COMMUNICATION AND CONFLICT IN MARITAL DYADS:
A PERSONAL CONSTRUCT APPROACH

DISSERTATION

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A typology of marital dyads derived from Kelly's (1955) Personal Construct Psychology was used to investigate the communicative behaviors of married companions. Four groups based on Kelly's Commonality (dyadic similarity) and Sociality (dyadic understanding) corollaries were contrasted: similar-understanding, dissimilar-understanding, similar-misunderstanding, and dissimilar-misunderstanding couples.

It was expected that dyadic understanding would contribute more to self-disclosure, cooperative involvement, and marital satisfaction than dyadic similarity. Furthermore, it was anticipated that couples high in understanding and low in similarity would represent optimally functioning couples, as evidenced by disclosure, satisfaction, and involvement with each other.

Sixty-three married couples who had known each other at least two years completed questionnaire items assessing demographic variables, marital satisfaction (Dyadic Adjustment Scale) and self-reported communication behaviors (Partner Communication Inventory, Dyadic Disclosure Inventory). Each spouse also completed an 8 X 8 Repertory
Grid and predicted the mate's responses on the Rep Grid. Subjects then participated in three different audio-taped discussion tasks (an informal conversation, a consensus decision-making task, and a role-played conflict-resolution scene) which were rated for avoidant, competitive, and cooperative responses, as well as overall self-disclosure.

Although understanding facilitated disclosure in conflict situations and similarity fostered marital satisfaction, communicative behaviors generally reflected the joint influence of both similarity and understanding. Dissimilar-understanding couples were intensely involved with each other and freely disclosed, but were not highly satisfied. Similar-understanding couples were the most content and had the greatest sense of validation as a couple. Similar-misunderstanding couples restricted their relationship by attempting to avoid expected confrontations. Dissimilar-misunderstanding couples viewed themselves in a socially desirable light, tried to maintain congenial, nonintimate interactions, and were moderately contented. Implications for therapeutic programs, for Kelly's theory, and for future research were discussed.
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CHAPTER I

CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN MARITAL DYADS:
A PERSONAL CONSTRUCT APPROACH

Couples often explain the dissolution of their relationship by commenting, "We just didn't seem able to get along any more" (Levinger, 1979; Rausch, Barry, Hertel, & Swain, 1974). Partly because of these sentiments, marriage enrichment programs teaching communication skills have proliferated in the past decade (Bosco, 1972; Mace, 1975; Miller, 1975; Miller, Nunnally, & Wackman, 1975, 1976; Patterson, Hops & Weiss, 1975; Wells & Figureel, 1979). These programs typically center on helping couples discuss their conflicts and disagreements in a constructive manner.

The most critical issues affecting successful resolution of marital conflicts are the type and quality of communication between partners (Bach & Wyden, 1968; Beach & Arias, 1983; Katz, 1965; Navran, 1967; Rogers, 1972; Snyder, 1979; Ting-Toomey, 1983). Consequently, recent studies have tried to identify patterns of dyadic interaction associated with marital satisfaction and marital stability.

The most promising of these studies have observed communication exchanges during conflict (Billings, 1979; Gottman, 1979; Gottman, Notarius, Markman, Bank, & Yoppi, 1976; Knudson, Sommers, & Golding, 1980; Rausch et al., 1974; Rogers &
Farace, 1975; Sillars, Coletti, Parry, & Rogers, 1982), and researched the long-term marital consequences of various communication styles (Fitzpatrick, 1977; Fitzpatrick & Winke, 1979; Glick & Gross, 1975; Koren, Carlton, & Shaw, 1980; Patterson, Weiss & Hops, 1976).

For example, Fitzpatrick (Fitzpatrick, 1977; Fitzpatrick & Best, 1979; Fitzpatrick, Fallis, & Vance, 1982; Fitzpatrick & Indvik, 1982; Indvik & Fitzpatrick, 1982) conducted a series of studies on the communication behavior of couples while resolving conflict. Using eight basic dimensions of interpersonal life ("sharing," "conflict avoidance," "assertiveness," "undifferentiated space," "autonomy," "temporal regularity," "ideology of uncertainty and change," and "ideology of traditionalism"), she empirically derived a taxonomy of ongoing relationships. Four discrete relational types were identified. The "Traditional Type" believed in traditional values (e.g., attending church; teaching children the importance of their national heritage; maintaining traditional sex roles), had regular schedules, and worked to minimize autonomy in the marriage. They mutually shared with each other, were expressive in their communication, and were willing to engage rather than avoid each other when dealing with conflict. They were, however, strongly opposed to an ideology of change: they seldom opted to engage in new or different experiences and admitted to feeling uneasy when dealing with uncertainty.
The "Independents" were committed to different, sometimes irregular schedules, but shared intimately with each other and exhibited a high level of expressive communication. They experienced some degree of conflict in the relationship. Like traditionals, they believed in confronting conflict but did so in a more frank and less socially constrained manner. Independents were also committed to an ideology of uncertainty and change in the relationship: they liked novel experiences, actively pursued "self-growth" opportunities, and preferred spontaneous as opposed to structured activities.

The third type, "Separates", had a regular daily schedule, shared little, were not committed ideologically in any particular direction, and led separate but not autonomous lives. These dyads were largely unexpressive with one another and used a strategy of conflict-avoidance to handle disagreements.

Fitzpatrick also identified a fourth "Mixed" type in which the husband classified himself as a "Separate" and the wife classified herself as a "Traditional." Although these couples admitted that they were in disagreement over a fair number of issues in the marriage (e.g., the issue of autonomy/interdependence), they were moderately cohesive, were sexually and affectionately expressive, and they reported satisfaction with the relationship. This pair, bonded primarily through sexual interactions, parallels the "Blue Collar Marriage" identified in other studies (Komarovsky, 1964; Slater, 1970).
In order for couples to constructively communicate about marital differences it would seem to help if they also understood how these differences affected the very act of communication. Personal Construct Theory (PCT, Kelly, 1955) offers a way to conceptualize differences between partners that has direct implications for the couple's communication. The present study (1) develops a PCT typology of couples, and (2) investigates the utility of this typology in understanding dyadic interactions. Predictions regarding communicative behaviors and dyadic differences based on Personal Construct Psychology are contrasted with those based on Newcomb's (1961) cognitive consistency model. In particular, dyadic differences are expected to affect the amount of self-disclosure and the degrees of cooperative, competitive, and avoidant behaviors evidenced in decision making activities, as well as overall satisfaction in the marriage.

**Basic Assumptions of Personal Construct Psychology**

Kelly's theory holds that, to better anticipate future events, people try to make sense out of the events in their world. This process is so basic to human activity that Kelly incorporated it into what he termed his fundamental postulate: "A person's processes are psychologically channelized by the ways in which he anticipates events" (Kelly, 1955, p. 46). Kelly organized his entire theory around this postulate, and a number of researchers, in extending the theory, have reiterated the central role of anticipatory construing.
(Bannister & Fransella, 1971; Bannister & Mair, 1968; Landfield & Leitner, 1980).

According to Kelly, mankind's primary business is to develop an understanding of the world and to test this understanding for predictive accuracy (Bannister & Fransella, 1971). People accomplish this by comparing events along a finite number of dimensions. These dimensions, or constructs, are always bipolar in nature. One pole of the construct represents the basis of perceived similarity between two or more events, and the opposite pole represents the way in which at least one other event is perceived to be different.

For example, a wife may rely on the construct "excited vs. calm" to interpret and predict her spouse's behavior. She may construe his response to his favorite football team winning a critical game and his response to an unexpected bill in the mail as similar, in that her husband is very "excited." She may perceive both as times to avoid him. In contrast, she may construe his idle conversation after dinner as "calm," perceiving this as a time to seek his affection.

Kelly stressed that constructs are imposed on events, not dictated by the events themselves. Each person constructs his or her own reality, which may or may not be more useful in predicting future events than the reality constructed by another person (Kelly, 1970a; Mancuso & Adams-Weber, 1982).

Prediction is easier for the person when constructs are organized into systems (Organizational Corollary). Thus
each person develops a network of hierarchical relationships among constructs. For Kelly, describing a person entailed specifying that individual's construct system. Consequently, differences between persons (i.e., married couples) can be described in terms of differences between construct systems.

Thus, personal construct psychology holds that all individuals construct for themselves an organized interpretation of events based on similarity and contrast, with the main goal of predicting future events (Adams-Webber, 1979; Kelly, 1970b; Mancuso & Adams-Webber, 1982). From this it follows that interpersonal contacts can be described in terms of interactions between construct systems.

Three corollaries of Kelly's theory have important implications for marital interactions, particularly conflictual interactions. Kelly identified these as the "Individuality," "Commonality," and "Sociality" corollaries.

The Individuality Corollary states, quite simply, that "persons differ from each other in their construction of events" (Kelly, 1955, p. 55). Different people construe the world in different ways. This corollary stems directly from Kelly's philosophical position that an event is always open to reconstruction ("constructive alternativism"), either by that same person or by someone else. Marital companions may differ not only in the events they experience, but more importantly, they may differ in their interpretations of events. Note that Kelly does not assume that couples who differ are in

The Commonality Corollary states that "to the extent that one person employs a construction of experience which is similar to that employed by another, his psychological processes are similar to those of the other person." (Kelly, 1955, p. 90). Similarity, as Kelly defines it, is based on a person's construct system, not on objective similarity. Kelly further explains that commonality refers to more than just using similar labels. Commonality refers to the degree to which two partners actually apply those labels in the same way (Duck, 1982; Kelly, 1970a; Neimeyer & Neimeyer, 1983). Thus, people do differ from one another (Individual Corollary) but some are more alike on certain dimensions than others (Commonality Corollary).

In addition to dyadic similarity, people also vary on how well they understand one another. Understanding, rather than similarity, dictates the reciprocal role-relationship of a dyad. Kelly expressed this formally in the Sociality Corollary: "To the extent that one person construes the construction processes of another, he may play a role in the social process involving the other person." (Kelly, 1955, p. 95). In other words, a couple's capacity to develop an intimate, ongoing relationship depends on the ability of each member to subsume the frame of reference of the other.
The notion of "role" has a specific meaning for Kelly, and is so central to his thinking that he considered entitling his work "role theory" (Kelly, 1955; Landfield & Leitner, 1980). A role, as Kelly defined it, "is a psychological process based upon the role player's construction of aspects of the construction systems of those with whom he attempts to join in a social enterprise" (Kelly, 1955, p. 97). An interpersonal role, then, is based on interpersonal understanding. Kelly makes this relationship clearer when he described role in a less technical manner as "an ongoing pattern of behavior that follows from a person's understanding [italics added] of how the others who are associated with him in his task think" (Kelly, 1955, p.97). Role, then, is a continuous interpersonal process—an "ongoing activity . . . that is carried out in relation to, and with a measure of understanding of, other people . . ." (Kelly, 1955, p. 98).

Landfield and Leitner (1980) underscore the relationship of role to understanding by noting "the person performs an interpersonal task based on his understanding of another person's construct system" [original italics]. For a married couple, mutual roles involve working towards greater comprehension of one another.

For Kelly, role relationships are the ideal in life, constituting a central part of the "optimal person" (Kelly, 1980). Two persons who play an ongoing role with each other build an "experiential cycle" based on intimate communication,
self-disclosure, and risk. In short, reciprocal roles provide the opportunity for mutual growth. The converse would be two partners who simply act as "behaving organisms" in a parallel, or perhaps even, disintegrative fashion (Kelly, 1955). For example, the more a spouse is able to understand what is implied by her partner's construct "sensitive vs. insensitive" (Neimeyer & Neimeyer, 1982), the more she can share experiences with that spouse. She will be able to anticipate his behavior and coordinate her own behavior with his, providing a context for mutual validation. If the two are unable to understand each other's construct systems, they may be behaving in the same time and space but not entering each other's worlds. In such an instance, they do not have a role relationship, as Kelly defines it.

While similarity of construct systems may enhance mutual understanding, such commonality is only incidental to developing a reciprocal role relationship. In fact, Kelly clearly points out that the two dimensions (Commonality, Sociality) are orthogonal. For example, two people may employ similar constructions but at the same time misperceive each other's point of view. As Kelly distinctly noted, "commonality can exist between two people who are in contact with each other without either of them being able to understand the other well enough to engage in a social process with him." (Kelly, 1955, p.99). In other words, two people
may be very much alike, but if they do not understand that fact, they will be "whistling in the wind."

Couples, therefore, can be either high or low in similarity and either high or low in understanding. Before articulating a PCT description of the four possible types of dyads resulting from the interaction of these two dimensions, research relevant to these dimensions will be reviewed.

Research on Similarity and Understanding

Although communicative behaviors play an important part in the development of relationships and in subsequent marital satisfaction (Fitzpatrick & Best, 1982; Rogers, 1972; Snyder, 1979; Ting-Toomey, 1983), research on similarity and understanding has, for the most part, focused on matters that are only indirectly related to dyadic communication. For example, similarity has been examined in its relationship to attraction, relationship formation, marital satisfaction, and marital adjustment. Likewise, investigators have tried to link understanding to liking of partners, to marital satisfaction, and to adjustment in marriage. Studies relating attraction and satisfaction to similarity and understanding, then, will be briefly reviewed and evaluated for their contributions to the present study on dyadic interactions.

Similarity and Dyadic Interactions. A great deal of evidence has established the importance of similarity in the attraction of strangers to one another. For example, attraction has been found to vary with similarity of opinions
(Winslow, 1937), values (Tagiuri, 1957), abilities (Senn, 1971; Zander & Havelin, 1960), economic status (Byrne, Clore & Worcel, 1966), and personality traits (Byrne, Griffit, & Stefaniak, 1967). This is true when the individuals involved are not even aware of the similarity (Byrne & Griffit, 1969; Neimeyer & Neimeyer, 1981), though perceived similarity may in fact be more important than actual similarity (Byrne & Blaylock, 1963; Levinger & Breedlove, 1966). It appears that similarity of attitudes or world view is basic to all such similarity-attraction findings (Byrne, 1971; Clore & Byrne, 1974; Griffit, 1974): people tend to like others who construe the world in a similar fashion. Similarity between strangers presumably leads to a sense of consensual validation, and since all people seek to validate their construction systems (Kelly, 1955), this gives rise to positive feelings between members of the dyad.

Thus dyadic similarity sets the stage for individuals to choose a relationship in which continued consensual validation is anticipated. It has been found, for example, that friends are more similar than nominal acquaintances in attitudes (Knapp & Harwood, 1977), preferences (Levinger & Breedlove, 1966; Newcomb, 1961), and personal constructs (Neimeyer & Neimeyer, 1982; Duck, 1973; Lea, 1979). This has been found in adolescent (Duck, 1975) and college (Duck, 1973; Lea, 1979) populations, using both crosssectional and longitudinal designs (Duck, 1973; Duck & Allison, 1978; Duck & Spencer, 1972;
Newcomb, 1956, 1961). Likewise, happily married couples are more similar to each other than are dissatisfied couples (Corsini, 1956; Dymond, 1954; Fergusen & Allen, 1978; Neimeyer & Hudson, 1984; Newmark, Woody, & Ziff, 1977), and nondisturbed couples are more similar than disturbed couples (Katz, 1965; Laing, Phillipson, & Lee, 1966). Since friendship development and marital satisfaction depend in part on open communication, these studies suggest that expressive communication may be facilitated by commonality and inhibited by lack of agreement.

Although similarity is correlated with attraction and satisfaction, a number of other factors (e.g., perceived similarity, developmental stage of the relationship, level of understanding) may interact with similarity to affect interpersonal processes. For example, perceived similarity may be more important than actual similarity in both initial attraction (Byrne & Blaylock, 1963; Newcomb, 1954, 1961), and marital satisfaction (Arias & O'Leary, 1977; Burgess, 1969; Byrne & Blaylock, 1963; Levinger & Breedlove, 1966). Developmental stage of the relationship is also a consideration. In a longitudinal study, Neimeyer, Neimeyer, and Landfield (1982) found that similarity affected attraction early in relationships but not later on. Likewise, similarity of values predicted break-ups in short-term couples but not in long-term couples (Kerckhoff & Davis, 1962), and Stephen and Markman (1983) found that married couples were lower in
similarity of world view than either couples who were dating or who were engaged. Furthermore, it appears that dissimilarity is desired over similarity at some points in the development of a relationship (Duck, 1979; Goldstein & Rosenfeld, 1969; Gregson, 1983; McCarthy & Duck, 1976), especially on issues considered by the couple to be superficial. Fitzpatrick and Best (1979) found that although couples who held similar views about the relationship reported higher levels of companionate activities than couples who differed, they expressed less affection towards one another.

It appears that at initial phases in a relationship dyadic communication may be enhanced by similarity. At later stages, however, incongruity may actually optimize certain communicative behaviors.

Understanding and Dyadic Interactions. Like similarity, understanding has been tied to attraction and satisfaction. For example, students reported liking an evaluator more when he was seen as understanding and discerning than when not (Landy & Aronson, 1968), and attraction was found to be greatest in dyads that evidenced mutual understanding (Neimeyer, Neimeyer, & Landfield, 1983).

Research on marital satisfaction is equivocal, with some studies suggesting that happily married couples accurately understand each other, and other studies suggesting that happy couples actually misperceive each other more than do dissatisfied couples. For example, couples who can accurately
predict each other's construals report higher levels of satisfaction (Dymond, 1954; Ferguson & Allen, 1978; Newmark et al., 1977) and adjustment (Christensen & Wallace, 1978; Laing et al., 1966). However, Neimeyer & Hudson (1984) found that this was true only for superordinate, but not subordinate constructs, and Corsini (1956) and Luckey (1960a, 1960b) found no relationship between understanding and happiness in married couples. In addition, some studies indicate that distressed individuals—rather than nondistressed—are more accurate in predicting how their spouses view them in the relationship (Beach & Arias, 1983; Margolin, Talovic, Weinstein, 1983). It was the nondistressed who actually distorted each other's views. The discrepant findings may reflect the various methods used to assess interpersonal understanding, some of which were likely artificially inflated by dyadic similarity (see Cronbach, 1955, 1958; Gage & Cronbach, 1955). As Cronbach argues, it is important to separate the influence of similarity when researching predictive accuracy between partners. It is possible, for example, for couples to score high in understanding (when measured by discrepancy scores) simply because they are similar to one another, and not because they can accurately predict each other's responses.

No studies have investigated the impact of understanding on the actual communicative process, particularly during conflict situations. However, since it can be assumed that marital satisfaction depends in part on the communication
between partners (Spanier & Lewis, 1980), the above findings relating dyadic understanding to marital satisfaction suggest that understanding (or misunderstanding) may directly impact the communicative behaviors of each spouse.

**Similarity and Understanding Together in Dyadic Interactions.** There have been no studies investigating the concurrent influence of similarity and understanding on the dyadic communication process. A few studies, however, have looked at the relative influence of these two variables on attraction and marital satisfaction. With regard to attraction, for instance, it appears that the influence of similarity is mitigated by understanding. For example, Walster (1963) and Aronson and Worcher (1966) found that the similarity-attraction relationship disappeared if individuals were assured in advance that they would be understood and accepted. In a related study with strangers, Neimeyer, Banikotes, and Porche (1981) provided false feedback to subjects to experimentally manipulate similarity and understanding. They found that initially people were more attracted to those whom they perceived as more similar, but that once information about the accuracy of their understanding was available, similarity had no effect on attraction ratings. In this experimentally contrived situation, sociality took precedence over commonality in determining interpersonal attraction. Predictive accuracy in this situation, of course, will be much different than that
existing in an ongoing marital dyad, but it does suggest that being able to understand another person may be more important, at least at some stages of relationship development, than being similar to that person.

This suggestion parallels Parloff, Waskow, and Wolfe's (1978) conclusion on therapy outcome studies. Parloff suggested that it is not similarity of experience, background, or personality that predicts positive outcome, but ability on the part of the therapist to apprehend the client's perspective. It also parallels Kelly's argument that understanding, rather than similarity, is critical to the development of intimate reciprocal role-relationships. Similarity and understanding have also been concurrently examined in relation to marital satisfaction. Corsini (1956), for example, found that similarity, but not understanding, was related to satisfaction in married couples. Additionally, he reported that similarity and understanding were not related to each other. Others, in contrast, have found that satisfaction and/or adjustment are related to both similarity and understanding (Dymond, 1954; Fergusen & Allen, 1978; Laing et al., 1966; Neimeyer & Hudson, 1984; Neimeyer, Neimeyer, & Landfield, 1982; Newmark et al., 1977). Only two of these studies, however, attempted to answer Cronbach's (1955, 1958; Gage & Cronbach, 1955) criticism that understanding scores may be artificially inflated due to similarity. These two (Newmark et al., 1977; Dymond, 1954) found similarity and understanding
to be uncorrelated with each other, even though each was positively related to satisfaction in the marriage.

**Implications for the Present Study**

From the foregoing research it appears that, as Kelly states, both commonality and sociality are critical to interpersonal development. Kelly (1955) argued that people choose those alternatives in life that seem at that moment to give them the greatest opportunity to expand their anticipatory system (Choice Corollary). Thus, according to Kelly, people tend to select and maintain relationships that offer the greatest potential for elaborating their construct systems (Duck, 1979; Neimeyer & Neimeyer, 1982). Elaboration can come through two channels: definition or extension.

One way to elaborate a system is to make its application more explicit and more clearly defined. An individual may try to do so by narrowing the range of events to which a system applies, by confirming in ever greater detail the relationships between events that have been found to exist, and by consolidating the system to minimize differences between constructs and to eliminate uncertainties (Adams-Webber, 1979; Bannister & Fransella, 1977; Neimeyer & Neimeyer, 1983). One might elaborate one's construct system, then, by trying to become "more and more certain about fewer and fewer things" (Kelly, 1955, p. 67), i.e., reconfirming the utility of constructs that have already been applied. Interacting with people who construe the world in a similar
fashion allows us to reconfirm those perceptions we have already actively developed. Dyadic commonality, then, at least initially, helps a couple articulate and define existence in their the world.

Elaboration can also take the form of enlarging the current network of constructions, making it apply to a broader range of events. The extension of the system makes more of life's experiences meaningful (Kelly, 1955), but stretching one's system like this also implies change, and may temporarily add a sense of ambiguity or uncertainty as it is applied in new ways. If individuals can encompass another's way of viewing the world, they have extended their construct systems to account for a broader range of events. Consequently, when a couple is able to mutually subsume one another's anticipatory systems, their personal constructs have been elaborated in an important way.

Nowhere are the processes of definition and extension more critical than in the marital relationship. In marriage, perhaps more than in any other colleagueship, couples expect to find the opportunity to mutually elaborate construction systems (Burgess, 1967; Kelly, 1955; Neimeyer & Hudson, 1984). Kelly comments: "Other things being equal, the man confronted with the alternative of marriage will choose marriage if that appears to provide him with an opportunity to enlarge or secure his anticipatory system" (p.523). Likewise, Berger (Berger & Kellner, 1964; Berger & Luckman, 1966) views marriage as a
"nomos-building" instrumentality in which each member of the dyad uses the relationship to sort out life experiences, and to construct a consistent reality that can be mutually experienced.

These processes of definition and extension are also reflected in the writings of a number of other theorists. For example, mankind is seen as choosing between opportunities for growth versus security (Maslow, 1969), of trying to enhance life versus merely maintaining life (Rogers, 1961), and of opting for a life of the unknown future with its ontological anxiety versus a life of the known past with its accompanying guilt and failure of courage (Binswanger, 1963; Boss, 1963).

The present study investigates the utility of Kelly's proposition that successful marital relationships are characterized by construct elaboration. Because it is impossible to know at the outset where a person's elaborative venture will lead and because constructs are primarily personal and not easily shared (Kelly, 1955), communication between members of a dyad is critical if they are to continue their elaborative journey together. The ability of the couple to do so at an intimate and personally relevant level depends on their ability to play a role with each other, as defined by Kelly. This, in turn, depends on their level of mutual understanding. As previously discussed, Kelly (1955, 1970) argues that people are able to play an intimate role with each
other characterized by affective exchanges only if they
successfully comprehend one another's constructs.

One important index of reciprocal understanding is the
level of self-disclosure (Jourard, 1959). Self-disclosure also
indicates the willingness of the couple to extend their
predictive capacities with one another (Kelly, 1955; Neimeyer,
Banikiotes, & Ianni, 1979), and it has been related to various
measures of interpersonal satisfaction (Burke, Weir, &
Harrison, 1976; Levinger & Senn, 1967; Chelune, 1975, 1976a,
1979; Waterman, 1979). The present study, therefore, evaluates
communicative behavior between members of a dyad in terms of
reciprocal self-disclosure.

Other key interpersonal behaviors identified in the
research on dyadic communication include degree of cooperative
interaction, level of competition between members, and the
degree to which partners avoid interacting with each other
(Fitzpatrick et al., 1982; Sillars et al., 1982; Sillars, Pike,
Jones, & Murphy, 1984; Sillars, Pike, Jones, & Redmon, 1983).
These dimensions of communication are also used in this study
to evaluate the elaborative venture of a couple. Additionally,
since marital satisfaction is a global reflection of
communication patterns in a marriage (Spanier & Lewis, 1980;
Levinger, 1980) ratings of marital satisfaction have been
included.
**Hypotheses**

Kelly's Personal Construct Theory would hold that companions with a high degree of mutual understanding are involved in a role-relationship with each other and are creating a context for optimal interpersonal functioning. Without this understanding the relationship becomes impoverished or even comes to a standstill. "In order for people to get along harmoniously with each other," Kelly reiterates, "each must have some understanding of the other" (1955, p. 99). Marital harmony does not depend on spouses holding the same construction systems but on their ability to successfully comprehend one another. Mates involved in a role-relationship, then, would be expected to share intimate information more freely, would work cooperatively rather than competitively to make decisions and resolve conflicts, and would characterize their relationship as more gratifying than spouses who misunderstand each other.

**Hypothesis 1:** Dyads high in understanding will score higher on a) reciprocal self-disclosure, b) cooperative behaviors, and c) marital satisfaction than couples who are low in understanding.

More interestingly, communicative behavior is expected to vary as a function of the interaction between similarity (commonality) and understanding (sociality). Based on these two dimensions, dyads can be classified as either high or low in similarity and either high or low in understanding. This
yields four distinct groups: those that are alike and accurately able to assess that similarity (similar-understanding); those that are very dissimilar but accurately comprehend each other's differences (dissimilar-understanding); those who are similar but who misperceive themselves (similar-misunderstanding); and those who disagree but do not accurately apprehend their discrepancies (dissimilar-misunderstanding). These four groups will be briefly described and compared in regard to expected interpersonal behaviors, based on Kelly's (1955) theory.

**Dissimilar-Understanding Couple.** Kelly contends that people choose relationships offering maximal opportunity for elaboration of their anticipatory systems. Individuals successfully facing the challenge of subsuming another person's world view that is quite distinct from their own encounter such a situation. They are validated in their attempt to widen the applicability of their construct systems. Consequently, a marriage in which mates diverge on a number of issues but are able to anticipate each other's perspectives provides the greatest potential for extension, and requires a risking role-relationship with a high level of communication. In fact, Kelly cites as one of the finest examples of "role relationships and constructive social interaction" (1955, p. 100), instances where a man and a woman, who do not consture all aspects of life in the same way, are able to understand each other. Conflicts for such partners are viewed as
opportunities for creative reconstruction (Boxer, 1983; Deutsch, 1969; Kelly, 1977) and decisions are a result of cooperative self-disclosure (Kelly, 1955). Such couples would describe their relationship as intimate, affectionate, and satisfying, and would seek opportunities conducive to growth and change. The term "dissimilar-understanding" will be used to refer to this dyadic prototype. It was expected that couples in this cell would be higher in both reported and observed self-disclosure, would be higher in reported marital satisfaction, and would evidence a greater degree of cooperative (vs. competitive or avoidant) interchanges when resolving conflicts, than any of the other three couple types.

Some evidence from the literature concurs with this description based on Kelly's theory. For example, Maslow (1958) and Rogers (1972) both consider the most healthy couple to be the pair that is both intimate and also supports autonomy. Argyle and Furnham (1983) found that the relationships in which people reported the highest level of satisfaction were also the ones where the greatest number of conflicts had to be faced and resolved. These were also the most intimate relationships. Additionally, Knudson, Sommers, and Golding (1980) report that couples who used an engaging rather than avoidant approach to handling discrepancies, increased in their understanding of each other more than they changed to become like each other over time. The intimate
"Independent Type" of relationship identified by Fitzpatrick et al. (1982). She describes this type as experiencing some degree of conflict, as being committed to different, sometimes irregular schedules, but as very sharing with each other and exhibiting a high level of expressive communication. They are also committed to an ideology of uncertainty and change. Expectations regarding this group are summarized in the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 2:** Couples who are below the median in similarity and above the median in understanding will score higher than any of the other three marital groups in a) self-disclosure, b) global dyadic satisfaction, and c) level of cooperative involvement.

**Similar-Understanding Couple.** Couples who are very much alike and realize that fact (similar-understanding) experience a certain amount of confirmation with each other. They are likely to operate together in a comfortable, harmonious fashion. For example, Gottman et al. (1976) found that happy couples were similar in that both members exchanged positive messages, and both members intended for their messages to be received as positive. Furthermore, both correctly perceived the messages from the other partner as positive. These couples were alike and accurately understood that fact. It would be easy to disclose in such an atmosphere. Additionally, Stamm and Pearce (1971) found that
stranger dyads who expected agreement and were confirmed in their expectations, freely disclosed their opinions, in contrast to dyads who were alike in their views but did not anticipate agreement.

However, while validation through similarity facilitates disclosure and communication in early stages of a relationship, in later stages (e.g., a marriage of over two years) excessive commonality can be experienced as constrictive or even impoverishing (Kelly, 1955, 1970; Landfield & Leitner, 1982; Neimeyer & Hudson, 1984; Neimeyer & Neimeyer, 1982). Commonality in such marriages provides validation, but only minimal opportunity for extension. Consequently, though it was expected that similar-understanding couples would freely disclose when discussing issues about the relationship, it was not anticipated that these individuals would reveal as much as dissimilar-understanding dyads. The interactive style of the "similar-understanding" couple would seem to resemble that of the "traditional" marital dyad identified by Fitzpatrick (Fitzpatrick et al., 1982; Fitzpatrick & Best, 1979). She describes these individuals as mutual sharers who use expressive communication, but who are low on autonomy and do not like change. They are willing to engage each other when experiencing conflict, but are characterized in particular by high interdependence with relatively little for individuality.
Hypothesis 3. Couples who are above the median in both similarity and understanding will evidence a) higher levels of both self-reported and observed self-disclosure and b) higher levels of marital satisfaction than either couples in the similar-misunderstanding cell or dissimilar-misunderstanding cell, but lower levels than couples in the dissimilar-understanding cell.

Similar-Misunderstanding Couple. The similar-misunderstanding dyad might be characterized as the "conflicted couple". These individuals are unaware of the congruity in their lives, and continually expect to find differences and disagreement. Consequently, their communication patterns would likely be marked by discordant, combatant, even antagonistic interactions. Because they are not involved in a role with each other, as defined by Kelly (1955), they obviate opportunity for intimacy. Kelly stressed that intimate exchanges are possible only in the context of mutual understanding in which the partners are actively developing reciprocal roles. The commonality of these "similar-misunderstanding" dyads is only incidental, and does not provide a basis for an enriched role-relationship. These couples were expected to be low on self-disclosure and the lowest of the four groups on overall marital satisfaction. Stamm and Pearce (1971), for example, found that in similar circumstances with stranger-dyads, similar-misunderstanding
pairs were the lowest in self-disclosure and they made high demands for information from the other person. Similarly, Neimeyer et al. (1981) found that strangers who were very similar but who misunderstood one another were not attracted to each other. Attraction in these dyads was even lower than that of dissimilar dyads. These findings from stranger-paradigms seem also to be operating in marital studies. Couples who were very much alike but perceived themselves to be incompatible were more dissatisfied (Newmark et al. 1977) and more maladjusted (Laing et al., 1966) than couples who were knowingly different. Couples who agree, then, but think they disagree would be characterized by conflicted, disputative communicational patterns.

**Hypothesis 4.** Dyads above the median in similarity but below the median in understanding will evidence significantly lower levels of a) self-disclosure and b) marital satisfaction and they will c) use more competitive behaviors when resolving conflicts or making joint decisions than couples in any other cell.

**Dissimilar-Misunderstanding Couple.** In the fourth type of marriage, individuals are quite different from one another, yet despite the discrepancies, assume that they are alike. They interact with each other in such a way that they are seldom forced to deal with the discrepancies. Because they lack the validation offered through commonality (i.e.,
are dissimilar) and do not experience the intimate reciprocal role offered through sociality (i.e., do not understand each other), they are expected to develop a style of communication that minimizes contact with each other (Kelly, 1955; Mancuso & Adams-Webber, 1983). Thus they are expected to shun direct encounters, to eschew intimate self-disclosure, and to employ diffuse, evasive, or deflecting verbalizations. They would tend to minimize differences between each other; consequently, their manner of handling conflict would be to distance themselves from it and to remain aloof. This prototype of the dissimilar-misunderstanding dyad might be characterized as the "avoidant couple." It was expected that couples in this cell would evidence lower levels of self-disclosure and marital satisfaction than couples in either of the understanding cells, and would utilize avoidant interpersonal behaviors when making joint decisions and resolving conflict more than couples in any of the other cells.

Knudson et al. (1980) found that over the course of an interaction in resolving differences, couples who changed to become more unlike each other on all levels but who incorrectly felt they understood each other better, used predominantly an avoidant style of interaction. This avoidant couple is similar to the "Separate Type" identified by Fitzpatrick (1977; Fitzpatrick et al., 1982; Indvik & Fitzpatrick, 1982). She described these dyads as sharing
very little, leading separate but not autonomous lives, being largely unexpressive with each other, and viewing themselves as avoiding conflict.

**Hypothesis 5**: Couples scoring below the median in similarity and in understanding will a) disclose less and b) report less marital satisfaction than couples in either of the high-understanding cells, and c) will engage each other in an avoidant manner more often than will couples in any other cell.

**Cognitive Consistency Theories**. These predictions regarding the four types of dyads (dissimilar-misunderstanding, dissimilar-understanding, similar-misunderstanding, similar-understanding) based on Kelly's theory can be contrasted with predictions derived from cognitive consistency theories (Newcomb, 1956, 1961; Heider, 1946, 1958; Osgood & Tannenbaum, 1955; Brown, 1965; Sussman & Davis, 1975). Heider's balance theory, Newcomb's A-B-X model, and Osgood's congruity model all maintain that individuals seek a state of balance, or perceived consistency in cognitive evaluation of events. Interpersonally, this balance typically stems either from affective feelings about another person or event or judged similarity to that person (Heider, 1958). Thus person "A" experiences consonance when interacting with person "B" when he perceives both to have similar attitudes toward event "X" (Newcomb, 1961). In cases of attraction, there is a "strain" (Newcomb, 1961) to maintain
a constant relationship of perceived similarity. For example, in conflict-resolution, marital couples have been found to distort or even lie about their own perceptions in order to maintain a perception of agreement in the relationship (Goodrich & Boomer, 1963; Ryder & Goodrich, 1966). Perceived similarity, therefore, is held to be more important than actual similarity (Newcomb, 1956, 1961). Indeed, assumed or perceived agreement has been found to correlate stronger with marital happiness than actual agreement (Arias & O'Leary, 1985; Beach & Arias, 1983; Byrne & Blaylock, 1966; Levinger & Breedlove, 1966; Margolin et al., 1979). From this perspective, an interaction would be expected in the present study between similarity and understanding, such that couples who perceive themselves as similar (i.e., similar-understanding dyads and dissimilar-misunderstanding dyads) would evidence higher levels of reported and observed self-disclosure and higher levels of marital satisfaction than would couples who see themselves as different (i.e., dissimilar-understanding couples and similar-misunderstanding couples). Thus, predictions for the dissimilar-understanding and dissimilar-misunderstanding cells, based on cognitive consistency models, would directly contradict those from Personal Construct Psychology.
CHAPTER II

METHOD

Brief Overview

Each couple was scheduled for a single two-hour session. For the first part each partner filled out questionnaire items assessing demographic variables, marital satisfaction, and self-reported communication behaviors. Each spouse then completed the Rep-Grid and predicted their mate's responses on the Rep-Grid. This provided similarity and understanding scores. For the second part of the session, marital companions were given three different discussion tasks during which their communicative behaviors were audio taped and after which they rated their own impressions of their interactions. These discussion tasks included an informal conversation, a consensus decision-making task, and a role-played conflict-resolution situation. Debriefing then followed. The audio tapes were then evaluated by trained raters for communicative behaviors (self-disclosure, avoidant responses, competitive responses, and cooperative responses).

Subjects

Sixty-three couples who had been married or living together for at least one year, and had known each other for at least two years, served as subjects. Subjects responded to announcements which appeared in newspapers and posters in a large metropolitan area of the Southwest, advertising a
study on "communication in marital relationships."

Participating couples were offered free movie or dinner tickets for their time. Husbands ranged in age from 16 to 72 years ($M = 34.67, SD = 12.10$); wives ranged in age from 21 to 72 years, with a mean age of 32.67 ($SD = 11.03$). For couples in this study, the mean length of marriage was 9.10 years ($SD = 9.97$) with a mean reported income of $33,000 ($SD = 16,557$). About half (56 percent) of the couples had no children from the current marriage; 25 percent had only 1 child, and 19 percent had 2 or more children. Of those with children, 82 percent reported having children still living in the home at the time of the study. Ninety-two percent of the husbands and 92 percent of the wives identified themselves as Caucasian; 6 percent of the husbands and 6 percent of the wives identified themselves as Mexican-American; 2 percent of the husbands and 2 percent of the wives identified themselves as Oriental. The highest level of reported academic achievement was as follows: Twenty-one percent of the husbands reported having graduate degrees, 40 percent had a college degree, 24 percent had completed 2 years of college, 14 percent reported having finished high school, and 1 percent had not completed high school. Thirteen percent of the wives had obtained graduate degrees, 37 percent held college degrees, 40 percent had attended college for two years, 8 percent reported a high school education, and about 2 percent of the wives had not completed high school.
The organizational similarity score (OS, median = 24) and the organizational understanding score (OU, median = 63) from the Rep Grid (see the description of the Role Construct Repertory Test, p. 34) were used to form each of the four independent groups: Similar-understanding, dissimilar-understanding, similar-misunderstanding, dissimilar-misunderstanding dyads. The similar-understanding category consisted of 24 couples scoring above the median on OS (M = 30.72, SD = 4.01) and above the median on OU (M = 76.20, SD = 6.56); the dissimilar-understanding category included 13 couples scoring below the median on OS (M = 22.00, SD = 2.74) and above the median on OU (M = 67.46, SD = 3.23); the similar-misunderstanding group consisted of 11 dyads scoring above the median on OS (M = 28.20, SD = 3.71) and below the median on OU (M = 59.60, SD = 4.27); dissimilar-misunderstanding partners were 15 dyads scoring below the median on OS (M = 20.07, SD = 3.69) and below the median on OU (M = 54.60, SD = 6.13). Couples in the four independent groups did not significantly differ from one another on age of husband, age of wife, income, level of education, race, number of children from the current marriage, number of children presently living in the home, level of current stress, nor number of years married.

Materials

Demographic Questionnaire. The Demographic Questionnaire (Appendix B) requested information on relevant marital variables such as income, age, number of children, and education.
Role Construct Repertory Test. Landfield's (1971, 1977) modification of Kelly's (1955) Role Construct Repertory Test was used to elicit eight constructs from each subject (see Appendix C for a more detailed description). Subjects are asked to compare two target persons and to describe the way in which they are similar to each other and different from a third person(s). This bipolar description then serves as a rating scale for evaluating each of the role-persons on the grid. Each role-person (element), then, is rated on a 13-point (-6 to +6) scale in which the poles of each construct serve as descriptive anchors. Eight constructs were elicited, yielding an 8 X 8 matrix in which columns constituted the role-persons used as elements, and the rows were the personal constructs employed by the subject (see p. 114). Following Thomas (1979) and Neimeyer and Hudson (1984), each spouse and each of their parents served as elements (a total of six roles). Two additional roles were also used: "someone we would like to get to know better," and "someone we dislike very strongly."

A number of tests have examined the test-retest consistency of the Rep Grid. When subjects were given the same elements to rate, Fjeld and Landfield (1961) reported a high test-retest consistency of the Rep Grid over a 2-week period ($r = .80$, $p < .01$). When subjects were asked to fit role-titles to a grid they had previously filled out, they found a correlation of .72 over a 2-week period. Other
reviews (Bannister & Mair, 1968; Fransella & Bannister, 1977) have repeatedly found consistency scores of between .60 and .80 in normal populations (depending on test-retest time, elements involved, and relationships investigated).

The Rep Grid yielded two scores relevant to this study: Construct Similarity and Predictive Accuracy. The former is a measure of commonality and the latter is a measure of sociality (understanding). Kelly's notion of commonality has typically been assessed in one of two ways: Content similarity refers to how congruent a couple is in terms of the labels (verbal content) they use to understand the world; organizational similarity refers to the degree to which the two partners actually sort elements (target persons) in the same way, regardless of construct labels. Though the former has been used more frequently, the latter more accurately represents Kelly's Commonality Corollary. Commonality, for Kelly, refers to the degree to which individuals actually employ their constructs in the same way (Kelly, 1955, 1970). Thus, for the primary analyses, construct similarity was assessed in terms of organizational similarity scores (OS). To do this, the role-element ratings made by each spouse were compared with those made by the partner. One point was awarded when both members rated a role-person on the same side of a construct as the persons used for eliciting the construct or when both persons rated a role-person on the opposite pole of a construct from the pair of target persons.
For example, to obtain the first construct ("A" on p. 114), couples identified a way in which the husband's mother was like the wife. For one couple in the study, the wife characterized the target persons as "caring" (vs. "selfish") while the husband characterized them as "hard-working" (vs. "lazy"). If the wife then rated her father-in-law on the same pole as these two (i.e., "caring") and the husband also rated him on the same pole using his grid (i.e., "hard-working"), the couple was awarded one point. Likewise, if the wife rated her own mother on the opposite pole from the target persons (i.e., "selfish") and the husband also rated her on the opposite pole from the target persons (i.e., "lazy"), the couple was given a point. With six role-persons and eight constructs (see the Response Sheet in Appendix C), possible organizational similarity scores for each dyad ranged from 0 to 48.

Predictive accuracy was assessed by comparing a mate's predictions of the partner's ratings with the partner's actual ratings. In other words, the ratings a spouse made under the instructions "Rate these people as you think your spouse would rate them using his/her scales" with the actual ratings made by the other partner. Consequently, four grids were generated: (a) the husband's ratings of the role-persons using his own constructs (H1), (b) the wife's ratings using her own constructs (W1), (c) the wife's predictions of the husband's ratings, using his constructs (H2), and (d) the
husband's predictions of the wife's ratings, using her constructs (W2). This yielded two sets of comparisons (H2 - H1 and W2 - W1) which were then combined to form the predictive accuracy (understanding) score for the couple. Scoring procedures for awarding points were the same as those mentioned above for organizational similarity. With six role-persons and eight constructs, possible accuracy scores for each spouse ranged from 0 to 48. Organizational understanding scores (OU) for the couple combined, then, potentially ranged from 0 to 96 for each dyad. Assessing understanding at the dyadic, rather than monadic or individual, level is in line with the challenge made by recent critics of family research (Glick & Gross, 1975; Rogers & Farace, 1982; Stephen & Markman, 1983; Thompson & Walker, 1982) to focus more on dyadic variables in which the couple is the unit of analysis. It is also consistent with the interpersonal underpinnings (Anchin & Kiesler, 1982; Landfield & Leitner, 1982; Sarbin, 1976) of Personal Construct Psychology. Organizational similarity and organizational understanding were marginally related (r = .24, p = .049).

When assessing similarity and understanding, the Rep Grid offers several advantages over the instruments that have been used for the bulk of similarity/understanding research in the past three decades. The Rep Grid asks subjects to generate their own words (bipolar descriptors) to compare
target persons, and then to use these scales to rate a series of people occupying various roles in their lives. Unlike most other measures, then, which ask subjects to rate each other using externally supplied terms, the Rep Grid technique allows similarity to be assessed in terms of each individual's own intrinsic, personally developed schemata. It does not limit understanding to a narrowly prescribed area based on the researcher's preconceptions (e.g., dominance-submission, love-hate, introversion-extroversion).

Additionally, it lowers the tendency of the subject to rely on stereotypic norms to interpret items, as is frequently the case with instruments such as the MMPI or the Leary Interpersonal Scale (e.g., Dymond, 1954; Newmark et al., 1977). For instance, it can be expected that over 80 percent of people tested will agree when answering questions such as "I get angry sometimes" or "I believe in law-enforcement" that pull for a stereotypic answer. Consequently chances are high that two individuals who have never met each other, would accurately predict each other's responses using such questions. For example, using experimenter-generated phrases, it was found that married couples who scored high in understanding were no more accurate than randomly paired couples who had never met each other but answered questions in a stereotypic fashion (Corsini, 1956). This was one of Cronbach's primary criticisms of research on interpersonal

For secondary analyses, two other pairs of scores were generated from the REP test: content similarity/content understanding, and target similarity/target understanding. Content similarity referred to the degree to which companions employed similar labels in their social constructions. Following Achterberg (1980), Duck (1973), and Landfield (1971) 10 points were awarded when a dyad was judged to have a bi-polar construct of identical connotation, 8 points were given when the two dimensions consisted of similar connotations, 5 points when a single pole of the dimensions was identical, and 3 points when one end of the construct connoted a similar idea. To assess reliability of the ratings, 35 percent of the subjects were randomly selected to be rated by a second rater. Rater reliability was adequate ($r = .79$, $p < .001$).

Although content similarity has been assessed in the literature, no research has evaluated content understanding. Content understanding was assessed in the present study by evaluating how well spouses understood the labels used by their partners. Discrepancy scores were computed between ratings made by a spouse and ratings made by the partner using that spouse's own construct labels. For example, the wife of one marital dyad in the study rated her mother-in-law as "-5" using her own construct label of "traditional vs.
dreamer." The husband, trying to predict his wife's use of that same label, rated his mother as "-1" on the "traditional vs. dreamer" construct. The discrepancy score in this instance, was |4|. Because content understanding was measured post-hoc for secondary comparisons, an ideal measurement of content similarity (i.e., asking couples to predict the actual labels used by their partners) was not available. Content understanding as assessed in the present study, then, resembles organizational understanding in that in both situations spouses were asked to predict partner's responses using the partner's own grid. For this reason the two measures were highly correlated (r = .73, p < .001).

Target similarity referred to the degree to which partners rated themselves as same or different on each of the construct dimensions. For example, if a wife rated her husband as "-4" and herself as "+4" on a "talkative vs. sensitive" construct dimension, the target dissimilarity score was |8|. Since the score was formed by summing the absolute difference scores between husband-wife targets for each construct, higher scores indicated greater dissimilarity. With 8 constructs ranging from -6 to +6 on the wife's grid, and 8 constructs similarly ranging from -6 to +6 on the husband's grid, possible target dissimilarity scores ranged from 0 to 192. This measure of congruence has often been used in similarity research paradigms, but it differs from Kelly's notion of commonality. For example,
with target similarity it is possible for couples to achieve high dissimilarity scores even when they agree in how they apply their constructs. For instance, a husband may rate himself as "excitable" (-5) and the wife as "calm" (+4); she may likewise rate him as "excitable" and herself as "calm." Although they concur in their evaluation (i.e., high similarity, according to Kelly), they are quite dissimilar as targets.

Target understanding was likewise computed by comparing husband-wife discrepancy scores on a spouse's REP Grid with the partner's predictions of that spouse's husband-wife discrepancy scores. For example, a wife's differential ratings of herself and her husband (W1) were compared with her husband's predictions of her ratings using her own construct dimensions (W2). Likewise, a husband's ratings of the two of them (H1) were compared to the wife's predictions regarding the husband's ratings, using his own constructs (H2).

**Dyadic Adjustment Scale.** Spanier's (1976) Dyadic Adjustment Scale was used to measure overall satisfaction in the marriage. The 32-item questionnaire (see Appendix D) is designed to assess relational satisfaction and adjustment along the following four dimensions: degree of consensus, amount of cohesion, affectional expression, and general relational satisfaction. Dyadic consensus is the level of agreement between partners on handling important relationship
issues such as finances. Dyadic cohesion refers to the amount of harmonious and companionate activities in which the couple involves themselves. Dyadic affection reflects the level to which the couple openly expresses affection for one another. Dyadic satisfaction is based on the couple's reported overall happiness within the relationship, and includes not only frequency of experienced conflicts but also asks how strongly the couple wishes to remain together.

The four, equally weighted scales have been substantiated in a number of factor analytic studies with different populations (Spanier, 1974, 1976; Spanier & Thompson, 1982). The scale has strong content, criterion-related, and construct validity, and has been found to have an overall reliability of .96, using Cronbach's coefficient alpha (Spanier, 1976; Spanier & Cole, 1976). The average intercorrelation between the four empirically derived subscales has been found to be .68 (Spanier, 1976). The Dyadic Adjustment Scale was also selected because most of the items tap perceptions of dyadic functioning, rather than simply individual response to the relationship.

**Interpersonal Communication Coding Scheme.** An adaptation of the Conflict Coding Scheme developed by Sillars (Sillars, 1980, 1985; Sillars et al., 1982) and extended by Fitzpatrick (Fitzpatrick et al., 1982) and Knudson (Knudson, Sommers, & Golding, 1980) was used to analyze the communication behaviors of couples in the discussion tasks.
In the discussion tasks couples were given 10 minutes to either carry on a typical casual conversation, make a joint decision, or role-play a typical conflict scene. Consequently the audio-taped discussions are characterized by a great deal of interchange between the partners. Communication exchanges were coded into three main categories using this coding scheme: cooperation, competition, and avoidance. Avoidance refers to communication acts which serve primarily to avoid discussion of the issue (e.g., denial, topic shifting, fogging, underresponsiveness, withdrawal). Competitive acts include faulting, blaming, hostile sarcasm, rejection, demanding that the other person comply, prescribing behaviors, and attributing unwarranted motives to the other person. Sillars termed this category "distributive", after Walton and McKersie (1965). Cooperation refers to behaviors designed to facilitate mutual exploration and joint resolution of the issue. "Integrative" behaviors of this type (Sillars et al., 1982) would include personal disclosure, nonevaluative description, emphasizing support and mutual outcome, a positive rather than negative approach, and accepting responsibility. Sillar's coding system has been successfully used in the analysis of conflict tactics among college roommates (Sillars, 1980a, 1980b, 1980c, 1981), as well as marital relationships (Fitzpatrick et al., 1982; Fitzpatrick & Indvik, 1982; Fitzpatrick, 1977; Fitzpatrick & Best, 1979; Sillars et al., 1983; Sillars et al., 1984). A similar coding
system was used by Ting-Toomey (1983) to differentiate the communication sequences of high and low maritally adjusted couples.

The unit of analysis was the individual act, consisting of a single word or a series of statements that comprise one message. To be considered an individual act in the dyadic exchange, a partner had to successfully hold the floor for at least two seconds or at least had to express a complete thought. A simple example of a message lasting less than two seconds that was still considered a complete thought was a "Yes" or a "No" directly elicited by a question. The end of the communicative unit was demarcated by the change of speaker. For the most part the categories are based on the speaker's verbal expression and seldom make use of inferential notions such as speaker's "intention" or "motivation." A comprehensive coding manual (see Appendix E), adapted from the work of Sillars (1985) and Fitzpatrick (1983), was developed for training the raters. To increase rater reliability, some of the sub-categories used by Sillars were eliminated, others were expanded, and clarifications were added. Two raters were provided written transcripts of the interactions to use while rating the audio-taped interactions. Raters were allowed to double code an exchange if two separate acts occurred in sequence while the speaker had the floor. Double codes for the same act were not allowed. Following Margolin and Wampold (1981), Billings
(1979), and Sillars et al. (1982), interrater reliability was assessed by evaluating the extent to which observers concurred on the overall frequency with which each behavioral category was reported. Pearson product-moment correlations for avoidant, cooperative, and competitive ratings, respectively were as follows: .79, .93, .88. Correlations between the two raters were .85, .76, .91, respectively, for the casual conversation task, the decision-making task, and the conflict-resolution task, respectively, and overall were .89. These reliability ratings are comparable to those reported by Sillars and Fitzpatrick.

**Disclosure Rating Scale.** The Disclosure Rating Scale (Doster, 1971) requires raters to make judgments about a person's level of intimacy in revealing immediate experiencing. It is based on similar scales by Rogers (1962) and Kiesler (1967), and of the three has the most detailed training materials. Communication is rated on a seven-point descriptively anchored scale (see Appendix F), with "0" indicating no reference at all to self and "6" representing intimate disclosure of feelings integrated with cognitions. The scale has been used to successfully investigate therapy processes (Doster, 1975; Doster & McAllister, 1973; Doster, Matloff, & Samelson, 1977), interviewing skills (Doster & Brooks, 1974; Doster & Slaymaker, 1972), and family interaction patterns (Doster & Strickland, 1969, 1971; Doster, 1976), with rater reliabilities ranging between .80
and .93 (Doster, 1974, 1976; Doster & Strickland, 1971; Chelune, 1978). In addition, disclosure ratings based on this scale are not biased toward negative topics, as has been found with Jourard's (1971) and Kiesler's (1967) scales (Doster & Strickland, 1971).

Rating of self-disclosure was done by two raters from audiotaped recordings. Self-disclosure ratings were made at 2 1/2 minute intervals for each of the three discussion tasks. Overall interrater reliability was moderate ($r = .71$, $p < .01$), ranging from .56 to .89. Reliability between the two raters was relatively consistent across discussion tasks: .66 ($p < .01$) for conflict resolution, .73 ($p < .01$) for decision-making, and .71 ($p < .01$) for the open-ended discussion task. Following Doster (1975) two disclosure scores were used in the analysis: mean and peak dyadic disclosure. Mean disclosure consisted of the average disclosure ratings across all the 2 1/2 minute intervals of a given discussion. Peak disclosure scores, on the other hand, represented the highest level of disclosure attained throughout the discussion.

**Partner Communication Inventory.** A number of family researchers argue the importance of assessing the subject's own perception of his or her behavior, as well as third-party observer assessments (Fitzpatrick & Winke, 1979; Glick & Gross, 1975; Gottman et al., 1976; Rausch et al., 1974; Spanier & Lewis, 1980; Thompson & Walker, 1982). They state
that the failure of most studies to use both measurements represents a glaring omission. The Partner Communication Inventory was designed for the present study to evaluate typical communication styles used by the couple outside of the laboratory setting. It is a self-report inventory that assesses the use of competitive, cooperative, and avoidant communication behaviors and also contains measures regarding companions' perceptions of the relationship. Thirty-three items thought to reflect avoidant, cooperative, or competitive behaviors were selected from an initial pool of 400 statements and vignettes collected from recent communication inventories and coder manuals (Beach & Arias, 1983; Fitzpatrick et al., 1982; Fitzpatrick & Best, 1979; Fitzpatrick & Winke, 1979; Norton, 1983; Sillars et al., 1982; Snyder, 1979; Ting-Toomey, 1983). The 33 items (see Appendix G) were administered to all the subjects and their intercorrelations were submitted to a principal components factor analysis. Three factors were selected and rotated to varimax criterion. These three factors accounted for 45.3 percent of the total item variance, with the individual factors accounting for 24.4 percent, 10.7 percent, and 10.1 percent of the variance, respectively. To be considered significantly associated with a factor, an item's primary loading was required to be at least .30, and its secondary loading could not be more than 50 percent of the primary loading. These items were evaluated for content validity and
summed to form the component scales. Table 1 (Appendix M) presents the items used for the scales with their factor loadings for the component scales. The scales were also evaluated for psychometric properties. Internal consistencies for the scales were good. Cronbach's coefficient alphas were .83, .81, and .64 for Avoidant, Cooperative, and Competitive subscales, respectively. Additionally all items were more highly correlated with their own subscale than with other subscales or with the total-item scale overall.

**Dyadic Disclosure Inventory.** The Dyadic Disclosure Inventory provided a self-report measure of dyadic disclosure outside of the laboratory setting to supplement the observational ratings made using Doster's scale. The self-report scale is adapted from Taylor and Altman's (1966a) compendium on disclosure research. Both breadth (i.e., number of different topics) and depth (i.e., level of intimacy) of disclosure are assessed using 13 topics (religion, money, politics, feelings, interests, family, sex, body-image, work, values, biographical information, friendship) that have been scaled for high-low level of intimacy (Taylor & Altman, 1966a, 1966b). The 26 items of the Self-Disclosure Scale are presented in Appendix H. For each item (e.g. "What animals make me nervous") each partner was asked to indicate whether this topic had been discussed
openly and freely (2), had been discussed "somewhat" (1), or had not been discussed at all (0).

**Interaction Evaluation Scale.** Following each interaction, participants rated the interaction on a number of dimensions, including satisfaction, perceived level of self-disclosure, perceived level of influence in the interaction, liking for partner, and anxiety (see Appendices I, J, & K). This provided an "insider's" perspective (Fitzpatrick & Winke, 1979; Glick & Gross, 1975) on the interchange to augment observer ratings. To avoid developing a mental set while evaluating the interactions, the format of each questionnaire varied: order of questions was randomized and the poles serving as anchors were varied. For example, on Q#4 of Appendix I, couples were asked to rate satisfaction using a scale ranging from "1" ("very dissatisfied") to "7" ("very satisfied"); for Q#8 of Appendix K the scale evaluating satisfaction was reversed, with "1" indicating satisfaction and "7" indicating dissatisfaction.

**Equipment**

A TEAC Stereo Cassette Deck (Model V-407C) with two-microphone input was used to record interactions of the couples. High quality Magnavox cassette tapes were used for recording. The two-microphone input allowed each partner to be recorded on a separate channel, facilitating observer ratings of the tapes.
**Procedure**

The study was advertised through local newspapers and neighborhood bulletin-boards as a study on "communication in marital relationships." Following an initial phone contact during which it was ascertained that couples met the basic requirements of the study (i.e., married or living together at least one year, having known each other for a total of at least two years), couples were invited to participate in the study. Free movie tickets or dinner tickets were offered as incentive. It was stated clearly on the phone that subjects would be participating in a research project and not in marital therapy.

On arrival, each couple was escorted to a room furnished with two comfortable chairs. They were told that this was a study about marital interactions, and that their own personal responses as a couple were of more interest to the researchers than trying to figure out "right/wrong" answers. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured, and each subject was given an informed consent form to sign (see Appendix A). It was explained that the whole process would take about 2 hours, and that after the first hour a short break would be given. Each partner was asked to complete the questionnaire packet (containing the Demographic Questionnaire, Partner Communication Inventory, Dyadic Disclosure Inventory, and Spanier's Dyadic Adjustment Scale) separately. Following that, standard instructions for the Rep Grid (see Appendix C)
were administered (Landfield, 1971, 1977; Thomas, 1979), with the addition that they were asked to agree on someone whom they both would like to get to know better, and someone whom they both disliked very much and would not care to associate with. Spouses were then seated in separate parts of the room. A total of eight constructs were then elicited from each spouse individually. Each spouse was then asked to predict the partner's ratings on each of the 8 elements (role-persons) using that partner's own Rep Grid.

At this point the couple was provided a short break, while the room was arranged for the discussion tasks. Two comfortable chairs were placed next to each other, and the recording system was set up. The order of the conversational dialogues was randomly determined preceding each session.

For the informal conversation task, subjects were told that they would have 10 minutes to discuss anything they chose to talk about. Although it was suggested that they could discuss what they had learned about the relationship from the questionnaires, instructions were ambiguous and open-ended. The experimenter left the room during the interaction. After 10 minutes, each partner was given an Interaction Evaluation Questionnaire (Appendix I) to complete in private.

The decision-making task consisted of three parts. Couples were asked to select three constructs from their 16 scales that best described them as a couple, to rate each
other using those three construct scales, and finally to agree on a single statement about themselves that best characterized them as a couple. All decisions were to be joint-agreements. They were given 10 minutes to complete the task (again, with the experimenter out of the room). Following this discussion, subjects filled out an Interaction Evaluation Questionnaire (Appendix J) separately.

For the Conflict-Resolution Task, couples were presented with seven vignettes of typical conflict scenes (see Appendix L), and were asked to select the one most applicable to the two of them. The seven vignettes were identified by Rausch (1974) as the seven prototypical conflicts most commonly experienced by both clinical and nonclinical couples, and have fruitfully been used in a number of conflict resolution studies (Billings, 1979; Gottman, 1979; Gottman et al., 1976; Knudson et al., 1980; Resick et al., 1981). After a few questions to help the couple think about the situation in greater detail, they were given instructions to role play the scene as it most typically evolves at home. Instructions and role-induction were based on Raushe (1974). Subjects were given 10 minutes to role-play the scene (with experimenter absent), after which they were given an Interaction Evaluation Questionnaire (Appendix K) to complete separately.

Following the suggestions of Gottman (1979) and Koren et al. (1980), this study used several contexts to examine the process of communication exchanges in couples. Couples were
observed as they interacted (1) in a non-structured, casual situation with primary focus on relationship issues, giving maximal opportunity for self-disclosure, (2) in a decision-making task that does not necessarily involve conflict nor intense emotion, and (3) in a role-played conflict-resolution task. A number of researchers (Billings, 1979; Glick & Gross, 1975; Gottman et al., 1976; Knudson et al., 1980; Koren et al., 1980; Resick et al., 1981) argue that instructing couples to role-play a typical conflict scene within their own relationship provides the most accurate and realistic assessment of interactive processes in a couple.

In role-play situations, couples are allowed to discuss conflict issues that are personally relevant with minimal guidance from the researcher and to use their own coping methods. Findings based on these observations are more readily generalizable to real-life interactions and are more predictive of actual exchanges likely to be experienced in the home than when directing couples to resolve differences that are contrived (e.g., color-matching, Goodrich & Boomer, 1958, 1962; playing Prisoner's Dilemma Game, Epstein, 1975; using rubber bats, Sternberg, 1966).

After completing the study, subjects were debriefed. They were provided the opportunity to discuss and/or re-examine their own questionnaires, along with a discussion of the general nature of the research project. Treatment of all subjects was in accordance with APA Standards.
CHAPTER III
RESULTS

Self-Report Variables

The first set of analyses examined the effect of organizational similarity and organizational understanding on overall marital adjustment. A 2 (similar vs. dissimilar) X 2 (understanding vs. misunderstanding) ANOVA was performed with DAS scores as the dependent variable. Means and standard deviations for each group appear in Table 2 (Appendix N), and results are found in Table 3 (Appendix O). A significant similarity X understanding interaction was found, $F(1, 59) = 4.90, p < .05$. Planned comparison $t$-tests for independent groups revealed that, contrary to expectations, similar-understanding dyads were more satisfied than either similar-misunderstanding dyads, $t(33) = 2.45, p < .05$ or dissimilar-understanding couples, $t(36) = 2.32, p < .05$.

To further investigate the role of similarity and understanding on marital adjustment, a 2 X 2 (similarity X understanding) multivariate analysis of variance was run using the four subscales of the DAS as dependent variables. Table 2 (Appendix N) contains the means and standard deviations for each group; results are found in Table 4 (Appendix P). A significant multivariate interaction (similarity X understanding) effect was found, Wilks-Lambda
\( F(4,56) = 3.11, \ p < .05 \), with significant univariate interaction effects for the Dyadic Cohesion Subscale, \( F(1,59) = 5.92, \ p < .05 \), and for the Dyadic Satisfaction Subscale, \( F(1,59) = 4.76, \ p < .05 \). Planned comparison \( t \)-tests for independent groups again revealed that, contrary to expectations, similar-understanding dyads involved themselves in more companionate activities (such as working on a project together) than either similar-misunderstanding subjects, \( t(33) = 2.35, \ p < .05 \) or dissimilar-understanding subjects, \( t(36) = 2.75, \ p < .01 \) and expressed more happiness with the relationship than did similar-misunderstanding couples, \( t(33) = 2.61, \ p < .05 \).

To analyse typical patterns of dyadic communication as reported by the couple, separate 2 (similar vs. dissimilar) X 2 (understanding vs. misunderstanding) ANOVAs were performed using Avoidant, Cooperative, and Competitive scores from the Partner Communication Inventory and Self-Disclosure scores from the Dyadic Disclosure Inventory as the dependent variables. Means and standard deviations are presented in Table 5 (Appendix Q); results for the PCI appear in Table 6 (Appendix R), and results for the DDI are shown in Table 7 (Appendix S). No significant main effects nor interaction effects were found for any of these self-report variables. No differences between groups were found, then, on self-reported use of avoidant, cooperative, or competitive behaviors, nor on level of dyadic disclosure.
Additional analyses were also conducted on questionnaire responses regarding the relationship. Questions #30 and #31 of the questionnaire (see Appendix G) asked couples for their own perceptions of how similar they were to one another overall and how well they believed they understood each other overall. Responses to these questions were not significantly correlated with organizational similarity and organizational understanding as measured by the REP test (r = .19, p > .05 for similarity, r = .14, p > .05 for understanding).

Consequently, contrary to expectations, no main effects were found in a pair of 2 x 2 (organizational similarity vs. organizational understanding) analysis of variance using couple's self-reported perception of global similarity and self-reported global understanding as dependent measures. The two dimensions did interrelate (interaction E's, p < .05), however, in that partners who construed the world in a similar fashion and also accurately anticipated each other's construals, as measured by the REP test, experienced themselves as more similar (M = 11.12, SD = 1.76) and felt more understood by each other (M = 12.04, SD = 1.40) than did dissimilar-misunderstanding partners (M = 9.47, SD = 2.50, t(38) = 2.25, p < .05 for perceived similarity; M = 10.87, SD = 2.20, t(38) = 2.07, p < .05 for perceived understanding.

However, dissimilar-understanding couples, who also scored above the mean on organizational understanding on the REP test, did not see themselves as any more understanding than
dissimilar-misunderstanding mates. Similar-understanding couples also believed that they understood each other more fully (M = 12.20, SD = 1.16) than did dissimilar-understanding spouses (M = 10.62, SD = 2.93), t(36) = 1.88, p < .05. The experiences of feeling similar and of understanding each other, then, depend in part on the simultaneous interplay between how congruent partners are in their organization of the world and how accurately they can anticipate each other's world views.

In a 2 X 2 (similarity X understanding) ANOVA for Questions #33 and #34 (see Appendix G), there were no group differences on estimates of daily or weekly conflicts. Subjective evaluations of the intensity of dyadic disagreements, then, were unrelated to organizational similarity and organizational understanding. However, for the question (#35) "Compared to most couples you know, how would you rate the number of disagreements the two of you experience overall?", there was a significant interaction, F(1,59) = 5.03, p < .05 such that similar-understanding couples felt that they had fewer disagreements than dissimilar-understanding and similar-misunderstanding dyads. On a related note, dissimilar-understanding spouses had more often seriously considered separation or divorce (Appendix D, #17) than had similar-understanding mates, t(36) = 2.40, p < .05.
Finally, when presented with a list of six words with which to characterize their marriage ("extremely unhappy," "fairly unhappy," "a little unhappy," "happy," "very happy," "extremely happy," and "perfect") with the instructional note that the middle point ("happy") represented the degree of happiness of most relationships (DAS #31, Appendix D), dissimilar-misunderstanding couples saw themselves as "perfect" more often than did any of the other couples. In fact, whereas 27 percent of the dissimilar-misunderstanding dyads selected this superlative to describe their relationship, none (0 percent) of the similar-misunderstanding couples, 7 percent of the dissimilar-understanding, and only 12 percent of the similar-understanding subjects characterized their marriage in this way.

**Observer Ratings of Discussion Tasks**

The next set of analyses involved observer ratings of dyadic interactions during the three discussion tasks (Informal Conversation, Conflict Resolution, Decision-Making). Self-disclosure was evaluated using 2 (similar vs. dissimilar) X 2 (understanding vs. misunderstanding) X 3 (discussion task) ANOVAs with repeated measures on the last factor. Mean self-disclosure scores and peak self-disclosure scores each served as dependent variables. Means and standard deviations are reported in Table 8 (Appendix T); results appear in Table 9 (Appendix U). Bartlett's test of
sphericity and Box's M test of homogeneity of variance (Huynh & Mandevill, 1979; Winer, 1971) indicated that symmetry conditions for repeated measures with unequal n were satisfied. No significant effects were found for peak self-disclosure. However, significant differences did exist for ratings made by observers on mean self-disclosure. A significant main effect for discussion task, $F(2,114) = 5.38, p < .01$ and for understanding, $F(1,57) = 4.42, p < .05$ were found, as well as significant similarity X understanding, $F(1,57) = 6.54, p < .05$ and understanding X discussion task, $F(2,114) = 3.13, p < .05$ interaction effects.

To evaluate the main effect for discussion task, simple contrasts for repeated measures (Games, Keselman & Rogan, 1981; Norusis, 1985; SPSS, 1983) with $p$ set for $< .05$ revealed that subjects overall were rated as disclosing more in the conflict-resolution discussion task ($M = 1.65$) than in either the decision-making task ($M = 1.44$) or the casual conversation task ($M = 1.40$). To evaluate the significant main effect for understanding and the significant interaction effects, separate 2 X 2 (similarity X understanding) ANOVAs were performed for each of the discussion tasks. Only in the conflict resolution discussion task was there a main effect for understanding, $F(1,57) = 4.85, p < .05$, with high-understanding dyads disclosing more freely to each other ($M = 1.81$) than low-understanding dyads ($M = 1.46$). In the informal conversation and decision-making tasks significant
interaction effects, $F(1,57) = 5.11, p < .05; F(1,57) = 4.21, p < .05$ were followed up by planned comparison $t$-tests. As predicted, dissimilar-understanding couples disclosed more than similar-understanding couples both while making decisions, $t(35) = 1.75, p < .05$ and casually conversing, $t(35) = 2.62, p < .01$, and they also revealed more about themselves than did dissimilar-missunderstanding couples while casually conversing, $t(26) = 2.86, p < .01$.

Observer ratings of cooperative, competitive, and avoidant communication exchanges were similarly analyzed for each of the discussion tasks. Since subjects varied on the total number of exchanges in each conversational task, percentage scores were computed to standardize comparisons. The percentages of avoidant, competitive, and cooperative exchanges used by each marital group for the three discussion tasks are presented in Table 10 (Appendix V). Because percentage scores produce skewed distributions that are not normally distributed, these scores were subjected to natural logarithmic transformations before analyses (Mendoza & Graziano, 1982; Wagner, Prospero, & Alexander, 1985; Winer, 1971). With transformed avoidance, competitive, and cooperative scores each serving as dependent measures, three $2 \times 2 \times 3$ (similarity X understanding X discussion task) repeated measures analyses of variance were run. Results are reported in Table 11 (Appendix W). A main effect for discussion task was found for both avoidance ratings,
$F(2,118) = 8.37$, $p < .001$ and for competitive ratings, $F(2,118) = 10.38$, $p < .001$. No other main or interaction effects emerged. Simple contrasts for repeated measures revealed that subjects overall were more avoidant during the conflict-resolution task and the informal discussion task than during the decision-making task. In addition subjects as a group were most competitive during the conflict resolution task and were least competitive in the decision-making task.

To test hypotheses regarding each marital group, planned comparisons were conducted for each conversation. Similar-understanding couples made more competitive responses during decision making than did dissimilar-understanding couples, $t(36) = 1.78$, $p < .05$. Inspection of the Conflict Coding Scheme subscales revealed that most of these competitive responses were of the "talk-over" nature, which included talking at the same time and cutting each other off. Dissimilar-understanding dyads also used fewer avoidant responses than did similar-misunderstanding couples while dealing with conflictual issues, $t(21) = 2.09$, $p < .05$.

**Self-Report Ratings of Discussion Tasks**

The next set of analyses involved subjects' own perceptions of their behaviors during each discussion task. The following items served as dependent measures in a series of $2 \times 2 \times 3$ (Similarity X Understanding X Discussion Task) repeated measures analyses of variance: (a) The degree to
which subjects believed their behaviors in the conversational task reflected typical interactions in the marriage (Appendix I, #11; Appendix J, #6; Appendix K, #3), (b) Level of dyadic understanding, formed by summing both persons' answers to the questions "How well do you feel you understood your partner during this interaction?" (Appendix I, #9; Appendix J, #8; Appendix K, #5) and "How well do you think your partner understood you during this interaction?" (Appendix I, #10; Appendix J, #7; Appendix K, #4), (c) Level of anxiety experienced during the dialogue (Appendix I, #7; Appendix J, #4; Appendix K, #1), (d) Degree of cooperative involvement ("Overall, how much input do you think you had in the discussion that just took place?"; Appendix I, #6; Appendix J, #3; Appendix K, #9), (e) General feelings (positive vs. negative) toward the partner (Appendix I, #8; Appendix J, #9; Appendix K, #6), (f) The extent to which partners avoided engaging each other or avoided talking about their differences (Appendix I, #12; Appendix J, #5; Appendix K, #2), and (g) Global satisfaction with the conversation, formed by summing both partners' answers to the questions "Overall, how satisfied are you with the interaction you just had?" (Appendix I, #4; Appendix J, #1; Appendix K, #7) and "Overall, how satisfied do you think your partner is with the interaction you just had?" (Appendix I, #5; Appendix J, #2; Appendix K, #8). In addition, an overall measure of self-disclosure was obtained following the open-ended informal
discussion. This score was formed by summing each spouse's answers to "How much do you feel you revealed about yourself to your spouse?", "How much did your spouse reveal to you in the interaction?", and, "In general, how intimate do you feel the information was that you revealed to your partner?" (Appendix I, #1, #2, #3). Table 12 (Appendix X) displays the means and standard deviations for these variables. ANOVA results are presented in Table 13 (Appendix Y).

There were no significant main effects nor interaction effects for participants' assessment of the degree to which "in-studio" behaviors paralleled "at home" behaviors (Appendix I, #11; Appendix J, #6; Appendix K, #3). Marital groups, then, did not significantly differ in their ratings of how typical their interactions were, nor did they believe that their behaviors were any less typical in one discussion task as opposed to another. These results offer some validation to the generalizability of the discussion tasks employed in this study.

Although no specific predictions were made regarding discussion task differences, a repeated measures main effect for discussion task emerged for dyadic understanding, dyadic satisfaction, cooperative involvement, level of anxiety, use of avoidant tactics, and feelings of like or dislike for the partner (all p's < .01). Simple effects contrasts for repeated measures with p set for < .05 revealed that participants were more satisfied and felt more understanding
during decision-making conversations than either open-ended talks or conflict-resolution talks. Additionally, persons in the decision-making dialogue saw themselves as less anxious, more avoidant, and liked their partners more than they did in the conflict-resolution discussions.

A similarity X understanding interaction was also found for satisfaction (item "g", as noted above), $F(1, 59) = 3.59$, $p < .05$, and level of cooperative involvement (item "d"), $F(1, 59) = 8.10$, $p < .01$. To clarify these results, 2 X 2 (similarity X understanding) ANOVAs were performed for each discussion task. With mutual satisfaction as the dependent variable, the similarity X understanding interaction was found to hold for the conflict resolution, $F(1, 59) = 4.57$, $p < .05$ and decision-making tasks, $F(1, 59) = 3.89$, $p < .05$, but not for the informal chat. Planned comparison t-tests identified consistent differences across both dialogues. Both while trying to arrive at a joint decision and while role-playing a typical conflict scene, similar-understanding couples were more satisfied than any of the other three marital groups (all $p$'s < .05). These results paralleled the previous findings for overall marital satisfaction, as measured by the DAS. Interestingly, dissimilar-misunderstanding dyads were also more satisfied following the decision-making task than either dissimilar-understanding or similar-misunderstanding. With level of cooperative input as the dependent variable, a significant similarity X
understanding interaction was found to hold for the open-ended dialogue, $F(1, 59) = 9.90, p < .01$ and for the conflict-resolution task, $F(1, 59) = 4.63, p < .05$. Planned comparisons again indicated that similar-understanding couples believed they were more cooperatively involved than similar-misunderstanding dyads, $t(33) = 2.36, p < .05$; $t(33) = 1.99, p < .05$ in both discussion situations, and more involved than dissimilar-understanding spouses during conflict-resolution, $t(36) = 2.15, p < .05$. Additionally, dissimilar-misunderstanding dyads believed that they were more cooperatively involved during the non-structured discussion task than either dissimilar-understanding, $t(26) = 2.12, p < .05$ or similar-misunderstanding marital companions, $t(23) = 3.00, p < .01$.

Additional planned comparisons on partners' perceptions while resolving conflicts found that similar-understanding marriages believed themselves to be more understanding (Appendix K, #5), $t(28) = 1.78, p < .05$ and felt more understood (Appendix K, #4), $t(38) = 1.79, p < .05$ than dissimilar-misunderstanding marriages. Also dissimilar-understanding dyads experienced more anxiety (Appendix K, #3) during the discussion than did similar-misunderstanding couples, $t(21) = 1.79, p < .05$.

**Comparison of Observer and Self-Report Ratings**

The next set of analyses evaluated the degree to which observer ratings of communication behaviors corresponded to
participants’ own ratings of their behaviors, using Pearson product-moment correlations. This included comparisons of appraisals of in-session behaviors made by observers, appraisals of in-session behaviors made by participants, and appraisals of general behaviors outside the laboratory setting made by participants. Table 14 (Appendix Z) contains correlations of self-report measures of everyday dyadic behaviors (Partner Communication Inventory, Dyadic Disclosure Inventory) with observer ratings of avoidant, cooperative, competitive, and disclosive behaviors during each of the three interviews.

In general PCI scores did not correlate consistently with observational ratings, with the following exceptions: Self-reported use of avoidant behavior was moderately related to observational ratings of avoidant exchanges in informal conversation ($r = .25, p < .05$), self-reported use of cooperative behavior correlated with observational ratings of cooperative exchanges during conflict resolution ($r = .34, p < .01$), and self-reported use of competitive behavior was noticeably consistent with observational ratings of competitive exchanges during open-ended discussions ($r = .42, p < .001$). Overall dyadic disclosure, as measured by Altman and Taylor’s Disclosure Scale, was not significantly related to observational ratings of disclosure in any of the three interactions.
Observer ratings of dyadic exchanges showed mild agreement with participants' own ratings of *in-session* behaviors. Table 15 displays the Pearson Product-Moment

Table 15

Pearson Product-Moment Correlations of Observational Ratings of Dyadic Dialogues (Conflict Coding Scheme and Doster Disclosure Scale) with Post-Interview Ratings Made by the Couples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Informal Discussion Task</th>
<th>Decision-Making Task</th>
<th>Conflict-Resolution Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avoidant Behavior</td>
<td>.24*</td>
<td>.15*</td>
<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative Behavior</td>
<td>.23*</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.22*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disclosive Behavior</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* No self-report ratings were available for competitive behaviors nor for disclosive behaviors during decision-making and conflict-resolution tasks.

*p < .05

Correlations of observer ratings of conversational behavior (based on the Conflict Coding Scheme and Doster's Disclosure Scale) with subjects' impressionistic ratings made immediately after each interview. Observer and participant evaluations of avoidant behaviors during informal discussion and decision-making tasks were significantly related (*p*'s < .05); additionally, observational and personal ratings of
collaborative efforts while casually conversing and while dealing with conflictual differences were significantly related ($p's < .05$). Observers and participants did not significantly agree on the level of intimate disclosure while informally chatting.

Self-report measures correlated moderately with each other. For instance, overall avoidant tactics, as cited by participants in the PCI, were correlated to in-session evaluations of informal discussion, decision-making, and conflict-resolution tasks, respectively, as follows: $r = .36, p < .01; r = .27, p < .05; r = .53, p < .001$. Similarly, couples' perception of global cooperation with each other were related to their own impressions of collaborating with each other while casually conversing, jointly making decisions, and addressing conflictual differences, in order, as follows: $r = .17, p > .05; r = .24, p < .05; r = .39, p < .001$. Dyadic disclosure was not so consistently reported. Correlations between generalized dyadic disclosure, as measured on the Dyadic Disclosure Inventory and self-estimates of intimate disclosure during the informal conversation were nonsignificant ($r = .10$).

**Comparative Evaluation of Similarity and Understanding Measures**

Additional analyses investigated issues of particular methodological concern, namely, the construct validity and generalizability of the notions of similarity (commonality)
and understanding (sociality). The measure used in the present study to assess Kelly's Commonality Corollary (Organizational Similarity) was compared to another measure of similarity often used by PCT researchers to evaluate construct commonality (Content Similarity, see p. 39). In addition, these two measures were compared to partners' own perceptions of similarity (Appendix G, #30), and to a non-Kellyan measure of similarity that has been used in the literature to assess likeness between partners ("target similarity", see p. 40). The correlations are presented in Table 16 (Appendix AA).

The two measures of similarity based on Personal Construct Psychology correlated moderately with each other ($r = .44, p < .001$) but not with subject's perceptions of similarity. Self-reported experience of similarity, on the other hand, closely matched target similarity ($r = .54, p < .001$). Furthermore, target similarity was related to organizational similarity ($r = .39, p < .001$) but not to content similarity.

Measures of understanding were likewise evaluated. Organizational understanding, content understanding, target understanding, and self-reported understanding were all compared to each other, along with self-reported measures of mutual understanding obtained after each of the three discussion tasks. Organizational understanding was used in the present study to assess Kelly's Sociality Corollary.
Content understanding (see p. 39) and target understanding (see p. 40) were used as secondary evaluations of predictive accuracy. Self-report measures of understanding included couples' global experience of their ability to understand each other (Appendix G #31, #32), and impressionistic ratings made by companions regarding their perceptions of understanding and being understood following each conversational task (Appendix I, #9, #10; Appendix J, #7, #8; Appendix K, #4, #5). Table 17 (Appendix BB) contains the resulting correlation matrix. Results concurred with those comparing similarity measures. The two measures of understanding based on Personal Construct Psychology correlated highly with each other ($r = .73, p < .001$) but not with partner's perceptions of their own experience of understanding each other. Self-reported understanding, on the other hand, closely paralleled target understanding. This was true for spouses' ratings of mutual understanding overall ($r = .49, p < .001$) and for their ratings made following the informal conversation ($r = .32, p < .01$) and conflict-resolution ($r = .39, p < .001$) tasks. Furthermore, target understanding was positively related to organizational understanding ($r = .34, p < .01$) but negatively related to content understanding ($r = -.34, p < .01$). In addition, content understanding correlated negatively, though in general nonsignificantly, with self-report measures.
Additional analyses contrasted measures of similarity with measures of understanding. Kelly assumed that commonality and sociality are theoretically orthogonal dimensions. Correlations between measures of similarity and understanding suggest that this may or may not be true, depending on the measures used to assess commonality and sociality. Organizational similarity and organizational understanding, as used in this study, were marginally related ($r = .24, \rho = .049$), while measures of commonality and sociality based on construct labels were not significantly correlated ($r = .02$). In contrast, partners' own evaluations of the extent to which they were in agreement and the extent to which they comprehended each other were highly related ($r = .64, \rho < .001$) as were measures based on mates as targets ($r = .73, \rho < .001$).

**Additional Comparative Analyses**

To further compare measures, median splits were performed for content similarity and content understanding, resulting in four groups: low similarity-low understanding ($n = 18$), low similarity-high understanding ($n = 14$), high similarity-low understanding ($n = 17$), high similarity-high understanding ($n = 14$). These four groups were used in a series of selected $2 \times 2$ (content similarity x content understanding) ANOVAs paralleling previous analyses performed for organizational similarity and organizational understanding. Because income was positively related to
content similarity, income was used as a covariate in all of the analyses.

Overall, similarity and understanding based on construct labels were less informative than measures based on cognitive organization. The results are summarized below. Of the self-report measures, the only significant effects were as follows: there was a main effect of understanding on typical use of avoidant behaviors (Partner Communication Inventory), $F(1, 57) = 5.31$, $p < .05$, such that dyads who could meaningfully anticipate each other's constructs reported avoiding each other more ($M = 29.59$) than companions who were poor at guessing each other's constructs ($M = 25.57$); a main effect for understanding on self-reported use of avoidant interactions during the decision-making task (Appendix J, #5) $F(1, 57) = 4.81$, $p < .05$, such that low-understanding marital companions saw themselves as more avoidant ($M = 3.80$) than high-understanding duos ($M = 2.70$); and a main effect for similarity during conflict resolution on satisfaction with the interview (Appendix K, #7 & #8) $F(1, 57) = 4.90$, $p < .05$, such that similar subjects were more satisfied ($M = 21.9$) than dissimilar subjects ($M = 19.5$). No other main or interaction effects were found for self-report variables (Dyadic Adjustment Scale, PCI Competitive and Cooperative Comportment, Dyadic Disclosure Inventory, Post-Interview Ratings).
For ratings based on observer evaluation, there was a similarity main effect for mean self-disclosure, $F(1, 57) = 11.18, p < .001$ and peak self-disclosure $F(1, 57) = 14.27, p < .001$ during decision-making tasks, such that mates who use highly similar words to describe the world disclosed more freely ($M = 3.3$) than spouses with dissimilar construct labels ($M = 2.9$). In addition there was a similarity main effect for avoidant behaviors during conflict resolution $F(1, 57) = 4.05, p < .05$ such that highly similar spouses were judged to be more avoidant in their interactions ($M = 3.5$ percent) than were dissimilar spouses ($M = 6.4$ percent). No other main or interaction effects were found for observer-based ratings during the three conversational tasks.

Because target similarity and target understanding were so highly correlated, it was impossible to form independent groups based on median splits, as was done with organizational similarity/organizational understanding and with content similarity/content understanding. However, Pearson product-moment correlations between target similarity and selected variables reveal that target similarity was significantly related to years married ($r = .63, p < .001$), self-reported disclosure on non-intimate (but not on intimate) items (Dyadic Disclosure Inventory, $r = .57, p < .001$), self-reported use of avoidant behavior in general (PCI Avoidant Scale, $r = .33, p < .05$), and self-reported use of avoidant behavior while resolving conflicts (Appendix K, #2), $r = .27$,
\( p < .05 \), and was negatively related to self-reported use of collaborative interactions (PCI Cooperative Scale, \( r = -.53, p < .001 \)). Couples who rate themselves on the same pole of a dimension, then, tend to have been married longer, disclose more on impersonal issues, rate themselves as more avoidant overall, especially when dealing with conflictual issues, and are less collaborative with each other in general.
CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

Findings relevant to the stated hypotheses will first be evaluated. The implications of these findings for Kelly's Personal Construct Theory will then be discussed, along with considerations for therapeutic endeavors with married couples. Finally, methodological issues will be addressed.

Dyadic Communication Behaviors

Sociality. It was assumed that couples with a high degree of mutual understanding would be involved in a role-relationship, as defined by Kelly, with maximal opportunity for active elaboration and validation of their construct systems. A main effect for sociality (accurate understanding), therefore, was hypothesized for self-disclosure, cooperative involvement, and dyadic satisfaction (Hypothesis 1). Although expectations were not confirmed for cooperative involvement and dyadic satisfaction, they were supported for dyadic disclosure during conflict resolution. While settling differences, couples who were able to accurately subsume one another's constructs revealed more about themselves than did couples who did not understand each other. Sociality, then, as articulated by Kelly, facilitated open communication between marital companions, particularly when dealing with conflictual,
emotionally intense issues. When dealing with less intense issues (e.g., casual conversations), companions' disclosure with each other was not related to their ability to anticipate each other's construals. It seems then, that the validation stemming from the ability to accurately predict a partner's behavior is most relevant to communication behaviors in those situations requiring greater personal investment and risk. Although understanding facilitated disclosure during conflict resolution, it did not lead to increased satisfaction with these conversations.

It is also interesting that no main effects were found for similarity. This contrasts markedly with research on initial attraction, where similarity between dyads (at least, as measured in those studies) was found to play a central role. The present results, in fact, consistently demonstrated that communicative behaviors in marital dyads are tied to an interaction between similarity and understanding.

**Dissimilar-Understanding Couples.** Kelly argued that persons who organize the world differently yet who struggle to accurately understand each other's construals are in the process of extending, expanding and maximizing their systems. By elaborating their constructs in this way they are building fresh experiences "never before envisioned" (Kelly, 1977, p. 9) and developing richer, more complex anticipatory systems (Epting & Amerikaner, 1980).
They are functioning as "optimal persons" (Kelly, 1955; 1980). The risking role relationship required by this "venturesome, audacious ought" (Kelly, 1980, p. 20) is reminiscent of the "fully functioning," "authentic" persons of Rogers (1961), Jourard (1974), Bugental (1965), and Maslow (1969).

It was hypothesized, then, that dissimilar-understanding couples would represent "optimally functioning" marriages, as evidenced by level of intimate disclosure and overall marital satisfaction (Hypothesis 2). Indeed, these couples were found to disclose more freely than either similar-understanding or dissimilar-misunderstanding couples while casually conversing about the relationship, and they also disclosed at higher levels than similar-understanding couples while arriving at consensual decisions. However, they were not more satisfied with their marriages. In fact, dissimilar-understanding couples were less satisfied than were similar-understanding couples. In addition, dissimilar-understanding couples were less satisfied than similar-understanding couples after dealing with conflictual issues and less satisfied than couples who perceived themselves to be similar (similar-understanding, dissimilar-misunderstanding) following joint decision-making tasks. It would appear that elaborating one's construct system by expanding it to cover a spouse's differing views
does lead to increased disclosure but not to increased satisfaction.

These findings parallel those of Sillars et al. (1983) and Fitzpatrick and Best (1979). The most distinctive feature of adjusted "independent" marriages (comparable to the dissimilar-understanding couples of the present study) was their high level of disclosure. However, independents were also less satisfied on Spanier's Dyadic Adjustment Scale than were "traditionals" (who closely parallel similar-understanding dyads). Fitzpatrick (1977) also found that independent dyads were more open to variety, new experiences, and change than were traditionals.

Evidence from the present study also suggests that while dissimilar-understanding couples are indeed open to change and to new experiences, they also face the difficult challenge of uniting different world views. In contrast to couples who knowingly hold similar world views, dissimilar-understanding partners felt they experienced more disagreements than their friends and had more often considered separation or divorce. One couple, in fact, were together again after having previously divorced each other, and many dissimilar-understanding subjects commented that they had previously participated in premarital counseling, marriage enrichment programs, or marriage encounter weekends. This challenge of the dissimilar-understanding marital companions is also reflected in self-
characterizations (part of the decision-making task) such as the following: "Despite the 'disadvantage' of an early marriage, we have learned how to accommodate ourselves to each other's idiosyncrasies, and feel that our relationship, even after 26+ years, has stability and potential for further growth," "[We] are a caring couple who are open to new experiences," "We came from totally different backgrounds and are trying to combine and use the best of both," "We try to make our relationship work," "We are a very sensitive, loving couple that likes to live life to its fullest," and "We have been able to adjust to each other's idiosyncrasies, without losing our individual qualities that add real spice to the relationship." It is also reflected in the following comment made by a spouse during one of the discussions:

... I feel like there's enough room for me to go ahead and explore new areas, without creating a problem for you. And I'm willing to let you have the same freedom, without feeling threatened, that you're going to go too far away, because I think that we try, at least, to let each other know where we are. Wouldn't you agree with that? ... Of course, there's always the possibility that that's going to change in the future ...
Interestingly, it was found that dissimilar-understanding couples used fewer avoidant behaviors than did similar-misunderstanding dyads while dealing with intense, emotionally conflicted issues; nevertheless, they were also more anxious. It seems that in order for couples who differ to successfully face the challenge of subsuming one another’s world views it requires a risking role-relationship, as defined by Kelly. This involves talking more directly with each other about differences and tolerating uncertainties, uneasiness, and anxiety. In fact, anxiety is seen by Kelly as the experience of recognizing that the events with which one is confronted (e.g., a spouses’ meaning system) lie outside the range of convenience of one’s construct system. Thus, for Kelly, anxiety is a natural consequence of extending one’s anticipatory system.

The raters were also struck with the emotional intensity of dissimilar-understanding dyads during discussion tasks*. These couples seemed to express anger and irritation more intensely, to more openly admit fears, and to cry more often than others, particularly in contrast to dissimilar-misunderstanding mates. These observations parallel the previously noted higher levels of intimate

*The raters were asked to record their impressionistic observations of couples along with the coded evaluations. They were, of course, blind to condition.
disclosure which, as measured by Doster's scale, reflect an ability to integrate cognitions with a full range of internal experiencing (Doster, 1971; Kiesler, 1967; Rogers, 1962). Dissimilar-understanding companions were also noticeable in their use of humor (side comments, jokes, banter, quips, and pleasant wit) to diffuse the tension of the interaction. The dissimilar-understanding conjugal dyad, then, might be characterized as the "Emotionally Engaged Couple."

**Similar-Understanding Couples.** Like dissimilar-understanding couples, dyads who organize the world in a similar fashion and who can predict each other's construals play a role with each other, as specified by Kelly. Consequently, it was anticipated (Hypothesis 3) that similar-understanding pairs would disclose more freely and report higher levels of marital satisfaction than couples who do not accurately understand each other and who are therefore not intimately involved in a role with each other (dissimilar-misunderstanding, similar-misunderstanding). It was also anticipated, however, that the commonality of similar-understanding couples would be experienced as constrictive in contrast to the enriching experiences of dissimilar-understanding couples, and that this would be evidenced by their lower disclosure and marital satisfaction scores.
Indeed, similar-understanding couples were less revealing to each other while casually conversing and making consensual decisions than were dissimilar-understanding couples. However, when placed in the position of dealing with emotionally charged disagreements, similar-understanding partners were like dissimilar-understanding spouses in that both disclosed more readily than couples who misunderstood each other (similar-misunderstanding, dissimilar-misunderstanding).

Moreover, similar-understanding couples were more satisfied with the marriage overall than were couples who perceived themselves to be different (dissimilar-understanding, similar-misunderstanding). By self-report, they were more involved in companionate activities (such as working on a project together, fixing meals together, or playing sports together), and they derived more pleasure and satisfaction from the conjugal relationship. They were also more satisfied than any of the other couples when discussing conflicting opinions, and they were more satisfied than dissimilar-understanding couples after making joint decisions. During these discussions they also felt more cooperatively involved than did dissimilar-understanding and similar-misunderstanding duos. It seems, then, that couples who experience the dyadic validation of sharing common constructs with their mates and accurately knowing what is
meaningful to their spouses are the most pleased with the relationship overall.

These findings again reflect those of Sillars et al. (1983) and Fitzpatrick and Best (1979). Traditionals rated themselves higher in marital satisfaction than did independents or "separates" (most comparable to the similar-misunderstanding couples of the present study), yet more satisfied traditionals actually had fewer disclosive acts. Sillars goes as far as suggesting that "for traditionals, it may simply be inaccurate to assume that communication is a critical mediator of marital satisfaction" (p. 2).

Furthermore, while making joint decisions, similar-understanding couples were rated as being more competitive: they felt more free to interrupt, cut each other off, and talk over each other than did dissimilar-understanding couples. The interrupting behaviors of similar-understanding couples resemble the interrupting behaviors noted by Haley (1964) in one of the early studies on family interactions. Normal families interrupted each other than dysfunctional families, who seemed to have more circumscribed rules for conversational control. When couples have the security of holding mutually confirming constructs, then, they are more free to actively present their views with each other when making decisions. They are not so noticeably free with each other, however, when handling more intense disagreements.
In his Choice Corollary Kelly maintained that people make those decisions that seem to provide the greatest possibility of elaborating their construct systems. This involves either extension or definition of the anticipatory system. By selecting someone with common constructs, similar-understanding couples have opted for a relationship in which existing constructs can be defined and confirmed. It appears that, contrary to the expectations developed in the introduction section, enlarging one's anticipatory system and extending it to previously unknown arenas is less important for global marital satisfaction than securing the system. When predictive accuracy is high, commonality seems to be experienced as comforting rather than constrictive; when predictive accuracy is low, however, commonality is related to marked marital dissatisfaction.

Research on friendship formation (Duck 1979, 1982; Gregson, 1983; McCarthy & Duck, 1976) complements the present findings. For example, the correlation of similarity to attraction and satisfaction was found to wax and wane in early stages of relationship development, yet as the friendship developed to a point requiring greater committment, similarity was highly valued. In the face of increasing demands for committment, then, companions opted for definition as opposed to extension of their construct systems. This was particularly so when similarity was
evaluated on core (vs. peripheral) and "psychological" (vs. "physical") constructs.

There were other indications from the present study that being able to accurately predict the thinking of a spouse who is much like oneself produces the maximal sense of experienced validation. For example, similar-understanding couples subjectively experienced themselves as both more similar and more understanding than similar-misunderstanding couples, and believed themselves to be more understanding with each other than did dissimilar-understanding couples. Likewise, similar-understanding couples experienced each other as more understanding than dissimilar-misunderstanding dyads while resolving conflicts. They also felt that they worked collaboratively together more than couples who perceived themselves to be different. Similar-understanding marital companions, then, might be described as "Comfortable Couples."

**Similar-misunderstanding Couples.** Similar-misunderstanding mates are unaware of the congruity in their lives. Instead, they expect to find differences and disagreement. Since they do not understand each other and are not involved in a role with each other, as specified by Kelly, they were not expected to display intimate communication. It was hypothesized, in fact, that similar-misunderstanding dyads would function the poorest of all the
groups as evidenced by marital dissatisfaction, competitive behaviors, and lack of self-disclosure (Hypothesis 4).

These expectations were not confirmed. However, in contrast to similar-understanding couples, similar-misunderstanding partners were less pleased with the marriage overall, they were less companionate with each other, they saw themselves as less alike and less tolerant, they perceived themselves to have less collaborative input into the discussions, they were less pleased with the decision-making and conflict-resolution discussions, and they characterized themselves as experiencing more disagreements.

These results are striking in that partners in both the similar-misunderstanding and similar-understanding groups organized the world in congruent ways. Congruence between partners, then, does not guarantee satisfying relationships. This suggests that the large body of research linking interpersonal similarity with marital satisfaction be interpreted with caution. As Kelly has commented, "commonality can exist between two people who are in contact with each other without either of them being able to understand the other well enough to engage in a social process with him" (1955, p. 99).

Similar-misunderstanding partners clearly were not involved in a role with each other the way similar-understanding mates were. In fact, in the context of
similar orientations, without the validation that stems from accurately predicting each other's construals (sociality), marital cohabitants relate in an impoverished and constrictive manner.

Like dissimilar-understanding couples, similar-misunderstanding partners also perceived themselves to be different from one another. However, similar-misunderstanding companions were not involved in an intimate role with each other, as were dissimilar-understanding pairs. For example, even though the two groups paralleled each other on many measures, similar-misunderstanding companions exhibited more avoidant behaviors, especially while addressing emotionally intense conflictual issues. In particular they more often shifted the topic of conversation, focused on irrelevant details, and even terminated the discussion. Because similar-misunderstanding partners expect to encounter differences and do not experience the validation of being able to accurately anticipate each other, they adopt an avoidant posture when conflicts become intense. Sillars (1983) likewise found that "separates" (who correspond partially to similar-misunderstanding couples and who were rated the lowest of the groups in his study in marital satisfaction), were most satisfied when they kept discussions to a minimum.

Comments from the couples during the discussion tasks also corroborate a picture of similar-misunderstanding mates
as persons who expect disagreement. For example, similar-
misunderstanding partners remarked: "Isn't it like our 
friend R. said, we fit together because we like to argue for 
the sake of arguing?", "I'd say we're total opposites—that 
we attract . . . two negatives make a positive," "We are a 
normal couple who argue a lot . . . who have a lot of 
differences, that's why we argue a lot . . ., " "I say 
we're two different people . . . I mean, two different types 
of people," and "I venture my opinion and then you get all 
ticked off because you think I'm trying to argue with you." 
The struggle of trying to handle the accompanying conflict 
by backing off from each other is also evident in the 
following exchange:

W: You hid your true feelings to avoid hurting me?
H: Yea . . .
W: That's part of the problem!!!
H: Well, otherwise I would get--do you want me to 
get pissed off? I was ready to strangle you 
today . . . We just don't need to get into 
it, that's all!!!.

The similar-misunderstanding marital dyads, then, might 
best be characterized as "Conflicted/Avoidant" Couples.

**Dissimilar-Misunderstanding Couples.** It was 
assumed that dissimilar-misunderstanding couples lack the 
validation offered through commonality (i.e., are 
dissimilar) and do not experience the intimate reciprocal
role offered through sociality (i.e. do not understand each other). On the other hand, they do experience perceived similarity. This group was expected to evidence a style of communication that minimized contact with each other and was expected to disclose less and to be less satisfied with the marriage than high-understanding couples (Hypothesis 5).

Dissimilar-misunderstanding dyads, however, were largely undifferentiated from other marital dyads. For example, companions in the dissimilar-misunderstanding group were not found to significantly differ from any of the other three groups in overall marital satisfaction, even though the other three groups did differ from each other. Similarly, no significant differences were found between dissimilar-misunderstanding mates and other marital partners in their use of avoidant, cooperative or competitive behaviors.

As expected, dissimilar-misunderstanding couples were not as open with each other as were dissimilar-understanding couples during informal conversations. Like similar-misunderstanding couples, they disclosed less than couples high in understanding when addressing conflictual issues. Dissimilar-misunderstanding spouses, then, maintained a parallel stance with each other during these interactions, yielding only a peripheral level of involvement.

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of the dissimilar-misunderstanding partners (who incorrectly perceived
themselves to be similar), was their tendency to see themselves in a positive light. For example, when presented with a list of six words with which to characterize their marriage ("extremely unhappy," "fairly unhappy," "a little unhappy," "happy," "very happy," "extremely happy," and "perfect") with the instructional note that the middle point ("happy") represented the degree of happiness of most relationships, dissimilar-misunderstanding couples saw themselves as "perfect" more often than did any of the other couples. In fact, whereas 27 percent of the dissimilar-misunderstanding dyads selected this superlative to describe their relationship, none (0 percent) of the similar-misunderstanding couples, 7 percent of the dissimilar-understanding, and only 12 percent of the similar-understanding subjects characterized their marriage in this way. For instance, one dissimilar-misunderstanding couple described themselves as follows: "We want to reform the world, and our own abilities complement each other's toward this wonderful goal."

The tendency of dissimilar-misunderstanding couples to view themselves in socially desirable ways was most evident in casual situations. When dealing with emotionally charged, conflicted issues and with situations where their differences were more salient, they were not as prone to view themselves in a positive light. For example, although dissimilar-misunderstanding couples felt they were more
cooperatively involved than were dissimilar-understanding or similar-misunderstanding couples during casual conversations, this was not the case while making joint decisions or resolving conflicts. Likewise, although dissimilar-misunderstanding couples were more satisfied than dissimilar-understanding or similar-misunderstanding couples while jointly deciding on descriptive adjectives for the two of them, this was not the case when confronting disagreements. Additionally, in conflictual interactions, as opposed to more casual conversations, dissimilar-misunderstanding couples were clearly less satisfied and felt less mutual understanding than similar-understanding subjects.

Dissimilar-misunderstanding spouses appear to develop a congenial atmosphere that is not particularly intimate, yet is not clearly avoidant and is not noticeably competitive. They do not often directly engage each other, as dissimilar-understanding couples do. Their largely parallel interactions allow them to operate in a comfortable, satisfying manner so long as they do not have to face situations that demand more direct testing of their anticipatory systems for the marriage.

Sillars (1983) identified a group of couples where satisfaction in the marriage was tied to maintenance of a neutral emotional climate. These couples were bonded primarily through sexual attraction, and often developed
activities outside the marriage (e.g., work) as significant sources of satisfaction. In a similar manner, the constructs on which dissimilar-misunderstanding dyads differed in the present study, may not have been their core constructs. They may have restricted the range of convenience of their self-constructs such that they only peripherally applied to the marriage. Consequently, satisfaction/dissatisfaction in the marriage would not have been related to similarity/dissimilarity of the constructs assessed in this study.

The parallel, uninvolved behaviors of the dissimilar-misunderstanding marital companions were also evident in other ways. For instance, the raters were struck with how often partners abdicated any involvement in the decision-making process. Decisions were often predicated on comments like "Whatever you want," "I don't care," "Nah . . . Whatever you want to do with your parents is fine," and is exemplified in the following exchange:

H: As far as I'm concerned, it doesn't make any difference.
W: I know, but we have to make a decision.
H: Pick any three!
W: Well, I don't want to be the one that does all the picking.
H: It's OK with me. Whatever you pick.
Such interactions contrasted markedly with the extended negotiation processes sometimes evident with other couples, particularly dissimilar-understanding partners. Dissimilar-misunderstanding dyads, then, might be characterized as "Parallel" Couples.

In summary, then, the two dimensions of commonality and sociality were productively used in this study to compare four prototypical groups of marital dyads. Dissimilar-understanding ("Emotionally Engaged") couples, who successfully face the challenge of subsuming different world views, disclose freely and are intensely involved with each other but they are not highly satisfied. Similar-understanding ("Comfortable") couples, who have the confirmation of knowingly being like each other, are the most content and have the greatest sense of validation as a couple. Similar-misunderstanding ("Conflicted-Avoidant") couples, who are unaware of the congruity in their lives, restrict their relationship by attempting to avoid expected confrontations. Dissimilar-misunderstanding ("Parallel") couples, who neither share common views nor understand their differences, view themselves in a socially desirable light, are not particularly discontented (except in conflict situations) and try to maintain congenial, nonintimate interactions. Group differences were unaffected by factors such as level of education, income, years married, number of children in the home, or current life stressors.
Theoretical Implications. Two key points regarding Kelly's Personal Construct theory emerge from these findings. The first concerns the relative importance of perceived similarity, actual similarity, and understanding to marital relationships. Although couples who perceived themselves to view the world congruently were more satisfied and participative in casual conversations, this was not the case when subjects became more actively involved with each other. When dealing with emotionally intense, conflictual issues, perceived similarity was unrelated to either dyadic satisfaction or communicative behaviors. Furthermore, although couples who perceived themselves to be different (dissimilar-understanding, similar-misunderstanding) were less pleased with the marriage overall than similar-understanding dyads, they were not less satisfied than couples who perceived themselves to be similar (dissimilar-misunderstanding, similar-understanding), as would have been expected from a cognitive consistency perspective. Perceived similarity, then, was not found to adequately account for marital relationships in this study.

Kelly clearly argued that predictive accuracy (sociality) is more important to relationship role development than similarity (commonality). Although he recognized that commonality may facilitate certain aspects of relationship formation, this was considered only incidental. Indeed, understanding in this study was related to self-
disclosure in conflict situations, whereas no main effects for similarity were identified. The ability to accurately anticipate partners' construals, then, enabled spouses to play a more intimate role with each other during interactions requiring a high degree of interpersonal risk.

The results of this study clearly suggest that it is the joint influence of commonality and sociality that is relevant to relationships. In fact, Duck (1983), argues that one can only talk about commonality in the context of sociality, and sociality cannot be evaluated outside of the context of commonality in relationships. The question that must be asked, he suggests, is not which is more important (sociality or commonality) but in what ways do they exist in relation to each other.

For example, in the present study, a high degree of commonality was experienced as comforting and validating when predictive accuracy was high, but was related to marked dissatisfaction when predictive accuracy was low. In the context of similar orientations, then, without the dyadic validation that comes from accurately predicting each other's construals (sociality), marital cohabitants related in a constrictive, dissatisfying manner. Likewise, in casual settings, for couples who differed from each other, partners were more contented if they were unaware of their differences.
Nowhere was the interplay between similarity and understanding more striking than with couples who were high in sociality. In fact, the second key issue to emerge from the present results concerns Kelly's Choice Corollary and the notion of the optimally functioning couple.

Kelly argued that people will choose those alternatives that give the best opportunities to elaborate their construct systems. This involves choosing either to extend or to define the current anticipatory system. The dilemma facing an individual was poetically posed by Kelly: "Which shall a man choose, security or adventure? Shall he choose that which leads to immediate certainty or shall he choose that which may eventually give him a wider understanding? . . ." (1955, p.64). If persons do not choose to successively reconstrue a widening variety of events they then minimize and constrict their experiencing, and make their system less adaptable (p. 172). The optimal couple, therefore, was expected to choose extension over definition.

The results suggest, however, that in the context of accurate understanding, extension does lead to intimate disclosure about a full range of internal experiencing but does not provide greater marital satisfaction. It was more satisfying for mates to be involved with a partner whose constructs provide confirmation of existing constructs than a partner whose meaning system challenges one's construct
system into further growth. The question arises, then, in what way is optimal functioning related to personal happiness?

Kelly was careful, of course, to stress that validation is not the same as happiness; it only represents the "compatibility (subjectively construed) between one's prediction and the outcome he observes" (1955, p. 158). People always try to make their anticipatory systems more useful in predicting events, even though these events may be displeasing.

Within Personal Construct Psychology, it seems clear that the conditions under which a person chooses extension or confirmation need to be more clearly articulated. For example, is the choice of extension or definition in a marriage related to cognitive complexity? Do couples who opt for partners different from themselves have more permeable superordinate constructs? Does it make a difference in the elaborative choice if couples knowingly differ on peripheral as opposed to core constructs? Are partners who choose extension over confirmation also persons who would be identified by Zuckerman (1979; Zuckerman, Buchsbaum, & Murphy, 1980) as "thrill-seekers"? Although these questions have been partially addressed in friendship formation (Duck, 1983) and in therapeutic relationships (Landfield, 1971), they have not been researched in the long-term colleagueship of marriage.
**Therapeutic Implications.** Much of the research on dyadic communication has been conducted with a view toward developing communication-enhancement programs or for guiding therapeutic endeavors. The findings of the present study suggest that it is important that the goal of such a program be clearly envisioned. Is the goal of therapy, for instance, to enhance expressive communication, to foster growth and new experiences, to facilitate decision-making, or to increase marital satisfaction? The current results suggest that these outcomes are very different experiences and would each entail very different programs. Expanding a couple's elaborative ability, for example, may require a kind of involvement that might decrease overall satisfaction.

The results also point to the importance of recognizing the different communication strategies employed by couples. What is effective for some, may not be for others, and any program stressing "optimal communication" would need to take this into account. Sillars et al. (1983) voiced a similar concern: "The potentially oppressive result for couples who seek expert advice is that 'good communication' may require conformity to someone else's conception of what constitutes a satisfying relationship" (p. 20).

For example, a program teaching partners to actively express their feelings and directly deal with their conflicts may not engender increased satisfaction for
parallel partners. With these couples, increasing understanding may actually precipitate marital crisis. Training people to accurately anticipate disagreement may help build tolerance (Aderman, Bryant, & Domelsmith, 1978), but only in certain couples. Rather than trying to develop confrontation skills, some couples (e.g., similar-misunderstanding) may need to learn better how to avoid intense interactions with each other. Others (e.g., emotionally engaged couples) may need to identify common constructs to serve as anchors before exploring their differences.

When couples describe difficulties, the present results would also suggest that one pay careful attention to the context. For example, certain difficulties were evidenced in conflictual, emotionally intense situations that were not apparent in decision-making efforts. Likewise, communicative behaviors that were productive for casual conversation were not beneficial during conflict resolution. There is no guarantee, then, that helping couples address disagreements will necessarily help them in the course of day-to-day, mundane interactions.

**Methodological Issues**

The results of this study are also pertinent to methodological issues in researching Kelly's Personal Construct Psychology and in studying dyadic communication. Relevant issues highlighted by these findings include a)
construct validity of Kelly's notions of commonality and sociality, and b) the use of conversational tasks to explore dyadic communication behaviors.

Kelly stated quite clearly that from a PCT point of view dyadic similarity referred to the degree to which persons employ their constructs in the same way. Similarity, as assessed in this study, was based on the degree to which partner's made the same or different interpersonal distinctions. This contrasts with measures of correspondence often used to research dyadic similarity, wherein similarity is seen as the degree to which partner's are rated on some dimension(s) in the same manner. The term "target similarity" was used in this study to characterize these latter measures. Interestingly enough, participants' direct self-ratings of similarity corresponded more closely to target similarity than either organizational or content similarity. In other words, when presented with the simple question "All things considered, how similar do you think you and your spouse are overall?" companions responded by comparing themselves as objects (targets rated along a dimension) rather than comparing themselves as subjects (construing persons).

This suggests that there are different levels of "similarity." Duck (1982, 1983) holds that viewing similarity on multiple levels is consistent with Kelly, and in fact, argues that the definition of commonality
necessarily entails multiple levels of similarity. When partners compare themselves as "construing persons" rather than "construed targets," this may represent a move toward a use of higher levels (e.g., Laing's (1964) research into meta-levels of dyadic similarity and understanding). The diverse findings on similarity and predictive accuracy that appear in the literature, then, may reflect the many levels on which similarity has been assessed. For example, Neimeyer (1983; Neimeyer & Hudson, 1984) investigated construct similarity in marital companions. However, their measure of similarity ("functional similarity") in which partners were asked to make ratings using each other's grids, should more appropriately be considered a measure of sociality.

This blurring of the distinction between similarity and understanding also showed up in the correlations between measures. Some measures of similarity based on the Rep Grid were actually more related to subjects' experiential perception of mutual understanding than actual similarity. Additionally, while sociality and commonality as measured from a Kellyan perspective were largely orthogonal, other means of assessing similarity and understanding were highly related. The correspondence between measures of similarity and understanding is important in assessing sociality, as some have noted by advocating that researchers partial out effects of similarity in order to adequately measure
predictive accuracy (Berger, 1985; Keller & Hyde, 1983). One of the implications, then, for research on commonality and sociality, is that the two must be evaluated jointly (Duck, 1982).

The findings of the current study also suggest that assessing similarity of constructs in terms of the labels people use (content similarity) is less informative than assessing similarity in terms of how they actually organize the world (organizational similarity). Kelly notes, after all, that constructs are highly personal and many of our constructs are difficult to put into words. Consequently, not only is organizational similarity more in keeping with the theory (as was outlined previously), it is also a more useful notion. For example, organizational similarity was related to people's own perception of similarity, while content similarity was not.

It is interesting that the longer couples had been together, the more alike they viewed themselves as targets; however, they did not organize their interpersonal worlds more congruently with marital duration. In other words, although couples changed in where they placed each other along certain dimensions, they did not change the dimensions they used. This suggests that a Rep Grid comparing nuclear family members, as in the current study, elicits core role constructs that may have developed earlier and change more slowly.
In addition to highlighting methodological issues for Personal Construct Psychology, the findings of this study are also relevant to methods used in studying dyadic communication. In the current study, observations were made of husband-wife conversational behaviors in three different contexts: casually chatting, making decisions which required joint-agreement, and role-playing a typical conflict scene from their own life. Subjects did not differ on the extent to which they considered their behaviors in these tasks to represent natural or typical conduct on their part, suggesting that the interactions observed in the laboratory setting were consonant with out-of-the-laboratory behaviors. This is noteworthy in that even when subjects were asked to role-play a typical conflictual scene they did not experience it as superficial or unrealistic. As Gottman (1983), Margolin (1978), and Markman (1980) argue, role-play seems a viable methodology for studying dyadic behaviors.

More importantly, subjects as a group experienced each of the three contexts differently. The conflict resolution task and the decision-making task, in particular, contrasted with each other. In the conflict-resolution task, partners were expected to re-enact a situation that has typically been problematic for them. This involved a high degree of expressed emotion and often did not result in resolution of differences. In the decision making task partners had to make consensual decisions together, but this did not
necessarily involve resolving disagreements. As a group, couples overall reported they were more satisfied, believed they were more understanding, saw themselves as less anxious, considered themselves more avoidant, and reported liking their partners more during decision-making conversations than during conflict-resolution talks. They were also rated by observers as revealing less about themselves, using fewer avoidant exchanges, and expressing fewer antagonistic comments while making joint decisions than while dealing with intense conflictual differences.

These findings suggest that contextual constraints on dyadic communication are important considerations. Research on communication behaviors in marital relationships, then, should examine partners' responses in a number of settings (Bowers, 1979; Gottman, 1982), and communication skills building programs should note the different dyadic demands in various situations. Conflict-resolution skills, for instance, may differ from decision-making skills.

Conclusion

The communicative behaviors of four prototypical marital dyads, based on the interplay of Kelly's commonality (dyadic similarity) and sociality (dyadic understanding) corollaries, were evaluated in this study. Dissimilar-understanding ("Emotionally Engaged") couples, who successfully faced the challenge of subsuming different world views, readily disclosed a full range of inner
experiencing and were intensely involved with each other, but they were not highly satisfied. Extending their construct systems to incorporate the mate's different perspectives required emotional risking and produced higher levels of anxiety.

Similar-understanding ("Comfortable") couples, who experienced the confirmation of knowingly being like each other, had the greatest sense of validation as a couple and were the most content. They worked collaboratively together to make decisions, and in non-conflictual situations, they felt free to interrupt each other. These couples opted to elaborate their construct systems by confirming existing, mutually held constructs rather than extending them to unknown arenas.

Similar-misunderstanding ("Conflicted-Avoidant") couples, who were unaware of the congruity with which they viewed the world, restricted their relationship by attempting to avoid expected confrontations. The constrictive communicative behaviors of similar-misunderstanding partners were particularly salient when contrasted to other couples high in similarity (similar-understanding). Similarity, then, did not lead to open communication without the validation of accurate understanding.

Dissimilar-misunderstanding ("Parallel") couples, who neither shared common views nor understood their
differences, perceived themselves to be similar and viewed themselves in a socially desirable light. This was most evident in casual interactions, and was less evident in conflictual, emotionally intense situations. Consequently, dissimilar-misunderstanding spouses tried to maintain congenial, nonintimate interactions, and were moderately content.

These findings have important implications for marital therapy. Clinicians should note that the communicative skills valued by some couples are not the same as those valued by other types of couples. For example, teaching dissimilar-misunderstanding couples to disclose with each other as similar-understanding couples do, may actually increase dissatisfaction. These findings also suggest that the goals of a therapeutic program should be clearly articulated. Increasing open communication, for instance, may be a distinctly different goal than increasing marital satisfaction, and would entail a very different program.

The findings from the present study also confirm the utility of Kelly's notions of commonality and sociality, as measured by organizational similarity and organizational understanding. In general, understanding was crucial for intimacy. On the other hand, similarity (in the context of accurate understanding) was central for marital satisfaction. This was especially true in emotionally
intense, conflictual situations. The interaction of similarity and understanding found in this study also suggest that further research is needed to identify the conditions under which couples opt to extend their construct systems in new ways (requiring understanding) and when they opt to confirm existing constructs (requiring similarity).
Appendix A

INFORMED CONSENT

Name: ____________________________________________

I have been informed as to the nature of this research project at Baylor College of Medicine. I understand that the study is concerned with marital interactions, and that I will be answering some questionnaires and participating in some brief discussions, which will be taped. The entire procedure will take between one and a-half and two hours. I also understand that I have been informed of any potentially adverse procedures involved, as well as the potential benefits for participating.

I have been assured that my responses will remain completely confidential and anonymous, and I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time. I have also been informed that I am free to ask any questions I may have regarding the research project.

________________________________________  ____________________________________________
Witness                                      Subject

________________________________________  ____________________________________________
Date                                         Date
Appendix B

Demographic Questionnaire

(1-2) Subject No ______

(3-4) 1. Age ______  (5) 2. Sex ______ 1. Male ______ 2. Female ______


(7-8) 4. How long have you been married/living together? ______ yrs

(9) 5. How long did you date before you got married/began living together? ______
   1. Less than 3 months ______ 2. 3 months to 6 months ______ 3. 6 months to one year ______ 4. One year to three years ______ 5. More than three years ______

(10-11) 6. How many children do you have from the current marriage? ______

(12-13) 7. How many children do you currently have living at home? ______

(14-18) 8. What is your average yearly income? ______

(19) 9. What is your level of education? ______
   1. 8th Grade ______ 2. 11th Grade ______ 3. 12th Grade ______ 4. one to two years of college ______ 5. college degree ______ 6. graduate degree ______ 7. other ______

(20-21) 10. What is your occupation? ____________________________

(22) 11. Are you currently facing any major stress, such as financial difficulties, job change, death in the family, moving, pregnancy, etc.? ______
   1. No ______ 2. Yes (If yes, specify: ________________________)
Appendix C

Instructions for the Role Construct Repertory Grid

**FIRST STEP: (Wife)**

In the upper right hand corner, circle "W" if it hasn't already been done for you. ("W" stands for Wife).

Find the slanted lines in the upper left-hand corner of the RESPONSE SHEET.

1. Write the first name of your mother or the person who has played the part of your mother in column #1.
2. Write the first name of your father or the person who has played the part of your father in column #2.
3. Write the first name of your spouse's mother (mother-in-law) in column #3.
4. Write the first name of your spouse's father (father-in-law) in column #4.
5. Write your own name in column #5.
6. Write the name of your spouse in column #6.
7. Write the name of someone the two of you would like to get to know better in column #7. You may need to confer with your spouse so that both of you write in the same name.
8. Write the name of someone the two of you dislike or would not particularly like to associate with. You may need to confer with your spouse so that both of your write in the same name.

**FIRST STEP: (Husband)**

In the upper right hand corner, circle "H" if it hasn't already been done for you. ("H" stands for Husband).

Find the slanted lines in the upper left-hand corner of the RESPONSE SHEET.
1. Write the first name of your spouse's mother (mother-in-law) or the person who has played that part in column #1.

2. Write the first name of your spouse's father (father-in-law) or the person who has played that part in column #2.

3. Write the first name of your own mother in column #3.

4. Write the first name of your own father in column #4.

5. Write the name of your spouse in column #5.

6. Write your own name in column #6.

7. Write the name of someone the two of you would like to get to know better in column #7. You may need to confer with your spouse so that both of you write in the same name.

8. Write the name of someone the two of you dislike or would not particularly like to associate with. You may need to confer with your spouse so that both of your write in the same name.

SECOND STEP:

Below your list of names, find Row A. Notice that Row A has two circles. Look at the names above the circles:

ARE THE TWO PEOPLE ALIKE IN SOME ONE WAY?

If they seem alike to you in some one way, write the way in which these two people are alike in the blank space under the heading "Column #1."

For instance, in the following example Bob and Ted are alike in that they are "honest".

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bob</th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Ted</th>
<th>Bev</th>
<th>Column #1</th>
<th>Column #2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>&quot;honest&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now look across your list of acquaintances. Find a person who is different from the two who are alike. In the blank
space under the heading "Column #2," write the way in which this person is different from the other two.

For instance, in the following example, Bev is different from Bob and Ted in that she is seen as "shady."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bob</th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Ted</th>
<th>Bev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Row A</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>〇</td>
<td>〇</td>
<td>&quot;honest&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;shady&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After you finish Row A, complete Row B, Row C, etc. Follow the same instructions.

If you cannot find a way in which the two circled people in a given row are alike, go to the next page; otherwise, skip to page 4.

If you cannot find a way in which the two people are alike, think about them again. If they are not alike in some way, perhaps the two are different in some one way. If you see that the two people are different in some way, under the heading labeled "Column #1" write the description which fits the person in the left circle. Under the heading labeled "Column #2" write the description which fits the person in the right circle.

For instance, in the following example, Bob and Ted are different from each other in that Bob is seen as "warm" and Ted is seen as "silly."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bob</th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Ted</th>
<th>Bev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Row A</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>〇</td>
<td>〇</td>
<td>&quot;warm&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;silly&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STEP #3:

PULL OFF THE TOP SHEET OF THE RESPONSE SHEET, AND CIRCLE "1" (IN THE UPPER RIGHT HAND CORNER).

For Row A, look over the description you wrote under Column #1 and the description you wrote under Column #2. Notice that between your two descriptions is a set of numbers ranging from "-6" to "+6". You have developed your own rating scale (or dimension), using these descriptors and the rating numbers.

Use your rating scale (dimension) for Row A to give your impression of "wife's mother" in Row A. Then rate each person in Row A until all the spaces in Row A are filled. Then rate each of the people in Row B using the scale for Row B. Do the same for Row C, Row D, etc.

ZERO RATINGS (0)

-->Use a "0" rating when neither description fits the person you are trying to rate, or when both poles equally apply.

For instance, in the following example, on Row A, this person feels that the "Formal vs. Humorous" dimension does not apply to the Father-in-law at all. In contrast, Mother is seen as very "formal" (-5) while Mother-in-law is seen as quite "humorous" (+4). On Row B, both Mother and Father are seen as "honest", but Father is more honest (-6) than Mother (-3).

USE OF "+" AND "-

-->Note that the "+" or "-" before the numbers merely refers to which side of the scale you are using, and does not refer to "good" or "bad".

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Column #1</th>
<th>Column #2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>Humorous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row A</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>-6-5-4-3-2-1 0+1+2+3+4+5+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row B</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>-5-4-3-2-1 0+1+2+3+4+5+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row C</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>-5-4-3-2-1 0+1+2+3+4+5+6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Father-in-law</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Row A</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>+4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row B</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row C</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Shady</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Row A</td>
<td>-6</td>
<td>-5-4-3-2-1 0+1+2+3+4+5+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row B</td>
<td>-6</td>
<td>-5-4-3-2-1 0+1+2+3+4+5+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row C</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>-5-4-3-2-1 0+1+2+3+4+5+6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dumb</th>
<th>Smart</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Row A</td>
<td>-6</td>
<td>-5-4-3-2-1 0+1+2+3+4+5+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row B</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>-5-4-3-2-1 0+1+2+3+4+5+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row C</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>-5-4-3-2-1 0+1+2+3+4+5+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column 1</td>
<td>Column 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column 3</th>
<th>Column 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Response Sheet
Appendix D

Spanier’s Dayadic Adjustment Scale

Most persons have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for each item on the following list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always Agree</th>
<th>Almost Always Agree</th>
<th>Occassionally Disagree</th>
<th>Frequently Disagree</th>
<th>Almost Always Disagree</th>
<th>Always Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Handling family finances
2. Recreational Activities
3. Religious matters
4. Demonstrations of affection
5. Friends
6. Sexual relations
7. Conventionality (correct or proper behavior)
8. Philosophy of life
9. Ways of dealing with parents or in-laws
10. Aims, goals, and things believed important
11. Amount of time spent together
12. Making major decisions
13. Household tasks
14. Leisure time activities and interests
15. Career decisions

(38) 16. Do you kiss your partner?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>Almost every day</td>
<td>Every Day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix D—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>Most of</td>
<td>More often</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the time</td>
<td>the time</td>
<td>than</td>
<td>not</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(39-45)

17. How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or terminating your relationship?

18. How often do you or your mate leave the house after a fight?

19. In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?

20. Do you confide in your mate?

21. Do you ever regret that you married (or lived together)?

22. How often do you and your partner quarrel?

23. How often do you and your partner "get on each other's nerves?"

24. Of the interests you are involved in outside of work, how many of them do you and your partner engage in together?

<p>| | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0 -- None of them</td>
<td>1 -- Very few of them</td>
<td>2 -- Some of them</td>
<td>3 -- Most of them</td>
<td>4 -- All of them</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are some things about which couples sometimes agree and sometimes disagree. Indicate if either item below caused differences of opinions or were problems in your relationship during the past few weeks. (Check yes or no).

(47-48)

25. Being too tired for sex (1) Yes (2) No

26. Not showing love (1) Yes (2) No
Appendix D—Continued

How often would you say the following events occur between you and your mate?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Less than once a month</th>
<th>Once or twice a month</th>
<th>Once or twice a week</th>
<th>Once a day</th>
<th>More than once a day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(49-52)  ____ 27. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas
         ____ 28. Laugh together
         ____ 29. Calmly discuss something
         ____ 30. Work together on a project

(53) 31. The dots on the following line represent different degrees of happiness in your relationship. The middle point, "happy," represents the degree of happiness of most relationships. Please circle the dot which best describes the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Extremely Unhappy</th>
<th>Fairly Unhappy</th>
<th>A little Unhappy</th>
<th>Happy</th>
<th>Very Happy</th>
<th>Extremely Perfect Happy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(54) 32. Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about the future of your relationship?

____ 5 — I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and would go to almost any length to see that it does.

____ 4 — I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do all I can to see that it does.

____ 3 — I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do my fair share to see that it does.

____ 2 — It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but I can't do much more than I am doing now to help it succeed.

____ 1 — It would be nice if it succeeded, but I refuse to do any more than I am doing now to keep the relationship going.

____ 0 — My relationship can never succeed, and there is no more that I can do to keep the relationship going.
Appendix E

Coding Manual for Interpersonal Communication Coding Scheme

The categories for this coding scheme are based primarily upon the empirical research of Sillars and Fitzpatrick, but also incorporate clinical observations and notions of theoretical relevance. It should be noted that:
(a) All categories refer to communicative acts, and (b) The categories are relatively objective and noninferential. In other words, you will be rating your direct observations, and as little as possible will be asked to make inferences about the intentions of the speakers.

There are three main categories in the coding scheme:
(1) Avoidant/Withdrawning Acts
(2) Competitive/Confrontative Acts
(3) Cooperative/Integrative Acts

**Avoidant** tactics minimize explicit discussion of conflicts. These include statements which deny the presence of conflicts, shift the focus of conversations, or communicate about conflicts indirectly and ambiguously. You can think of this as much like Karen Horney's description of "moving away from" others.

**Competitive** tactics are verbally competitive, confrontative, or individualistic behaviors, such as insults, criticism, hostile jokes and commands that seek concessions from another person. This is much like Horney's "moving against" others.

**Cooperative** (or **Integrative, Affiliative**) tactics, are verbally cooperative behaviors or statements which pursue mutually favorable resolution of conflicts. This refers to statements which directly discuss conflicts and promote a positive or neutral affective climate between parties. This resembles Horney's "moving toward" other people.

**Unit of Analysis.** The basic unit for coding is the speaking turn. In other words, a rating is given each time a speaker successfully gains the floor. Each speaking turn will be sequentially numbered on the transcript for easier coding. Try to code one rating per speaker-turn; sometimes, however, a turn may be double coded if two different acts occur in sequence. Do NOT double code the same statement. Avoid double codes as much as possible.
Sub-Categories. There are 22 subcategories in the coding scheme beneath the three main categories. These subcategories are briefly described below, but we will talk in greater detail about them as we go over the practice tapes.

AVOIDANT ACTS

1.1 Denial.
--->Simple Denial: Unelaborated statements that deny that a conflict is present.

A: Do you think that's a problem?  
*B: No, I don't think that's a problem.

--->Extended Denial: Denial statements that elaborate on the basis of denial.

A: Are you angry?  
*B: Who, me? I never get angry, and you know that.

1.2 (Avoidant) Topic Termination. Statements or behaviors that directly terminate discussion of a conflict issue before an opinion has been expressed. This may include actually leaving the room to terminate the conversation.

A: I don't want to visit your parents this Christmas.  
*B: I don't want to talk about it.

1.3 (Avoidant) Topic Shifting. Statements that indirectly terminate discussion of a conflict issue before the discussion has reached a natural culmination.

--->Watch for abrupt discontinuities in the discussion:

A: I think we are a happy couple.  
*B: Did you see that show about rabbits on TV?

A: I think this one may be a problem.  
*B: Are we talking loud enough?

--->Do not use this code if both parties have expressed and explained their opinions and there is no abrupt
shift in the discussion (i.e., not all topic shifts are counted as avoidance).  (See 3.8 for Appropriate Topic Shift).

1.4 Noncommittal Responses.  Failure to acknowledge or deny the presence of a conflict following a statement or inquiry about the conflict by the partner.

A: Do you think that's a problem?
*B: Well, uh, I.

A: That's not really a conflict with us
*B: MMM, (long pause), well

*NOTE: "I DON'T KNOW".  Instances of "I don't know" may reflect noncommittal (1.4) or may be expression of genuine lack of knowledge (Self-disclosure, 3.2). Most "I don't know" statements will probably fit the 1.4 code rather than the 3.2.

•This category also includes statements that are ambivalent, wishy-washy, noncommittal, vague, impersonal, self-contradictory with reference to the conflict issue.  In general, these are statements that effectively "fog" or derail the conversation.

-->Ambivalence:
*A: It doesn't really bother me, it's just that I'm not used to having friends borrow things.  Sometimes I get upset, but it doesn't really bother me.

-->Impersonalization:

A: Are you dissatisfied?
*B: All people are dissatisfied sometimes.

*B: That could be something that a person might feel, but I don't know.

1.5 Excessive Detail. Excessive attention to meanings of words, correct grammatical form, dates, times, etc., that serve to avoid discussing the issue.

A: Pressure from work has affected our relationship.
*B: Now, do you mean our long-term relationship, our daily relationship, or how we are in bed?

A: Let's go eat dinner at Grandy's.
*B: Dinner—is that lunch or supper, and are you talking about tomorrow or today? Or next week?

A: I get so irritated when you call my mother a "bitch."
*B: I don't say "bitch." I say "b-i-utch." Not "bitch".

A: It seems that we get into an argument about this every week.
*B: No, just every moment of every day.

COMPETITIVE / CONFRONTATIVE ACTS

2.1 Faulting/Blaming. Disparaging statements that directly criticize the personal characteristics, talents, or behaviors of the partner or that are presented in a belittling, blaming manner.

*A: You're a real bitch, you know that?
*A: That's a stupid thing to say.

2.1 Inducing Guilt. Making statements designed to induce guilt.

*A: You know, you have just ruined my day.
*A: If you'd just pay the phone bill, everything would be alright.

2.3 Rejection. Statements in response to the partner's previous statements that imply personal antagonism toward the partner as well as disagreement. (Note: Disagreement in and of itself does not count as rejection). Intonation and tone of voice are especially important for this category.

*A: Bullshit!!!
Appendix E—Continued

*A: Oh, come on !!!!

2.4 **Overriding.** Talking over the other person and not allowing him/her to have the floor. This may include telling the other person to shut up, taking the floor by increasing volume, or rapid-fire talk. This may appear very often as a double code, secondary to other ratings.

2.5 **Commands & Prescriptions.** Demands, arguments, or other prescriptive statements that seek a change in the partner's behavior in order to resolve a conflict. These requests often implicitly blame the partner for something, and often contain the words "should" or "ought" in them.

*A: You shouldn't let my weight bother you so much.
*A: Put the stupid thing down now.

2.6 **Threatening.** Blunt uses of power.

*A: Just try to get away with it.
*A: Oh, I'm gonna remember this one for sure. And you're not going to forget it either.

2.7 **Hostile Questioning.** Directive or leading questions that fault the partner.

*A: Alright, who does most of the house cleaning around here, huh?

This can also include questions that do not really seek an answer:

*Why don't you stop living like a slob?

2.8 **Hostile joking or Sarcasm.** Joking or teasing that faults the partner.

*A: Shall we tell everyone about what rags you use to clean? Or about your silly dolls you sleep with?
*A: You’re such a clean person. You even wash the toilet paper.

2.9 Presumptive Attribution. Statements that attribute thoughts, feelings, intentions, or motivations to the partner that the partner does not acknowledge. (e.g., mind-reading, "playing God", "playing junior psychologist"). This code is the opposite of "soliciting disclosure" (3.3).

*A: I think you’re purposefully making yourself miserable.

*A: You said you weren’t bothered when he didn’t call, but I knew you were.

*A: You always tell me that. You just won’t admit it.

COOPERATIVE/INTEGRATIVE ACTS

3.1 Descriptive/Informational. Statements about observable events, information, etc. related to the conflict.

A: (Reading the card): "Criticism of another’s belief."

*B: I criticized you yesterday for getting angry with the kids.

3.2 Personal Disclosure. Self-disclosing statements about personal events related to the conflict which the partner cannot observe, such as thoughts, feelings, intentions, motivations.

*A: I sure did have a bad weekend last weekend. I didn't feel like talking to anyone.

*A: I'm not used to your neatness because my parents didn't worry so much about how the house looked.

3.3 Soliciting Information / Soliciting Disclosure. This may include nonhostile questions about observable events related to the conflict or may
involve soliciting information from the partner about events related to the conflict which one cannot observe (thoughts, feelings, intentions, motivations, past history).

*A: What is the balance of the checkbook?

*A: What do you think about that?

*A: Does it bother you if I borrow things without asking?

---Do not use this code for leading questions, rhetorical questions (i.e., questions that do not expect an answer), instances where the other person is not given time to answer the question, instances where the question is answered by the person who asked it, or for "back-channel" types of questions (e.g., "Huh?", "What?").

3.4 Seeking Reassurance. An attempt to evoke reassurance from the other (either directly or indirectly). This may include attempting to make-up after an argument.

*A: You're not still mad at me, are you?

*A: Do you still love me?

3.5 Acceptance or Support. Statements that express understanding, support, empathy, acceptance, positive regard for the partner (despite acknowledging a conflict), shared interest or goals, compatibilities with the partner, or strengths of the relationship.

*A: It wasn't anything you could help. It wasn't intentional on your part.

*A: Well, I get depressed sometimes too. We can't be perfect, you know.

*A: Most of the time we get along. We respect one another's rights.

A: I think we get along OK.

*B: Yea, most of the time we get along.
3.6 **Accepting Responsibility.** Statements that express a willingness to change, show flexibility, make concessions, or consider mutually acceptable solutions to conflicts.

*A:* I think I could work on that more.
*A:* Well, I think that is my fault.
*B:* I think we've both contributed to the problem.

- **NOTE:** Do not use this code for statements of the "Yeah, but" variety (e.g., "Well, maybe I'm not so neat, but neither are you.").

3.7 **Initiating Problem Solving.** Statements that initiate a course of action or that initiate mutual consideration of solutions to conflict.

*A:* Let's go see your parents for Thanksgiving and mine for Christmas.
*A:* I sure don't know... let's think about this one... what do you think we should do?

3.8 **Appropriate Topic Shift.** Statements that redirect the conversation in a conjunctive manner; that help refocus on the topic and move the interaction in a cooperative direction. This may often follow situations in which the conversation was derailed by Avoidant topic shifting (1.2) or topic termination (1.3). Topic shift may be either direct or indirect.

*A:* Back to this thing about Christmas. I don't know if I can get off of work for that long.

4.0 **Irreverent Remarks /Joking.** Nonhostile joking that supplants serious consideration of the conflict or topic. This category was initially placed under both avoidance and cooperation, and is coded separately because of it's multifunctional purpose.

*A:* I think I would rate me a "6" on this one.
*B:* You could have fooled me (laugh).

5.0 **Uncodable.** This category is reserved for those instances in which it seems impossible to assign a code. Use it sparingly.
Coders' Quick-Reference Guide for Interpersonal Communication Coding Scheme

1. AVOIDANT ACTS.

1.1 Denial: Statements that deny the presence of a conflict.

1.2 (Avoidant) Topic Termination: Statements or behaviors that directly terminate discussion of a conflict issue before an opinion has been expressed.

1.3 (Avoidant) Topic Shifting: Statements that are disjunctive with the flow of conversation and serve to indirectly terminate discussion of a conflict before natural culmination of discussion.

1.4 Noncommittal Responses: Underresponsiveness (failure to acknowledge or deny the presence of a conflict following a statement or inquiry about the conflict by the partner) or statements that are ambivalent, noncommittal, or self-contradictory in reference to the issue. NOTE: "I don't know" statements may reflect noncommittal or genuine lack of knowledge (self-disclosure).

- Also "wishy-washy"; vague or impersonal statements; or "fogging".

1.5 Excessive Detail: ("Nit-Picking"). Excessive attention to meanings of words, correct grammatical form, dates, times, etc. that serve to avoid the issue.

2. COMPETITIVE/CONFRONTATIVE ACTS

2.1 Faulting/Blaming: Disparaging statements that directly criticize the personal characteristics, talents, or behaviors of the partner or that are presented in a belittling, blaming manner.

2.2 Inducing Guilt: Making statements designed to indirectly induce guilt.

2.3 Rejection: Statements in response to the partner's previous statements that imply personal antagonism toward the partner as well as disagreement. (Disagreement in and of itself does not count as rejection). Tone of Voice is important.

2.4 Overriding: Talking over the other person and not allowing him/her to have the floor. May include increasing volume or speed of talk; telling the other person to shut up.

2.5 Command & Prescriptions: Demands, arguments, or other prescriptive statements (e.g., "should," "ought") that seek a change in the partner's behavior in order to resolve a conflict. These requests often implicitly blame the partner for something.

2.6 Threats: Blunt use of power by threatening.

2.7 Hostile Questioning: Directive or leading questions that fault the partner.

2.8 Hostile Joking/Sarcasm: Joking or teasing that faults the partner.

2.9 Presumptive Attribution: Statements or questions that attribute thoughts, feelings, intentions, or motivations to the partner that the partner does not acknowledge. This code is the opposite of "soliciting disclosure."

3. COOPERATIVE/INTEGRATIVE ACTS

3.1 Descriptive/Informative: Statements about observable events, information, etc. related to the conflict or given as support for a position taken.

3.2 Personal Disclosure: Self-disclosing statements about events related to the conflict which the partner cannot observe, such as personal thoughts, feelings, intentions, motivations.
3.3 **Soliciting Information/Soliciting Disclosure**: Statements or questions that solicit information from the partner in a non-hostile manner. Rhetorical questions do not count.

3.4 **Seeking Reassurance**: Statements that attempt to evoke reassurance from the partner.

3.5 **Acceptance/ Support**: Statements that express understanding, support, acceptance, positive regard, shared interests, compatibilities or empathy.

3.6 **Accepting Responsibility**: Statements expressing a willingness to change or to make concessions.

3.7 **Initiating Problem Solving**: Statements that suggest a course of action or that initiate mutual consideration of solutions.

3.8 **Appropriate Topic Shift**: Statements that move the topic toward cooperative interaction; refocusing, redirecting the topic in a conjunctive manner.

4.0 **"Irreverant" Remarks/ Jokes**: Nonhostile joking that supplants serious consideration of the issue.

5.0 **Uncodable**.
Appendix F

Summary of Doster's Disclosure Rating Scale

0. Absence of personal involvement. The topic has been explored in an entirely impersonal or superficial manner. Focus is wholly on people, objects, and events (or experiences) not including this person. Self-references are notably lacking or few in number. Information may be an attempt to define, clarify, or discuss the topic without reference to self. His response may represent an inability or refusal to deal with the topic in terms of his personal frame of reference.

1. This person has dealt with the topic almost entirely on a non-personal or superficial level. An attempt has been made to bring oneself into the picture, but this is mostly incidental to the content presented. Identification of self usually serves to acknowledge where the thoughts originate (e.g., "It seems to me . . . ", "I believe that . . .") but the central focus is on people, objects, and events surrounding the person. Inclusion of self can also be implied through membership in a larger group (e.g., "Everyone is . . . ", "Our fraternity sent . . . ", "People in the South are . . . "), but inclusion or standing in the group requires interpretation. The information does allow for an understanding about what he thinks or how he sees events external to himself in terms of attitudes, opinions, or beliefs about them. However, his interaction with the events or their impact on him are clearly unexplored.

2. There is noticeably more material involving aspects of the speaker but the tendency to deal with the topic on a superficial level clearly predominates. Involvement of self is not incidental and requires no interpretation, but reflects an attempt to reveal information about self. The person has placed himself within the context of his experiences as opposed to an observer of experiences. This person is primarily at a cognitive level, clearly owning his attitudes, opinions and beliefs. However, his elaboration of an experience is shallow or not profound in content. Reference can be made to emotions or behaviors, but their generality, scope, or breadth is such as to not allow for
discrimination among his experiences or to distinguish them from other people.

3. Equal attention is given to both superficial and personal aspects regarding this topic. The person clearly places himself within the context of his experiences, but information about self is oriented more to event description or clarification rather than exploration of self. The content of his descriptions clearly place events as aspects of his personal experience. Aspects of the event are described, feelings labeled or behavior indicated. But his orientation is one of having you understand various aspects of the event rather than exploration and understanding of this event. Labeling of feelings or behavioral descriptions enhances a picture of the event but provides mostly a general overview of him and not an appreciation of integral relationships. Evaluations of self (comparisons, impressions, judgments) are either absent from topical treatment or explored at a general and/or impersonal level.

4. This person has dealt with this topic mostly on a personal level. He clearly places himself within the context of his experience and the information provided allows for a good understanding of his personal frame of reference. Cognitions and emotions are well explored at a specific situational level and tied into aspects of these events. Elaboration of cognitions and emotions go beyond simply labeling, and are explored in terms of an integrated internal experience of himself. However, the impact of his cognitions and emotions on his responses to (operations on or interactions with) the external remains vague and unclear. Aspects of self including behaviors and evaluations (comparisons, impressions, judgments) are either absent from topical treatment or explored at a general and/or impersonal level.

5. This person has dealt with this topic almost entirely on a personal level. Cognitions and emotions are well explored within the context of his experiences and the information provided allows for a good understanding of his personal frame of reference. Exploration in terms of his internal experience of himself is more fully understood through his efforts to integrate these aspects with his responses to (operations on or interactions with) the external. Evaluations (comparisons, impressions, judgments) are either absent
from topical treatment or explored at a general and/or impersonal level.

6. This person has focused entirely on himself, providing an intimate picture of various aspects of himself as they relate to the topics. Cognitions and emotions are well explored within the context of his experience and the information provides a good understanding of his personal frame of reference. His internal experience of himself is more fully understood through his efforts to integrate these aspects with his responses to (operations on or interactions with) the external. He reflects on himself in an evaluative manner, offering comparisons of self with others, impressions of self and others, and judgments about self and others. At this level he places his understanding of self in perspective with where he wants to be (or doesn't want to be) and where others are.

*Taken from the training manual provided for Doster's Disclosure Rating Scale.*
Appendix G

Partner Communication Inventory (Part I)

Please indicate to what extent the following statements apply to your marriage.

1 -- Never happens.
2 -- Seldom occurs.
3 -- Occurs periodically.
4 -- Occurs quite frequently.
5 -- Seems to happen all the time.

(55-64)

1. My spouse and I seem able to go for days sometimes without settling our differences.

2. Whenever I sense an argument coming on, I leave the room.

3. We both know that there are certain things we don't talk about and don't ask questions about.

4. We find that if we disagree about something, it is best to postpone discussion of it till another time or even another day.

5. It seems that a lot of times when we are trying to make a decision about something, we end up changing the topic.

6. My spouse often claims that I won't admit that there is a problem between us when he/she thinks that there is.

7. Whenever it comes to making a decision together, we tend to leave it to the other person.

8. If we can avoid arguing about some problems, they will disappear.

9. We hide our true feelings in order to avoid hurting one another.

10. We usually find that expressing our own views when making a decision helps us work out an acceptable agreement.


11. Even in the middle of serious disagreements we find that we end up laughing together.

12. My spouse asks me questions that help me express my point of view when we have to make a decision together.

13. We never seem to be able to come up with a decision that both of us like, even on small things.

14. We are usually straightforward about our likes and dislikes so that we both know where each other stands.

15. We will stay up late at night just to resolve a disagreement, rather than go to bed.

16. We seem to get further in our discussions when we talk about "the two of us" more than when we talk about "me versus you."

17. We touch a lot when discussing things on which we disagree.

18. At times we discuss what would happen if we each accepted the other's point of view.

19. We share responsibility for deciding when, for how long, and at what speed chores around the house should be completed.

20. We decide together how to arrange the furniture and set up the various rooms in our house.

21. My spouse tries to tell me what magazines or books to read and/or what television shows to watch.

22. Minor disagreements with my spouse often end up in big arguments.

23. It seems that one of us always gets our way when we disagree.
24. My spouse forces me to do things I do not want to do.

25. We are likely to argue in front of friends or in public places.

26. I tell my spouse what magazines or books to read and/or what television shows to watch.

27. We seem to argue more than most couples I know.

28. When making decisions together we often get stuck and neither one of us can change the other person's mind.

29. We both know who "wins" and who "loses" in our arguments.

(10) 30. All things considered, how similar do you think you and your spouse are overall? (Place an "X" in the box that best represents your answer).

Very Similar

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Very Dissimilar

(11) 31. Overall, how well do you think you understand your spouse?

Do Not Understand

At All

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Understand

Him/Her

Very Well

(12) 32. Overall, how well do you feel understood by your spouse?

He/She Does Not Understand

Me At All

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

He/She Understands

Me Very Well
33. On the average, how many disagreements, misunderstandings, or conflicts do the two of you have in a week? _____

34. On the average, how many disagreements, misunderstandings, or conflicts do the two of you have in a day? _____

35. Compared to most couples you know, how would you rate the number of disagreements the two of you experience overall?

_____ 1. More than any couple we know
_____ 2. More than most couples we know.
_____ 3. About the same as most couples we know.
_____ 4. Less than most couples we know.
_____ 5. Less than any couple we know.
Appendix H

Partner Communication Inventory (Part II: Self Disclosure)

Please indicate the degree to which you have discussed the following items with your spouse. Write in the number from "0" to "2" that most accurately describes your interaction with your spouse on each item.

0 -- Have not discussed this at all
1 -- Have discussed this somewhat
2 -- Have discussed this openly and freely

(Col)
(18-24)

___ 1. The religious denomination to which I belong.†

___ 2. What kind of furniture I would like to have in the living room.‡

___ 3. What I find attractive in people of the opposite sex.†

___ 4. Where my parents and grandparents came from.†

___ 5. What foods I feel are best for my health.†

___ 6. The amount of money I received for allowance when I was a child.†

___ 7. My feeling about how good a job the President is doing.†

(25-43)

___ 8. How I might feel (or actually felt) if I saw my father hit my mother.*

___ 9. What I believe about God.*

___ 10. What animals make me nervous.†

___ 11. How satisfied I am with different parts of my body.*
12. My favorite pet.†

13. What sports I am good at and which I am poor at.*

14. How I feel about financially supporting my spouse's parents.*

15. Times I have felt lonely.*

16. The kinds of group activities I usually enjoy.†

17. Things which would cause me to break up a friendship.*

18. How I feel about mixed marriages (i.e., people of two different races or cultures marrying).*

19. My special strong points and qualifications for my work.*

20. What I daydream about.*

21. How often I masturbate.*

22. How I feel about new fashions.†

23. Whether or not I would ever steal money if I had to have it.*

24. My favorite subjects in school.†

25. My favorite color.†

26. Something about my life as a child or adolescent that I don't want anybody to know about.*

*Intimate Item

†Nonintimate Item
Interaction Evaluation Scale
(Casual Conversation)

Please answer the following questions about the discussion you just had. Place an "X" in the box that best describes your perception of the interaction. Your first impressions are usually best, so work quickly.

1. How much do you feel you revealed about yourself to your spouse?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Very</th>
<th>Very Much</th>
<th>Very Little</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. How much did your spouse reveal to you in the interaction?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Very</th>
<th>Very Little</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. In general, how intimate do you feel the information was that you revealed to your partner?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Intimate</th>
<th>Not Intimate At All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Overall, how satisfied are you with the interaction you just had?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Overall, how satisfied do you think your partner is with the interaction you just had?

Very Satisfied  |  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  | Very Dissatisfied

6. Overall, how much input do you think you had in the discussion that just took place?

No Input At All  |  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  | A High Amount of Input

7. Overall, how anxious were you during this interaction?

Very Anxious  |  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  | Not Very Anxious

8. Right now, how would you rate your feelings for your partner?

Very Negative  |  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  | Very Positive

9. How well do you feel you understood your partner during this interaction?

Understood Very Well  |  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  | Did Not Understand
10. How well do you think your partner understood you during this interaction?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did Not Understand</th>
<th>Understand Very Well</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. How typical was this interaction of your average way of dealing with each other?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Typical</th>
<th>Not Very Typical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. In the interaction you just had, how much do you think the two of you tried to avoid talking about your differences?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did Not Avoid Each Other</th>
<th>Completely Avoided Each Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix J

### Interaction Evaluation Scale
**(Decision-Making Task)**

Please answer the following questions about the discussion you just had. Place an "X" in the box that best describes your perception of the interaction. Your **first impressions** are usually best, so **work quickly**.

1. Overall, how satisfied are you with the interaction you just had?

| Very Dissatisfied | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | Very Satisfied |

2. Overall, how satisfied do you think your partner is with the interaction you just had?

| Very Satisfied | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | Very Dissatisfied |

3. Overall, how much input do you think you had in the discussion that just took place?

| A High Amount of Input | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | No Input At All |

4. Overall, how anxious were you during this interaction?

| Very Anxious | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | Not Very Anxious |
5. In the interaction you just had, how much do you think the two of you tried to avoid talking about your differences?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did Not Avoid Each Other</th>
<th>Completely Avoided Each Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. How typical was this interaction of your average way of dealing with each other?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Not Very Typical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. How well do you think your partner understood you during this interaction?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did Not Understand</th>
<th>Understand Very Well</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. How well do you feel you understood your partner during this interaction?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understood Very Well</th>
<th>Did Not Understand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. Right now, how would you rate your feelings for your partner?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Negative</th>
<th>Very Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix K

Interaction Evaluation Scale
(Conflict-Resolution Task)

Please answer the following questions about the discussion you just had. Place an "X" in the box that best describes your perception of the interaction. Your first impressions are usually best, so work quickly.

(65-68)

1. Overall, how anxious were you during this interaction?

Very Anxious

Not Very Anxious

2. In the interaction you just had, how much do you think the two of you tried to avoid talking about your differences?

Did Not Avoid Each Other

Completely Avoided Each Other

At All

3. How typical was this interaction of your average way of dealing with each other?

Very Typical

Not Very Typical

4. How well do you think your partner understood you during this interaction?

Did Not Understand

Understood Very Well
5. How well do you feel you understood your partner during this interaction?

Understood
Very Well | Did Not Understand
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. Right now, how would you rate your feelings for your partner?

Very Negative | Very Positive
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. Overall, how satisfied are you with the interaction you just had?

Very Dissatisfied | Very Satisfied
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. Overall, how satisfied do you think your partner is with the interaction you just had?

Very Satisfied | Very Dissatisfied
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9. Overall, how much input do you think you had in the discussion that just took place?

A High Amount of Input | No Input At All
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Appendix L

Vignettes for Role-Play Interactions in Conflict-Resolution Task

1. Sharing Events of the Day

   The husband is excited about sharing with his wife something he experienced during the day. She, however, has been feeling harassed and is looking forward to some privacy and time to herself.

2. Food

   The wife has been looking forward all day to eating out. The husband feels tired and wants to eat something at home.

3. Sex

   The husband very much wants to complete some activity of his choosing without being disrupted. The wife, however, wants to be close and to make love.

4. Decision to Have Children

   The wife wants to have children and wants a decision to be made about this. The husband is opposed to having children at this time for various reasons.

5. Discipline of Children

   The wife feels that the children need firmer discipline, whereas the husband advocates spontaneity and permissiveness as important for children.

6. Money

   Both spouses are told that they have been on a tight budget because they have been saving for a major purchase. The wife has been feeling deprived, and has managed to save some food money and wants to purchase herself something small but special. The husband has been feeling pretty short of pocket money because of the budget and wants to let his wife know he needs more money.
7. **In-Laws**

The husband wants to visit his family for four days during Christmas and is looking forward to enjoying the special holiday festivities. The wife is reluctant to visit his parents because of specific grievances with her in-laws.
Appendix M

Table 1

Item Loadings for Partner Communication Inventory Subscales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competitive (9 items)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. We seem to argue more than most couples I know.</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. We are likely to argue in front of friends or in public places.</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Minor disagreements with my spouse often end up in big arguments.</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. We never seem to be able to come up with a decision that both of us like, even on small things.</td>
<td>-.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. When making decisions together we often get stuck and neither one of us can change the other person's mind.</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. My spouse often claims that I won't admit that there is a problem between us when he/she thinks that there is.</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. My spouse tries to tell me what magazines or books to read an/or what television shows to watch.</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. We both know who &quot;wins&quot; and who &quot;loses&quot; in our arguments.</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Factor Loading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. It seems that one of us always gets our way when we disagree.</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Avoidant (7 items)

1. If we can avoid arguing about some problems, they will disappear. | .81 |
2. We both know that there are certain things we don't talk about and don't ask questions about. | .76 |
3. Whenever it comes to making a decision together, we tend to leave it to the other person. | .70 |
4. We find that if we disagree about something, it is best to postpone discussion of it till another time or even another day. | .66 |
5. It seems that a lot of times when we are trying to make a decision about something, we end up changing the topic. | .64 |
6. We hide our true feelings in order to avoid hurting one another. | .64 |
7. Whenever I sense an argument coming on, I leave the room. | .56 |
### Cooperative (8 items)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. At times we discuss what would happen if we each accepted the other's point of view.</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My spouse asks me questions that help me express my point of view when we have to make a decision together.</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. We touch a lot when discussing things on which we disagree.</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Even in the middle of serious disagreements we find that we end up laughing together.</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. We seem to get further in our discussions when we talk about &quot;the two of us&quot; more than when we talk about &quot;me versus you.&quot;</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. We usually find that expressing our own views when making a decision helps us work out an acceptable agreement.</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. We share responsibility for deciding when, for how long, and at what speed chores around the house should be completed.</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. We decide together how to arrange the furniture and set up the various rooms in our house.</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix N

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations of Marital Dyads on Spanier's Dyadic Adjustment Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low-Similarity/</th>
<th>Low-Similarity/</th>
<th>High-Similarity/</th>
<th>High-Similarity/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low-Understanding</td>
<td>High-Understanding</td>
<td>Low-Understanding</td>
<td>High-Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Total)</td>
<td>234.20 (24.56)</td>
<td>219.77 (42.46)</td>
<td>224.60 (26.01)</td>
<td>241.20 (14.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAS Subscales</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyadic Cohesion</td>
<td>35.27 (6.79)</td>
<td>32.31 (5.56)</td>
<td>32.50 (6.13)</td>
<td>36.48 (3.75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyadic Consensus</td>
<td>96.00 (11.04)</td>
<td>91.08 (16.70)</td>
<td>93.00 (9.70)</td>
<td>98.96 (7.76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyadic Affection</td>
<td>21.40 (4.29)</td>
<td>20.31 (5.66)</td>
<td>21.90 (3.93)</td>
<td>22.04 (2.56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyadic Satisfaction</td>
<td>81.53 (8.37)</td>
<td>76.08 (17.83)</td>
<td>77.20 (9.64)</td>
<td>83.72 (4.99)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( n = 15 \quad \quad n = 13 \quad \quad n = 11 \quad \quad n = 24 \)
Appendix C

Table 3

Summary Table of 2 X 2 (Similarity X Understanding) ANOVA for Total Scores on Dyadic Adjustment Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
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<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DYADIC ADJUSTMENT SCALE</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Similarity</td>
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<td>1085.57</td>
<td>1.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>23.15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23.15</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S X U</td>
<td>3395.43</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3395.43</td>
<td>4.90*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>40879.11</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>692.87</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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*p < .05
### Appendix P

#### Table 4

Summary Table of 2 x 2 (Similarity X Understanding) ANOVAs for Subscales of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)

<table>
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<th>F</th>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>Dyadic Cohesion</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarity</td>
<td>6.97</td>
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<td>6.97</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>0.13</td>
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<tr>
<td>S X U</td>
<td>169.78</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>169.78</td>
<td>5.92*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>1692.44</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dyadic Consensus</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Similarity</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S X U</td>
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<td>417.65</td>
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<td>124.47</td>
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</tr>
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<td><strong>Dyadic Expression</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S X U</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>938.23</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>15.90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dyadic Satisfaction</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>38.63</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
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<td>Understanding</td>
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<td>3.99</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S X U</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>505.78</td>
<td>4.76*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>6267.30</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>106.23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*P < .05
Appendix Q

Table 5

Means and Standard Deviations of Marital Dyads on Partner Communication Inventory and Dyadic Disclosure Inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low-Similarity/ Low-Understanding</th>
<th>Low-Similarity/ High-Understanding</th>
<th>High-Similarity/ Low-Understanding</th>
<th>High-Similarity/ High-Understanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partner Communication Inventory</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidant Scale</td>
<td>29.27 (9.26)</td>
<td>26.69 (4.52)</td>
<td>27.70 (7.29)</td>
<td>26.32 (5.60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative Scale</td>
<td>49.13 (9.21)</td>
<td>50.85 (10.40)</td>
<td>49.60 (11.77)</td>
<td>54.80 (5.96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive Scale</td>
<td>34.67 (5.75)</td>
<td>36.23 (9.83)</td>
<td>35.10 (11.49)</td>
<td>33.16 (7.30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dyadic Disclosure Inventory</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Disclosure</td>
<td>73.00 (16.07)</td>
<td>77.39 (15.65)</td>
<td>68.50 (14.59)</td>
<td>75.48 (11.46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimate Disclosure</td>
<td>33.20 (10.32)</td>
<td>34.69 (10.08)</td>
<td>30.70 (7.23)</td>
<td>34.24 (7.87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonintimate Disclosure</td>
<td>39.80 (7.76)</td>
<td>42.69 (6.74)</td>
<td>37.80 (8.74)</td>
<td>41.24 (5.09)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1n = 15  2n = 13  3n = 11  4n = 24
Appendix R

Table 6
Summary Table of 2 X 2 (Similarity X Understanding) ANOVAs for Avoidant, Cooperative, and Competitive PCT Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AVOIDANT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarity</td>
<td>10.88</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.88</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>54.73</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>54.73</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S X U</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>2765.65</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>44.61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COOPERATIVE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarity</td>
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<td>92.13</td>
<td>1.19</td>
</tr>
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<td>170.69</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Error</td>
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<td>80.25</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPETITIVE</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarity</td>
<td>38.48</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>38.48</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S X U</td>
<td>43.30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>43.30</td>
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<td>Error</td>
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<td>69.35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix S

Table 7

Summary Table of 2 X 2 (Similarity X Understanding) ANOVAs for Self-Disclosure Scores on Dyadic Disclosure Inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL SELF-DISCLOSURE SCORE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarity</td>
<td>128.72</td>
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<td>128.72</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>458.14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>458.14</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S X U</td>
<td>23.75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23.75</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>11615.82</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>196.88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **SELF-DISCLOSURE ON INTIMATE-ITEMS SUBSCALE** |       |    |       |     |
| Similarity           | 24.46 | 1  | 24.46 | 0.31|
| Understanding        | 90.24 | 1  | 90.24 | 1.14|
| S X U                | 14.79 | 1  | 14.79 | 0.19|
| Error                | 4665.83 | 59 | 79.08 |     |

| **SELF-DISCLOSURE ON NON-INTIMATE ITEMS SUBSCALE** |       |    |       |     |
| Similarity           | 40.98 | 1  | 40.98 | 0.90|
| Understanding        | 141.73| 1  | 141.73| 3.10|
| S X U                | 1.06  | 1  | 1.06  | 1.13|
| Error                | 2697.33| 59 | 45.72 |     |
Appendix T

Table 8

Means and Standard Deviations for Observer Ratings of Self-Disclosure During Each of the Three Discussion Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low-Similarity/ Low-Understanding⁴</th>
<th>Low-Similarity/ High-Understanding⁴</th>
<th>High-Similarity/ Low-Understanding²</th>
<th>High-Similarity/ High-Understanding³</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal Conversation Task</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Disclosure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.25 (0.30)</td>
<td>1.60 (0.35)</td>
<td>1.42 (0.63)</td>
<td>1.31 (0.31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peak Disclosure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.17 (0.97)</td>
<td>2.27 (0.43)</td>
<td>2.25 (1.24)</td>
<td>1.89 (0.31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-Making Task</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Disclosure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.36 (0.32)</td>
<td>1.52 (0.24)</td>
<td>1.53 (0.43)</td>
<td>1.35 (0.29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peak Disclosure</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.88 (0.25)</td>
<td>2.02 (0.31)</td>
<td>2.48 (1.26)</td>
<td>2.29 (1.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict-Resolution Task</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Disclosure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.50 (0.34)</td>
<td>2.08 (1.41)</td>
<td>1.42 (0.30)</td>
<td>1.61 (0.35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peak Disclosure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.15 (0.96)</td>
<td>2.62 (1.96)</td>
<td>2.10 (0.87)</td>
<td>2.22 (0.69)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Ratings based on Doster's Self-Disclosure Scale

¹n = 15  ²n = 13  ³n = 11  ⁴n = 24
Appendix U

Table 9

Summary Table of 2 X 2 X 3 (Similarity X Understanding X Discussion Task) ANOVA for Mean and Peak Self-Disclosure Ratings on Doster's Disclosure Rating Scale During Each of the Three Discussion Tasks

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* $p < .05$  ** $p < .01$
### Appendix V

#### Table 10

Mean Percentage Scores for Ratings on the Conflict Coding Scheme During Each of the Three Discussion Tasks

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**Note.** Some dyadic exchanges were coded on more than one dimension. Consequently, percentage scores for Avoidant, Competitive, and Cooperative exchanges, when summed, may total more than 1.000.

\[1n = 15 \quad 2n = 13 \quad 3n = 11 \quad 4n = 24\]
Appendix W

Table 11
Summary Table of 2 X 2 X 3(Similarity X Understanding X Discussion Task) ANOVAs for Dyadic Ratings on the Conflict Coding Scheme During Each of the Three Discussion Tasks

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**AVOIDANCE RATINGS**

**Between**
- Similarity 1.10 1 1.10 2.05
- Understanding 0.50 1 0.50 0.93
- S X U 0.01 1 0.01 0.02
- Error 31.70 59 0.54

**Within**
- Task 10.39 2 5.19 8.37***
- S X T 1.10 2 0.55 0.89
- U X T 1.09 2 0.54 0.88
- S X U X T 0.59 2 0.30 0.48
- Error 73.22 118 0.62

**COOPERATIVE RATINGS**

**Between**
- Similarity 0.36 1 0.36 1.60
- Understanding 0.42 1 0.42 1.88
- S X U 0.68 1 0.68 3.03
- Error 13.17 59 0.22
### Within

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### COMPETITIVE RATINGS

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#### Within

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***p < .001
# Table 12
Means and Standard Deviations for Self-Report Measures Following Each of the Three Discussion Tasks

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^1n = 15  
^2n = 13  
^3n = 10  
^4n = 25  

^5Casual Conversation  
^6Decision-Making Task  
^7Conflict-Resolution Task
## Table 13

Summary Table of 2 X 2 X 3 (Similarity X Understanding X Discussion Task) ANOVAs for Dyadic Ratings on the Conflict Coding Scheme During Each of the Three Discussion Tasks

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### EXPERIENCED ANXIETY

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### AVOIDANT EXCHANGES

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**Source** | **SS** | **df** | **MS** | **F**  
---|---|---|---|---
**Within**  
Task | 21.48 | 2 | 10.74 | 4.93**  
S X T | 1.21 | 2 | 0.61 | 0.28  
U X T | 9.51 | 2 | 4.75 | 2.18  
S X U X T | 9.78 | 2 | 4.89 | 2.24  
Error | 257.18 | 118 | 2.18 |  
**POSITIVE FEELINGS FOR PARTNER**  
**Between**  
Similarity | 4.16 | 1 | 4.16 | 0.42  
Understanding | 0.06 | 1 | 0.06 | 0.01  
S X U | 26.49 | 1 | 26.49 | 2.69  
Error | 580.43 | 59 | 9.84 |  
**Within**  
Task | 22.71 | 2 | 11.36 | 6.04**  
S X T | 8.44 | 2 | 4.22 | 2.24  
U X T | 1.72 | 2 | 0.86 | 0.46  
S X U X T | 0.01 | 2 | 0.00 | 0.00  
Error | 222.03 | 118 | 1.88 |  

*P < .05 | **P < .01 | ***P < .001
Appendix Z

Table 14

Pearson Product-Moment Correlations of PCI\textsuperscript{1} and DDI\textsuperscript{2} Scales with ICS\textsuperscript{3} and DDS\textsuperscript{4} Ratings Made During Each Discussion Task

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<th>Conflict-Resolution Task</th>
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<td>Competitive Subscale</td>
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<td>Competitive Exchanges</td>
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<td>(DDI)</td>
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<td>Dyadic Disclosure Scale</td>
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</table>

\textsuperscript{1}Partner Communication Inventory  \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{2}Dyadic Disclosure Inventory
\textsuperscript{3}Interpersonal Coding Scheme  \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{4}Doster's Disclosure Scale
\textsuperscript{*}p < .05  \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{**}p < .01  \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{***}p < .001
### Appendix AA

#### Table 16

**Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Matrix of Similarity Measures**

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<td>2. Content Similarity</td>
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<td>3. Target Similarity</td>
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<td>--</td>
<td>.54***</td>
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<td>4. Self-Reported Similarity</td>
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***p < .001
### Table 17

**Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Matrix of Understanding Measures**

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<tr>
<td>3. Target Understanding</td>
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<td>4. Self-Reported</td>
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*P < .05  **P < .01  ***P < .001
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