

## CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

This study addressed the need for empirical studies in MFT that focused on ethnically or culturally diverse populations, especially with ethnic minority couples. The purpose of this research study was to examine conflict resolution styles most predominant among the Latino couples in the sample and to examine if various demographic data, such as years married, country of origin, years living in the United states, education, religion, gender, and language preference may be related to couples conflict resolution style.

In addition to Gottmans Marital conflict Scale, MSC (1994), other items included in the survey were questions related to connectedness, politeness, harmony, and hierarchies, which are said to be reflected in the cultural meaning systems that significantly shape the Hispanic family's style of communication, conflict management, and emotional expression (Ho, 1987; Falicov, 1998). Currently, family therapists do not have an empirically based understanding of the communication and conflict resolution process potentially germane to Latino couples. The impetus of this study was the desire to examine if the assumptions found in the MFT literature could be supported by my data.

The assumptions found in the MFT literature that describe Latino couple's communication and conflict resolution styles are as follows: 1) Latino couples are conflict avoidant because they are members of a collectivistic culture; 2) Ideologies about connectedness, hierarchy, and personalismo shape the Latino family's style of communication, conflict management, and emotional expression; 3) Latinos view direct

form of communication as undesirable and disrespectful; 4) The varying acculturation rates of family members complicates communication, which is often governed by traditional hierarchical structure; and 5) Communication is formal, indirect, and guarded in public, especially with authority figures. In this discussion, research hypothesis, research questions, and the assumptions found in the MFT literature about Latinos style of conflict resolutions will be addressed.

### *The Sample*

This sample was unique in that although the data was collected in two cities, Houston and Dallas, Latinos from 21 countries were represented. The respondent's country of birth showed an unequal distribution of those born in the United States as opposed to those born outside the continental U. S. The majority, 66.22%, were Latino immigrants from another country. Of those respondents who immigrated to the United States, the number of years living in the U.S. ranged from 1 to 58 years. A possible reason for this is that I am from another country and my family members and friends are from another country. It is possible that since the sample was obtained via snowball sampling procedure, the people distributing the survey knew a lot of Latinos who were also born in another country.

### *The Survey*

Of the 382 participants, 56.5% answered the survey in Spanish, and 43.5% answered in English. These percentages are important since language of the survey makes a difference when using ethnically diverse samples. It is necessary to include the dominant language for that culture in the survey and great care must be taken with the translation of the survey, especially when translating into Spanish because many

countries use different words for the same thing. The same is true with English, when considering the diversity of the English language from the U.S., Canada, England, Scotland, Australia, and South Africa for example. However, rarely do we see samples so diverse with emigrant Caucasian, Non-Hispanic samples in the U.S. This is not the case with Latino samples in the U.S. as evidenced by this research study.

### *The Redefined Variables*

The Redefined variables were created using factor analysis and content analysis. The data was reduced and grouped similarly related variables as with the MCS. Content analysis was a stronger form of clustering the variables since the factor analysis groupings did not yield higher reliability scores. In addition to the dependent variables conflict Avoidance, Validator, and Volatile conflict resolution styles, five additional dependent variables emerged, named “Unity”, “Harmony”, “Conservatism”, “Autonomy”, and “Passion”. The same items from the MCS and direct statements from the MFT literature were used. With this sample, the Redefined variables had higher reliability scores than Gottman’s Marital Conflict Scale and appeared to be more culturally sensitive measure for this sample. As will be discuss later, often times the Redefined variables yield statistically significant F-results when MANOVAs were run, and the subscales from the MSC did not. In the future, these Redefined subscales can be improved to create a stronger measure for conflict resolution among Latino Couples.

### Hypotheses Testing

Four major hypotheses were examined related to gender, culture, religion, and education. The following is a discussion related to the statistical results. As a reminder,

the hypothesis generated reflected the assumptions about Latino families in the MFT literature.

*Hypothesis 1: Gender*

The first hypothesis examined if gender differences would be found due to traditional beliefs about gender roles. The descriptions found in the MFT literature describe Latina women as submissive and men as being dominant (Ho, 1987). This power imbalance is due to the hierarchical nature of relationships. Because of this assumption, it was hypothesized that the Latina women in this sample would be more Avoidant or Validating, and the Latino men would be more Avoidant or Volatile. Gender was examined through out all of the major analyses and overall, there were no strong gender differences in conflict resolution style between the wives and the husbands. These data support Gabrieleidis et al's findings suggesting little gender differences between Mexican and U.S. participants in the study (1997). Nonetheless, gender is still a salient point to discuss because certain independent variables related to the wives and husbands conflict resolution styles differently. Overall, hypothesis one was not supported. There were no major gender differences in conflict resolution styles in this sample.

*Hypothesis 2: Culture*

Hypothesis two examined the relationship between the culture variables and conflict resolution styles. The culture variables were country of origin (U.S. or foreign born), number of years living in the U.S. if foreign born, language preference, and language in which they answered the survey. It was hypothesized that the participants who were foreign born and more comfortable with speaking and writing Spanish would have a predominant conflict Avoidance style. It was also hypothesized that the Latinos in

the sample who were born in the United States, preferred speaking and writing in English, and had many years living in the U.S. would have more Validating style. These hypotheses stem from the idea that the more acculturated people are, the more likely they will be less they will espouse traditional Latino values, and the less Avoidant they would be.

*Country of Birth (U.S. or Foreign Country)*

It was predicted that wives and husbands born in the U.S. would have a more Validating style and the participants born in another country would have a more Avoidant style. The highest mean scores for wives and husbands conflict resolution style was for the Validator style, with the participants who were born outside the U.S. having slightly higher mean scores. The lowest mean scores for the wives and husbands country of origin was for the Volatile style. For the Redefined variables, the highest mean scores were for the wives and husbands Unity style, again showing that when the wives and husbands were born outside the continental U.S., they had higher mean scores for the Unity conflict resolution style. These results do not support the hypothesis that Latinos and Latinas born in the U.S. would have a more Validating style of conflict resolution. This is important since the majority of the sample was foreign born and most had a Validating style.

In contrast to the Wives Born in the U.S. variable, the husband's born in the U.S. did yield statistically significant multivariate or univariate effects for wive's country of origin. However, the Wilks Lambda indicated a significant multivariate  $F$ -test result for husband born in U.S. for the Redefined variables. ANOVAS indicated that both wives and husbands were more Unified when the husband's were born outside the U.S. and

when the husband's were born in the U.S. the wives and husbands were both more Autonomous, however, only the husband's Autonomy was statistically significant. Overall, it appears that wife's country of birth did not demonstrate statistical differences in conflict resolution styles. However, husband's country of origin did relate to husband's and wives feeling more unified if the husbands were born outside of the U.S. and the husbands feeling more autonomous when they were born in the U.S. It appears that born in the U.S. or not does relate to a couples sense of cohesion and independence. These findings are consistent with the literature that asserts that immigrants are more cohesive than non-immigrants and it is possible that they would probably feel less secure with an autonomous style of conflict resolution if they were transitioning from a collectivistic culture to an independent culture or a new country regardless.

#### *Number of Years Living in the United States*

The subscales that correlated at a significant level were for the number of years the husband lived in the U.S., not the wives. From the MSC subscales, husband's Validator subscale was the only style that correlated with the number of years the husband lived in the. The more years the husbands lived in the U.S., the less Validating they were. There were no significant differences between the number of years the wives lived in the U.S. and the wives and husband's conflict resolutions styles. The number of years the husband lived in the U.S. also negatively correlated with the husband's Unity. It appears that wife's number of years in the U.S. did not significantly relate to the wives or husbands Unity or any other conflict resolution style. The husband's and wives had less of a Unity style of conflict resolution, when husbands lived many years in the U.S. As with the Born in U.S. variable, it was the husbands who were more influential in the

wives and husbands conflict resolution style, not the wives. Overall, these correlations do not support the hypothesis that the more years Latinos live in the U.S., the more validating they will be.

### *Wife's Language*

As with the other culture variables, it was hypothesized that the wives language preference would relate to her conflict resolution style, with wives preferring English to have a more Validating style and wives preferring Spanish a more Avoidant style. The mean scores for wife's conflict resolution styles show that the highest means scores are for the Validator and Unity style for wives preferring Spanish. The husband's also had the highest mean scores for the Validating and Unity style when the wives preferred speaking Spanish. These results do not support the hypothesis that Latinas who prefer speaking English are more Validating and have more Validating husbands. If language is an indication of acculturation (Berry, 1997), it is possible that for the women in this sample, that the more acculturated they were, the less Validating they were. This is counterintuitive because most therapists have the assumption that American women have a Validating style of resolving conflict.

There were no significant multivariate or univariate F-test results for the MCS subscales and wife's language preference but there were for the Redefined variables. Univariate  $F$ - Tests revealed statistically significant differences in wife's language preference for the Harmony subscale. To clarify which language preference differed from each other, Duncan Multiple Range post hoc test indicated that there were no differences between groups for the wives and husbands when the wife preferred speaking English or Spanish, but when the wives were bilingual, preferring both languages

equally, they and the husbands were less Harmonious. Therefore, it appears that when wives were bilingual, they and the husbands were less Harmonious than when the wives preferred English or Spanish. This is an interesting finding since mastering both languages may increase a persons sense of competence and mastery, therefore helping them be more proactive and less avoidant.

#### *Husband's Language*

As with the wife's, it was hypothesized that the husband's language preference would relate to their conflict resolution style, with husband's preferring English to have a more validating style and wives preferring Spanish a more avoidant style. The mean scores for husband's conflict resolution styles show that the highest mean scores are for the Validator and Unity style for wives preferring being bilingual having the highest mean scores.

The husband's also had the highest mean scores for the Validating and Unity style when the wives were bilingual. Unlike the wives, the husbands had a slightly higher Validating scores and Unity scores when they were bilingual, as opposed to wives who had higher Validating and Unity means scores when they preferred speaking Spanish. Either way, these results do not support the hypothesis that Latino's who prefer speaking English are more validating and have more validating wives. Also, these data inform us of how being bilingual also can show variance in a sample. It is important for assessments to include questions asking if the participants prefer one language over another or if they use both or many languages equally. More research needs to be conducted in the areas of language preference, conflict resolution, and personal sense of agency.

*Husband's Survey Language*

As with the husband's language preference, it was hypothesized that the language in which the husbands answered the survey would relate to their conflict resolution style, with husband's answering in English having a more Validating style and those answering in Spanish having a more conflict Avoidant style. Similar the husband's language preference, the mean scores for husband's conflict resolution styles, indicating the highest mean scores for the Validator and Unity style for wives when the husband's answered the survey in Spanish.

The Wilks Lambda indicated a significant multivariate  $F$ -test result for the language the husband used to answer the survey for the MCS, and for the redefined variables. Univariate  $F$ - Tests revealed statistically significant differences in Husband's language for survey for the Avoidance and Harmony subscale. Means plots indicated that both wives and husbands were more Avoidant when the husband's answered the survey in Spanish. For the Redefined variables, as with Avoidance subscale, means plots indicated that both wives and husbands were more Harmonious when the husband's answered the survey in Spanish. Overall, it appears that when husband's answered the survey in Spanish, they and the wives were more Avoidant and Harmonious than if the husbands who answered in English. These results support the hypothesis that the language in which the husband's answered the survey would relate to them having a more Avoidant style of conflict resolution. A point of interest is the differences in conflict resolution style based on language preference and language in which the husbands answered the survey. One would assume that both variables would relate to the same

style of conflict but they don't. Other variables need to be explored to examine the differences in regard to written and spoken language.

### *Hypothesis 3: Religion*

It was hypothesized that religious and/or traditional values, in addition to active, consistent religious participation would yield greater preferences for an Avoidant style. This hypothesis stems from the belief that if Latinos were religious or traditional in their marital roles, then they would not challenge the gender role hierarchy prescribed by religious beliefs nor be confrontational in order to keep the peace.

### *Wives' Religion*

As can be seen in Table 21, the mean scores for wives' conflict resolution styles show that the highest means scores are for the Validator and Unity style for the Protestant wives having slightly higher means scores. The lowest mean scores for the wives religion was for the Volatile style. When examining the Avoidant subscale, Catholic wives were more Avoidant than the Protestant wives. However, for the Redefined variables, the Protestant wives had a more Conservative style of conflict resolution than the Catholic wives and a more Harmonious style than the Protestant wives.

The husband's also had the highest mean scores for the Validating style, when the wives were Protestant. In contrast to the wives, there were no differences with the Avoidance styles with the husbands when the wives were Catholic. However, the husbands were more Conservative when the wives were Protestant than when the wives were Catholic.

In regard to hypothesis 3, wives' religion related more to a Validator Style of conflict resolution, for the wives and husbands. However, when examining the Avoidant

subscale means, Catholic wives were slightly more Avoidant than the Protestant wives, and there were no differences for the husbands Avoidance regardless of the wives' religion. In regard to the Redefined variables, the wives and husbands had higher means scores for the Conservative subscale when the wives were Protestant. This is important since most of the items of the Conservative subscale are from the MCS, Avoidant subscale. Overall, the wives and husbands were more Validating, Unified, and Conservative when the wives were Protestant.

### *Wives' Religiosity*

As can be seen in Table 22, the means scores for wife's conflict resolution styles show that the highest means scores for wife's conflict resolution style are for the Validator style for wives who attended religious services weekly. As with the wives' religion, the lowest mean scores for wives religiosity was for the Volatile style. For the Redefined variables, the highest mean scores were for wife's Unity style, with wives who attended religious services sometimes, or every now and then. Unlike the Validator subscale, the wives who attended services sometimes had higher means scores for the Unity conflict resolution style. In regard to the Avoidance subscale, wives who attended religious services once per week were more Avoidant than the wives who attend sometimes or rarely. The Redefined variables showed the same pattern with the wives and husbands having highest means scores for the Conservative and Harmonious if they attended religious services once per week. Overall, it appears that the more the wives attended religious services, the more Validating they and the husbands were, not Avoidant, and that the wives who attended services had more Unity if they attended services sometimes instead of once per week.

As with the wives, the husband's also had the highest mean scores for the Validating style when the wives attended religious services once per week. However, when examining the means scores for the Avoidance subscale, the husbands were more Avoidant when the wives attended religious services once per week than when she went to church sometimes or rarely. The husbands were also more Conservative if the wives attended services weekly they were more Harmonious when the wives attended religious services rarely. They were equally Harmonious when the wives when to church once per week or sometimes.

As can be seen in Table 23, the Wilks Lambda indicated a significant multivariate F-test result for wives' religiosity for the MCS, and for the Redefined variables. Univariate F- Tests revealed statistically significant differences in wives' religiosity for the Avoidance subscale, the Validator subscale, and the Conservative subscale. To assess which level of wives' religiosity differed from each other Duncan Multiple Range post hoc test indicated that wives were more Avoidant when they attended religious services once per week, as the mean scores indicated above. The wives who attended services sometimes were not statistically different from other groups, and the wives who attended religious services rarely were the least Avoidant. The same pattern was true for husbands' Avoidance. Overall, wives and husbands were more Avoidant when the wives attended religious services at least once per week.

The Duncan Multiple Range post hoc test for wives' Validator Style indicated that wives were more Validating when they attended religious services sometimes or at least once per week. There were no statistically significant differences in those groups. And the wives and husbands who attended religious services rarely were the least Validating.

The wives and husbands were more also Conservative when the wives attended services weekly, and the least Conservative when the wives attended religious services rarely.

This supports the hypothesis that the more Latinas attended religious services, the more conservative they would be.

### *Husbands' Religion*

It was predicted that husbands who were Catholic would have a more Avoidant and Conservative style of conflict resolution. As can be seen in Table 24, the mean scores for wives' conflict resolution styles show that the highest mean scores for the Validator style when the husbands were Catholic. The lowest mean scores for the husbands' religion was for the Volatile style, with Protestant wives being more Volatile. For the Redefined variables, the highest mean scores were for the Protestant wives. As with the wife's religion variable, when the wives had the highest scores for the Unity conflict resolution style. When examining hypothesis 3, the mean scores do not support the hypothesis that Catholic husbands are more conflict Avoidant style, they are more Validating. However, when looking at the Avoidance subscale, when compared to Protestant wives, the Catholic wives were more Avoidant than the Protestant wives.

The husband's also had the highest mean scores for the Validating style when they were Protestant, with the means scores for husbands' Validator style being slightly higher when they had Protestant husbands. As with the wives, for the Redefined variables, the husband's had the highest mean scores for the Unity style, when they were Catholic. As with the wife's, the husbands both had a slightly higher Validating and Unity scores when the husbands were Protestant. These results do not support the hypothesis that Latino's who are Catholic are more conflict Avoidant, nor does it support

the hypothesis that Catholic husbands would be more Conservative. Wives and husbands were more Conservative when the wives were Protestant.

The only statistically significant  $F$ -Result difference was for the between-groups main effect for husband's religion for the Redefined variables. Univariate  $F$ - Tests revealed statistically significant differences in husband's religion for the Conservative, Autonomy, and the Passion subscales. ANOVAS indicated that only husbands', not wives, Conservatism was statistically significant at the .05 level, and only wife's Autonomy, and wives' Passion was statistically significant at the .05 and .01 level respectively. Means plots indicated that when husbands were Protestant, they were more Conservative, and when husbands were Catholic the wives were more Autonomous and Passionate. These results show that different religious affiliations would relate to different conflict resolution styles.

#### *Husbands' Religiosity*

As can be seen in Table 26, as with the wives religiosity variable, the means scores for wife's conflict resolution styles show that the highest means scores for wife's conflict resolution style are for the Validator and Unity style for husbands who attended religious services weekly. As with the wives' religiosity, the lowest mean scores for husbands' religiosity was for the Volatile style. In regard to the Avoidance subscale, wives whose husbands attended religious services once per week had more and Avoidant style than the husbands who attend sometimes or rarely. The Redefined variables showed a similar pattern in regard to Conservatism, with the wives being more Conservative if her husband attend services weekly, but more Harmonious when the husbands rarely attended religious services. Overall, it appears that when the husbands

attended religious services weekly, the wives were more Validating and had more Unity, but had more Harmony if the husbands rarely attended services.

As with the wives, the husband's also had the highest mean scores for the Validating style when the husbands attended religious services once per week. However, when examining the means scores for the Avoidance subscale, the husbands were also more Avoidant when the husbands attended religious services once per week. The husbands were also more Conservative if they attended services weekly than when he attended services sometimes or rarely. However, the husbands were more Harmonious when the husbands attended religious services sometimes, and were least Harmonious when the husbands went to church once per week. Duncan Multiple Range post hoc tests indicated that overall, wives and husbands were more Validating, Conservative, and Unified if the husbands attended religious services at least once per week.

#### *Hypothesis 4: Education*

Hypothesis 4 examined the relation of educational attainment and conflict resolution style. It was predicted that individuals having higher education would have more Validating styles and those with lower education would have more Avoidant or Volatile styles of conflict resolution.

#### *Wife's Education*

As can be seen in Table 29, univariate  $F$ - Tests revealed statistically significant differences in wife's education for the Avoidance subscale for the MCS and the Harmony subscale of the redefined variables. To clarify which levels of education differed from each other, four one-way analyses of variances were run with wife's education as the independent variable and wife Avoidance and husband Avoidance and wife Harmony and

husband Harmony as the dependent variables. Duncan Multiple Range post hoc test indicated that both wives and husbands were more Avoidant when the wife had a grade school education, in comparison to when the wives had a high school, some college, or a college degree or higher. There were no statistical differences found among the other education groups. Four one-way analyses of variance were run for wife's and husbands Harmony. Duncan Multiple Range post hoc test indicated that wives had more of a Harmony style when they had a both a grade school and high school education and husbands had more of a Harmony style when wives had achieved a grade school education. It appears that for the wives, having higher education related to them being more Harmonious, but husbands were equally Avoidant and Harmonious when wives had a grade school education. Overall, wives and husbands were more Avoidant when the wives had a low education. The data support the hypothesis that low education relates to a conflict avoidant style.

#### *Husband's Education*

As can be seen in Table 31, the Wilks Lambda did not indicate a significant multivariate  $F$ -test result for husband's education for the MCS but did yield a significant multivariate  $F$ -test result for the Redefined variables. Univariate  $F$ - Tests revealed no statistically significant differences in husband's education for any of the subscales for the MCS or the Redefined variables. Thus, husband's education level does not appear to relate to conflict resolution style to the extent that the wife's education level does. This could be due to an offset of the power structure in the relationship if the wife achieves a higher education or is empowered by her education. It is also possible that if her husband

prefers a traditional marriage, he will have more power regardless of his educational status.

### Clinical Implications

Communication is a critical component to all forms of psychotherapy and a proper understanding of communication is especially important in marital therapy because improving problems in communication is often the primary goal for therapy (O'Donohue & Crouch, 1996). Fry and Bjorkqvist (1997) affirm we should be cautious when attempting to apply conflict-resolution techniques across cultural settings, especially when attempting to mediate within a culture different from our own. Fry and Fry (1997) assert that although there have been numerous anthropological studies examining the culturally specific nature of conflict resolution, many of the models and techniques used for conflict resolution have stemmed from non-anthropological sources from Western societies, which convey implicit assumptions about the generalizability of these models. Fry and Fry argue for a both/and stance that helps practitioners and analysts obtain a balance and integration for the importance of cultural influence with the search for more general patterns for models of conflict resolution. So while it is important to understand Gottman's ideas of conflict resolution, for example, it is also equally important to understand the cultural nuances that will relate to a couples preferred style of resolving conflict and suspend our stereotypes about how we think they are, versus how they think they are.

The most important clinical implication that family therapists can gain from this study is the awareness that the majority of the women and men in this sample describe themselves as having a Validator style of conflict avoidance. The vignettes and the

results of the statistical analyses evidenced this. In addition, it is equally important for MFTs to continue to work toward using diagnostic and research measures that are culturally sensitive. The Redefined variables can be seen as a reframe to Gottman's variables, however, when closely examining the content of the items for the scales, the Redefined variables are more accurately labeled to represent the meaning of the subscale. For example, most of the items from the Conservatism scale were from the MSC Avoidant subscale, but the items related more with conservative values instead of an avoidance style of conflict. Future qualitative research would have to be conducted to validate the Redefined subscales.

#### Limitations of the Study

Although the goal of the study was not to generalize the findings of this sample to all Latinos, the main limitation of the study is that a random sample was not used. We can not generalize these findings to all Latinos. It was decided by the researcher that the snowball sampling procedure would be more effective in getting Latino couples to participate. This decision was also informed by the MFT literature that states that Latinos have ideologies about connectedness that presumes that self worth is defined by inner qualities that give them self respect and the ability to earn the respect of others. This value, personalism, is a characteristic in which a Latino feels a sense of inner dignity and in return has an expectation that others will reciprocate respect for that dignity (Ho, 1987). Personalism refers to the establishment of relationships through personal and effective bonds (Inclan, 1990), and for Puerto Ricans, it is a cultural concept that emphasizes the personal quality of any interaction (Ramos-McKay, Comas-Díaz & Rivera, 1988). I have learned from experience that Latinos are less likely to participate in

a study if there is no personal contact. The snowball sampling procedure was beneficial in that they were asked personally to answer the survey and they did not need to feel the intimidation or the distrust of dealing with a perceived institution, which is common among immigrant Latinos.

Another limitation of the study was the instrument. The Marital Conflict Scale did not have high reliability scores and had not been tested for validity. The instrument was used because it was one of the few instruments that had an Avoidant subscale and the Avoidance subscale was needed in order to examine the primary hypothesis: Are Latinos conflict avoidant? The five other measures were created to examine if higher reliability scores could be gained, and they were. However, there was not a way to validate the new measures. There could be other aspects of conflict resolution that the participants may talk about. In addition, a replication study would be needed to see if the same five constructs would result.

Another limitation of this study was that within- group differences for Latinos were not presented in this analysis. Any study examining an ethnic group from a monolithic stance should be taken with a grain of salt and not be perceived as “the way these people are.” The danger of doing this perpetuates the essentialism often found in the MFT literature about minority groups. This is something I have struggled with since the onset of the project, especially given the diversity among Latinos. However, there is a great need in MFT for research using a Latino sample, and the bigger question I was trying to examine was to see if Latinos were conflict Avoidant as the MFT literature suggests. The answer to that question was no; the predominant preferred style of conflict resolution was a Validating style. However, follow-up studies would have to be

conducted to examine if there are variances due to country of origin. For example, are Latinos from Mexico more validating than those from Argentina? I am not sure if this information could be useful. In this study, data was collected regarding each participant's country of origin and future research could examine the within group differences related to conflict resolution for this sample. I am also concerned with further stereotyping and categorizing that may result with global statements such as Latinos have a validating style of conflict resolution.

#### Implications for Future Research

I have learned a lot about myself as a researcher during this process. Perhaps the greatest implication for future research would be for the researcher in MFT to learn how to attending to the research process as they do to the clinical process. Focusing on the process as well as content is consistent with clinical training as a family therapist. By attending to the process would mean more than having a clearly defined methodology, but being in touch with the self-of-the-researcher issues that informs the research project. There are many subjective decisions made along the way and these decisions are not often documented in the final text. I struggled with this and I hope to continue to be self-aware and write more in this area.

#### Conclusion

The data presenting in this study may help couple and family therapists understand more closely the contextual factors that most related to the conflict resolution styles among Latino couples in this sample. These contextual factors were preferred spoken and written language, country of origin and years in the U.S. if the individual emigrated from another country, religious beliefs and religious attendance, and

educational attainment of both partners. These issues need to be addressed in order for therapists to have a culturally responsive assessment of Latino couples and to be more effective in helping their clients understand the issues impacting their ability to resolve their conflicts.

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