion

1. I cannot imagine another person making me as happy as _____ does.
2. There is nothing more important to me than my relationship with _____.
3. My relationship with _____ is very romantic.
4. I cannot imagine life without _____.
5. I adore _____.
6. I find myself thinking about _____ frequently during the day.
7. Just seeing _____ is exciting for me.
8. I idealize _____.
9. There is something almost 'magical' about my relationship with _____.
10. I find _____ to be very personally attractive.
11. I would rather be with _____ than with anyone else.
12. I fantasize about _____.
13. When I see romantic movies or read romantic books I think of _____.
14. I especially like physical contact with _____.
15. My relationship with _____ is passionate.

Commitment Scale (Rusbult et al., 1998)

Please answer the following questions as honestly as you can. Indicate how well each of the following statements describes your feelings and thoughts about **your current romantic relationship.** Be sure not to overlook any statements as you work through the questionnaire. Respond to the statements in the order they appear. Respond according to the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree				strongly agree

1. I want our relationship to last for a very long time.
2. I am committed to maintaining my relationship with my partner.
3. I would not feel very upset if our relationship were to end in the near future. **(R)**
4. It is likely that I will date someone other than my partner within the next year. **(R)**
5. I feel very attached to our relationship – very strongly linked to my partner.
6. I want our relationship to last forever.
7. I am oriented toward the long-term future of my relationship (for example, I imagine being with my partner several years from now).

Parental Influence on Mate Choice (Buunk, Park, & Duncan, 2010)

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the statements below. Use the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree				strongly agree

1. If he has good reasons for it, a father has the right to give his daughter away for marriage
2. It is the duty of parents to find the right partner for their children, and it is the duty of children to accept the choice of their parents
3. If they take into account the wishes of their children, parents have the right to demand that their children accept the partner they have chosen for them
4. Even though children have the right to look for a partner themselves, in the end, the parents have the last say in this matter.
5. Children have the right to reject a partner their parents have chosen for them **(R)**
6. If their parents have serious objections against someone their children prefer as a partner, children should break off the relationship with that person
7. When selecting a partner, children should take into account the wishes of their parents
8. Children should always consult their parents in their choice of a partner
9. Parents have the right to say how they feel about it, but in the end, it is up to the children to select their own partner **(R)**
10. Children have the right to select their own partner without any interference by their parents **(R)**

Family Allocentrism Scale (Lay, 1998)

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the statements below. Use the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree				strongly agree

1. I am very similar to my parents.
2. I work hard at school to please my family.
3. I follow my feelings even if it makes my parents unhappy. **(R)**
4. I would be honored by my family's accomplishments.
5. My ability to relate to my family is a sign of my competence as a mature person.
6. Once you get married your parents should no longer be involved in major life choices. **(R)**
7. The opinions of my family are important to me.
8. Knowing that I need to rely on my family makes me happy.
9. I will be responsible for taking care of my aging parents.
10. If a family member fails, I feel responsible.
11. Even when away from home, I should consider my parents' values.
12. I would feel ashamed if I told my parents "no" when they asked me to do something.
13. My happiness depends on the happiness of my family.

14. I have certain duties and obligations in my family.
15. There are a lot of differences between me and other members of my family. **(R)**
16. I think it is important to get along with my family at all costs.
17. I should not say what is on my mind in case it upsets my family.
18. My needs are not the same as my family's. **(R)**
19. After I leave my parents' house, I am not accountable to them. **(R)**
20. I respect my parents' wishes even if they are not my own.
21. It is important to feel independent of one's family. **(R)**

Study 2

Ideal Partner Items
(Fletcher, Simpson, Thomas, & Giles, 1999)

Please rate each of the following 18 characteristics on how important or desirable it is for your *dating partner* to possess. Use the following scale.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very Unimportant						Very Important

1. Understanding
2. Supportive
3. Considerate
4. Kind
5. Good listener
6. Sensitive
7. Adventurous
8. Nice body
9. Outgoing
10. Sexy
11. Attractive
12. Good lover
13. Good job
14. Financially secure
15. Nice house or apartment
16. Appropriate ethnicity
17. Successful
18. Dresses well
19. Comes from a family with a good reputation
20. Favorable social status or rating
21. Similar religious background
22. Someone my family approves of

Warmth-Trustworthiness: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Vitality-Attractiveness: 7, 8, 9, 11, 12
Status-Resources: 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22

Item 10 loaded on multiple factors so it was not included in the analyses

Now take a moment and think about your **parents' opinions**, if they were to choose a mate for you, please rate each of the following characteristics from **their point of view**, on how important or desirable it is for **your** potential mate to possess. Use the following scale.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very Unimportant						Very Important

1. Understanding
2. Supportive
3. Considerate
4. Kind
5. Good listener
6. Sensitive
7. Adventurous
8. Nice body
9. Outgoing
10. Sexy
11. Attractive
12. Good lover
13. Good job
14. Financially secure
15. Nice house or apartment
16. Appropriate ethnicity
17. Successful
18. Dresses well
19. Comes from a family with a good reputation
20. Favorable social status or rating
21. Similar religious background
22. Someone my family approves of

Warmth-Trustworthiness: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Vitality-Attractiveness: 7, 8, 9, 11, 12
Status-Resources: 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22
*Items 10 loaded on multiple factors so it was not included in the analyses

Study 3 and 4

Attitudes Towards Sex Roles Scale   Larsen & Long, 1988)

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the statements below. Use the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5
strongly				strongly
disagree				agree

1. It is just as important to educate daughters as it is to educate sons. **(R)**
2. Women should be more concerned with clothing and appearance than men.
3. Women should have as much sexual freedom as men. **(R)**
4. The man should be more responsible for the economic support of the family than the woman.
5. The belief that women cannot make as good supervisors or executives as men is a myth. **(R)**
6. The word "obey" should be removed from wedding vows. **(R)**
7. Ultimately a woman should submit to her husband's decision.
8. Some equality in marriage is good but by and large the husband ought to have the main say-so in family matters.
9. Having a job is just as important for a wife as it is for her husband. **(R)**
10. In groups that have male and female members, it is more appropriate that leadership positions be held by males.
11. I would not allow my son to play with dolls.
12. Having a challenging job or career is as important as being a wife and mother. **(R)**
13. Men make better leaders.
14. Almost any woman is better off in her home than in a job or profession.
15. A woman's place is in the home.
16. The role of the teaching in the elementary schools belongs to women.
17. The changing of diapers is the responsibility of both parents. **(R)**
18. Men who cry have weak character.
19. A man who has chosen to stay at home and be a house-husband is not less masculine. **(R)**
20. As head of the household, the father should have the final authority over the children.

Romantic Beliefs Scale (Sprencher & Metts, 1989)

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the statements below. Use the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5
strongly				strongly
disagree				agree

1. I need to know someone for a period of time before I fall in love with him or her. **(R)**
2. If I were in love with someone, I would commit myself to him or her even if my parents and friends disapproved of the relationship.

3. Once I experience 'true love', I could never experience it again, to the same degree, with another person.
4. I believe that to be truly in live is to be in love forever.
5. If I love someone, I know I can make the relationship work, despite any obstacles.
6. When I find my 'true love' I will probably know it soon after we meet.
7. I'm sure that every new thing I learn about the person I choose for a long-term commitment will please me.
8. The relationship I will have with my 'true love' will be nearly perfect.
9. If I love someone, I will find a way for us to be together regardless of the opposition to the relationship, physical distance between us or any other barrier.
10. There will be only one real love for me.
11. If a relationship I have was meant to be, any obstacles (e.g. lack of money, physical distance, career conflicts) can be overcome.
12. I am likely to fall in love almost immediately if I meet the right person.
13. I expect that in my relationship, romantic love will really last; it won't fade with time.
14. The person I love will make a perfect romantic partner; for example, he/she will be completely accepting, loving, and understanding.
15. I believe if another person and I love each other we can overcome any differences and problems that may arise.

Love Finds a Way: 2, 5, 9, 11, 13, 15
One and Only: 3, 4, 10
Idealization: 7, 8, 14
Love at First Sight: 1, 6, 12

Essential Characteristics of a Spouse Scale (Gilbert, Dancer, & Thorn, 1991)

We would like to know what you want in a future partner. What are the qualities that you view as important in that person?

Listed below are a number of characteristics. Please indicate the degree of importance you give to each characteristic in a potential *future spouse*.

1	2	3	4	5
not at all important				essential

1. Someone who is nice looking
2. Someone who enjoys the same recreational activities
3. Someone who shares my spiritual values
4. Someone who holds traditional views of women's roles
5. Someone who is sexually attractive to me
6. Someone who shares my viewpoints and interests
7. Someone who will alter his/her work schedule for parenting
8. Someone willing to take maternity/paternity leave so I can continue my work
9. Someone who pursues their own interests and goals
10. Someone who makes me feel needed
11. Someone who is warm and nurturing
12. Someone who puts me first
13. Someone who makes me feel special
14. Someone who makes me feel protected and secure

15. Someone who can intuit what makes me happy
16. Someone who is strong and self-confident
17. Someone who likes challenges and is willing to try new things
18. Someone who is considerate and listens to me
19. Someone who can easily share their feelings and hurts
20. Someone who is serious about their career
21. Someone who makes me feel and appear successful
22. Someone who is able to be independent financially
23. Someone who will be supportive of my career
24. Someone who shares daily household tasks (e.g., cooking)
25. Someone who holds traditional views of men's roles **(R)**
26. Someone who will be successful in their career
27. Someone who shares the daily tasks of childrearing (e.g., diapering)
28. Someone who comes from a family with a good reputation
29. Someone who has good financial prospects
30. Someone who has a favorable social status or rating
31. Someone who has a similar religious background
32. Someone who my family approves of

Traditional Mate Characteristics: 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 27
Non-traditional Mate Characteristics: 3, 4, 7, 8, 25,28, 29, 30, 31, 32
Items 21 and 26 loaded on multiple factors so were not included in the analyses

Future Difficulties Scale (Gilbert, Dancer, & Thorn, 1991)

Listed below are a number of possible issues or conflicts, which can occur in marital life. Please think about each item carefully, then indicate how likely a barrier or difficulty such a situation might pose in your *future marital life*.

1	2	3	4	5
unlikely a difficulty for me				very likely a difficulty for me

1. Using child care for a pre-school aged child
2. Using child care for a pre-school aged child
3. Finding good child care
4. Having the freedom to locate or relocate professionally
5. Having the option to devote most of my time to my occupational work
6. Getting saddled with too much economic responsibility
7. Getting my spouse to really share household work
8. Getting my spouse to really share in the childrearing
9. Getting my spouse to be supportive of my career efforts
10. Pursuing a career compatible with my interests and abilities despite family demands (financial or otherwise)
11. Having to work more than I want to for financial reasons
12. Getting saddled with too much responsibility for the home and family
13. Working less than full time and still advancing in my career
14. Sharing childrearing and home responsibilities with my spouse and still being competitive in my career

15. Feeling a lot of conflict if I continue my career and have a child
16. Maximizing my professional potential

Childcare: 1, 2, 3, 15
Sharing Family Work: 7,8,9,12,14
Career Advancement: 5,6,11,13
* Items 4 and 10 loaded on multiple factors so were not included in the analyses

Scales for Study 4

The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; Glick & Fiske, 1996)

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the statements below. Use the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree				strongly agree

1. No matter how accomplished he is, a man is not truly complete as a person unless he has the love of a woman.
2. In a disaster, women ought to be rescued before men.
3. People are not truly happy in life without being romantically involved with a member of the other sex.
4. Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess.
5. Women should be cherished and protected by men.
6. Every man ought to have a woman he adores.
7. Men are incomplete without women.
8. A good woman should be set on a pedestal by her man.
9. Women, compared to men, tend to have a superior moral sensibility.
10. Men should be willing to sacrifice their own well-being in order to provide financially for the women in their lives.
11. Women, as compared to men, tend to have a more refined sense of culture and good taste.

Thank you for your participation in this study, you are over halfway done, but before you continue:

We are currently working on compiling a new study and would like to request your help to finalize the project. The following is a vignette and questions we are considering using in the next study. Please take a few minutes to read the vignette and answer the questions.

Traditional Gender-Role Ideology:
Jay thinks that, as a man, he possesses strong leadership qualities and should primarily be responsible for the economic support of the family. He wants to provide the means for his spouse to be able to stay at home because he believes that almost any women is better off in her home than in a job or profession. Although he thinks it is good for both husband and wife to express their opinions, Jay believes that as head of the household, he should get the final say in family matters.

Benevolent Sexism:
Jay is a man who thinks that no matter how accomplished he is, a man is not truly complete as a person unless he has the love of a woman. He thinks that every man should have a woman whom he adores and is happy with. He thinks that women should be cherished and protected by men, and he puts his wife on a pedestal, because he thinks that, like other women, she has a quality of purity few men possess.

Egalitarian:
Jay is a modern man regarding the roles each member of the couple should play. He thinks there should be equality in a marriage and that the husband and wife should participate equally in family decisions, as well as in taking care of the home and the children.
Sam believes times have changed and therefore both members of the couple should bring money home and jointly provide for the family's finances.

Manipulation Check:

1. I had a hard time clearly understanding the vignette.

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree				strongly agree

2. The vocabulary/words used in the vignette were too difficult or complex.

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree				strongly agree

3. Do you think Jay holds a positive attitude towards women? **(R)**

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree				strongly agree

4. Do you think Jay holds a negative attitude towards women? **(R)**

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree				strongly agree

5. Marriage should not interfere with a woman's career any more than it does with a mans.

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree				strongly agree

6. Women should be allowed the same sexual freedom as men.

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree				strongly agree

Manipulation Check 1: items 3, 4 (indicates greater positive attitude towards women)
Manipulation Check 2: items 5, 6 (indicates greater egalitarian beliefs)