Seven Types of Marriage:
Empirical Typology Based on ENRICH*

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Using ENRICH, a computerized marriage assessment tool (Olson, Fournier, & Druckman, 1986), data from 8,383 couples was collected across nine dimensions of their marriage. The data was analyzed in two phases-cluster structure seeking and classification phases-by three different clustering methods (inverse factor analysis, hierarchical agglomerative, and k-means cluster analysis). Seven types of marriage were identified: Devitalized couples (40%), Financially focused couples (11%), Conflicted couples (14%), Traditional couples (10%), Balanced couples (8%), Harmonious couples (8%), and Vitalized couples (9%). The multidimensional profiles are described in relation to global measure of marital satisfaction, demographic characteristics, and clinical and research implications.

Typologies and classifications are utilized in every field of scientific inquiry. Reducing observations of a large number of individual cases to a smaller number of like entities brings order to the phenomena under study and at the same time economizes the work of scientists and practitioners. Furthermore, because typologies provide convenient conceptual tools for the description of observations, and because they contain the concepts necessary for the development of theories, typologies are seen as a fundamental process of any science (Aldenderfer & Bashfield, 1984).

In the family field, marriages and families have been classified both heuristically and empirically (Miller & Olson, 1990; Olson, 1990). While heuristic models begin from a conceptual base to classify families into theoretically or clinically meaningful types

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(e.g., open vs. closed systems), empirical typologies begin with a set of observations and reduce the range and variety of relationship patterns to a smaller number of types. Because empirical typologies focus on relations among objects rather than relations between variables, they bear promise for bridging the gap between research, theory, and clinical practice (Olson, 1981). They provide researchers and clinicians with a common language while more closely linking clinical description with theoretical formulations.

Researchers who have attempted to classify marital systems have struggled with an array of conceptual and methodological issues. Theoretically, the question is: What are the major dimensions of the marital relationship along which marriages can be classified most efficiently? Methodologically, the major issues that researchers face lie in the choice of clustering methods, interpretation of the results, and the small number of cases that most programs can handle.

This article describes an empirical typology of marital relationships. The major objective of the study was to derive marital types based on couples' perception of various dimensions of the relationship and to describe the profiles of relationship across these dimensions. In the following sections the conceptual and methodological issues in empirical typology of marital systems are described, along with our attempt at resolving them.

Previous Research on Marital Types

Previous empirical typologies have classified marriages by a variety of relationship variables. Most of these studies were based on selected aspects of the marital relationship. For example, Goodrich, Ryder, and Rausch (1968) classified couples by their closeness to their family of origin, role orientation, and marital distress; Shostrum and Kavanaugh (1971) developed types of couples across dimensions of anger-love and strength-weakness; Miller and Olson (1990) classified couples across dimensions of task leadership, conflict, and affect; and Gottman (1979) classified couples by their communications and problem-solving interactions.

Typologies along a more comprehensive measure of the marital relationship are rare. An exception is Snyder and Smith's (1986) classification of husbands and wives into five types, based on 11 dimensions of the Marital Satisfaction Inventory. Unfortunately, Snyder and Smith produced separate marital types for husbands and wives, rather than treating the couple as a unit of study, and their typology was based on a relatively small sample (178 couples). Additionally, the resulting profiles may have been distorted by (a) the inclusion of global measures of marital distress and conventionalization, neither of which are dimensions of the marital relationship but rather characteristics that run across the other nine scales, and (b) the use of a similarity measure for the clustering process (Pearson-product correlation) which may have a serious biasing effect.

Despite these limitations, the typology of marriages along a multidimensional measure of the couple relationship is appealing because it integrates theoretical, research, and clinical interests in the quality of marriages. As Spanier and Lewis (1980) have noted, no topic in the family field has developed theoretically and has attracted so much research and clinical interest as the study of marital quality.

Despite the recognition that the marital relationship is a multidimensional phenomenon, many marriage assessment tools assume a single factor of marital quality (e.g., Locke & Wallace, 1959; Norton, 1983; Schumm et al., 1986), and the majority of researchers treat marital quality as a unidimensional construct. A typology of marriage across *multiple* dimensions of marital quality promises both a clinical utility, by classifying families across a comprehensive measure of the marital relationship, and a theoretical and research advantage, by studying marital quality as a multidimensional phenomenon.

The present study is based on ENRICH, a computerized marriage-assessment tool that evaluates couples' problem areas and strengths along various dimensions of the relationship (Olson et al., 1986). Specifically, the instrument provides scores of husbands' and wives' evaluation of their relationship along 10 categories: personality issues, communication, conflict resolution, financial management, leisure activities, sexual relationship, children and parenting, family and friends, equalitarian roles, and religious orientation. These dimensions have been constructed after an extensive review of the clinical literature on areas of marital problems and conflicts (Fournier & Olson, 1986).

Four additional scales are included in the inventory: a 10-item marital satisfaction scale, which provides a global assessment of satisfaction with the above 10 categories; an idealistic distortion scale, which is used to correct all scores for social desirability; and cohesion and adaptability scales, used to classify couples by the Circumplex model of marital and family systems (Olson, Russell, & Sprenkle, 1989).

ENRICH scales have shown good internal consistency and test-retest reliability, as well as content and construct validity (Fournier, Olson, & Druckman, 1983). Its predictive validity has been established in several studies that have utilized its premarital form (PREPARE) to predict marital functioning and divorce 3 years later (Fowers & Olson, 1986; Larsen & Olson, 1989). Its discriminant validity and concurrent validity also have been established (Fowers & Olson, 1989).

In terms of clinical utility, ENRICH has a computerized 12-page summary that provides *individual scores* for the husband and wife on each of the categories. The individual scores are corrected downward based on the individual'' score on the idealistic distortion scale. A *couple agreement* score which measures the level of positive agreement by the couple is also derived for each category. This computerized summary provides a profile description of relationships along the various dimensions of marital

relationship; a vital feature of clinical diagnosis and intervention. The instrument has been used extensively both for clinical purposes and marital enrichment programs.

Various Types of Cluster Analysis

Once marital relationships are observed (or measured), the primary objective of the typology is to reduce the range and variety of relationship patterns to a smaller number of types that will be sufficiently distinguished from one another. All clustering methods begin by computing similarities or distances between cases and then proceed to group together cases that are not similar. Different clustering methods vary in the similarity measures they use and their clustering procedure.

Early classification studies employed *Q*-analysis (inverse factor analysis), where correlations between cases across variables rather than between variables across cases were used in a factor analysis. However, the Pearson correlation, used as a similarity measure, is insensitive to differences in magnitude of the clustering variables and is sensitive to shape because of its implicit standardization of each case across all variables (Aldenderfer & Bashfield, 1984). This characteristic is of special importance when the objective is to describe the data in terms of profiles because cases with similar profiles are highly correlated even if they differ markedly in elevation.

Other clustering procedures may be divided into those that assign cases into a known number of groups (*k*-means cluster analysis) and those that seek the number and structure of cluster in the data of similarity-dissimilarity between cases (agglomerative hierarchical cluster analysis). Both methods are valid, especially if they use measures similarity other than correlation.

Researchers using agglomerative hierarchical cluster analysis often encounter three types of problems: (a) different procedures yield different clustering results; (b) unlike common factor analysis, there are no clear criteria for determining the number of "factors" in the data; (c) most clustering procedures can handle only a small number of cases; therefore, unstable solution and clusters containing outlying cases are likely to be formed. *K*-means cluster analysis can be used only if the number of groups (clusters) is known a priori; unlike agglomerative cluster analysis, however, a large number of cases may be classified.

In the present study, three clustering procedures were used to deal with these issues. First, *Q*-analysis was used to explore the "natural" number of clusters in the data. Second, agglomerative heirarchical cluster analysis was employed to see the structure of clusters. Third, based on these results, a *k*-means cluster analysis was conducted with two large samples (more than 3,000 couples each) to obtain a more stable solution of relationship profiles.

METHOD

Subjects

A national (American) sample of 8,383 married couples who participated in either marital therapy or marital enrichment programs and who had taken ENRICH between 1983 and 1985 was included in this study. Their scores were obtained from the PREPARE/ENRICH computer records. The mean ages were 33 for the males (range: 18 to 66) and 32 for females (range: 17-64). The average couple had been married for ten years and had 2-3 children. Eighty percent of the couples were in their first marriage; 16% were remarried (previously divorce or widowed). The majority of couples in the sample were Protestant (80%), Caucasian (93%), and had at least some college education.

Measures

Husbands' and wives' ENRICH scale scores, corrected for social desirability, were used for the classification analysis. Nine scales were used. The *Personality Issues* scale reflects adjustment to the partner and satisfaction with his/her behavior, personality traits, and habits. *Communication* measures the perception of being understood by the partner and the ability to share feelings. *Conflict resolution* assesses attitudes about conflicts in the relationship and comfort with the way problems are handled and differences resolved. *Financial management* focuses on attitudes and concerns about the way economic issues are managed and agreement on financial matters. *Leisure activities* assesses the individual's preferences and the couple's consensus about the use of leisure time, interests, time together, and activities. *Sexual relationship* reflects the individual's feelings and concerns about the expression of affection and sexuality in the couple's relationship. *Children and parenting* reflects a consensus regarding child-bearing and child-rearing decisions and satisfaction with how parental roles are defined. *Family and friends* assesses feelings and concerns about relationships with relatives, in-laws, and friends. *Religious orientation* assesses religious beliefs and attitudes about the importance of religion in the couple's life. The tenth ENRICH scale, equalitarian roles, was not included in the classification study because scores on this scale are not directly comparable to those of the other scales[1] and because of this scale's lower discriminant power (Fowers & Olson, 1989).

In addition to scores on these scales, couples' files contained 18 demographic measures for each spouse (such as age, year married, number of children, birth order, marital status, residence, income, education, occupation, and the like). Two background measures were used as a partial validation in the classification process. *Marital Satisfaction* is a single item that asks respondents to rate on a 5-point scale their global satisfaction with their marriage. Although ENRICH contains a 10-item *Marital Satisfaction* scale, the single-item scale was used for validation since the items in the ENRICH scale represent each of the other 10 ENRICH scales. By using this scale we would have run the risk of validating the results with a redundant measure. The single-

item marital satisfaction is a global measure that correlates .71 with the 10-item scale for males and .77 for females (Fowers & Olson, 1991). *Considered Divorce* is a dichotomous item (yes-no) that asks whether the respondent has considered separation or divorce. There are obvious limitations in using "considered divorce" as an actual measure of marital stability since people consider separation or divorce far more frequently than they actually take steps in this direction. It does give, however, a rough indication of stability since considering divorce is a global measure of marital distress and usually precedes filing for divorce.

Couple Scores

Because the study focuses on the marital relationship, it seemed desirable to move from the *individual* level of measurement to the *marital* level of analysis. In the majority of studies where couple data are used, researchers make use either of the couple's mean score or the discrepancy between the husband's and wife's scores. The couple's mean score, the most commonly used method for combining individual scores, summarizes marital characteristics but does serious injustice to individual differences. The couple's discrepancy score, on the other hand, highlights difference but cannot provide a location for the couple on a scale (Larsen & Olson, 1990). Since both the location of a couple on a scale and their individual discrepancy are important in assessing the marriage, a procedure for deriving couple scores was developed. Using husband's and wife's scale scores, a combined couple score (C) was computed on each of the nine ENRICH scales:

$$C = \frac{h + w}{2} - \frac{|h - w|}{2}$$

In this equation, the couple's mean score is corrected downward by the absolute discrepancy between the husband and the wife. Thus the couple score (a) is directly related to the mean score and inversely related to the size of the discrepancy; (b) is equal to the mean score only when there is no discrepancy between the husband and the wife; and (c) when discrepancy exists, the couple score is smaller than the mean score and larger than the lower of the two partners' score.[2] More detailed information on the husband, wife, and couple scores in this sample is provided in the Appendix.

Cluster Analysis Procedures

The couple scores were used for the classification analysis, which was carried out in two phases: (a) the cluster-structure seeking phase and (b) the classification phase.

In the first phase, a *Q*-analysis (inverse factor analysis) and a hierarchical agglomerative cluster analysis were used to seek structure of similarities in a randomly selected subsample. In the second phase, a *k*-means cluster analysis with relocation was used to classify a larger sample of couples into types based on the results obtained in the earlier phase. This procedure was first conducted with a randomly split half of the sample and then replicated with the second half. Analyses of variance and multivariate analyses of variance were used at each phase to test differences in profiles between types.

Additionally, the types were compared at each phase in terms of the two validating items (marital satisfaction and considering divorce) and other demographic characteristics.

ANALYSES AND RESULTS

Stucture-Seeking Phase

A small subsample of 164 couples was randomly drawn from the pool of 8,385 couples. This subsample was used for the exploratory, structure-seeking phase of the study. The major objective of this phase was to reveal the number and structure of clusters that represent the data (similarities among cases) most efficiently. A correlation matrix of similarity among cases was first produced and then analyzed by principal component analysis. The results indicated that the data are best explained by seven factors (lowest eigenvalue 11.32). The sole purpose of this *Q*-analysis was to explore the "natural" groupings, that is, the number of clusters in the data. As was noted earlier, an inverse factor analysis alone may not be an adequate procedure for delineating profiles. The second procedure for clustering couples was hierarchical agglomerative cluster analysis. Specifically, an average linkage within groups was used as a clustering method, with Euclidean distance measure for computing (dis) similarity between cases. In this clustering method, cases are sequentially combined based on their similarity across variables so that the average distance between all cases in each resulting cluster is as small as possible. Because Euclidean measure is sensitive to the variables' units of measurement, the variables were standardized to prevent the possible biasing effect of variables with larger variance.

Inspection of agglomerative schedule coefficients (as a means of determining the number of clusters) suggested again that the data may be represented by seven clusters. Multivariate analysis of variance indicated significant differences between groups across all clustering variables ($F = 11.52$, $p<.001$), as well as significant differences between variables across groups. To further test differences in profiles, a one-way analysis of variance with a Scheffe range test was conducted for each variable across groups. This analysis showed that no two types were similar in the variables' means. In other words, this test indicated that the clustering solution yielded well-differentiated clusters. Similar tests were conducted with a larger (eight and nine) and smaller (five and six) number of cluster solutions. A larger number of clusters resulted either in the formation of an outlying cluster (that is, a cluster containing a single case), or clusters that were not well-differentiated (that is, insignificant differences between a pair of clusters in all nine clustering variables). A smaller number of clusters resulted in a loss of substantive differences (merging of two clusters that were significantly different) and in increased standard deviations of scale means. Analyses of variance and chi-square tests were also conducted to examine differences between types in demographic characteristics. These tests indicated no significant differences between types in demographic characteristics. These tests indicated no significant difference between types in age, length of marriage, number of children in the family, education, religious orientation, or race. There were however, significant differences between marital types in the single-item marital

satisfaction measure and in considering divorce. Although these measures cannot be considered sufficient (external) validation for the clustering solution, they nevertheless provide some support in that the types are different from one another not only in the clustering variables, but also in regard to other relevant measures.

Classification Phase

Once a cluster structure was derived, its results were used to classify a second set of couples. The purpose of this phase was to classify a large enough sample of couples to achieve more stable profiles. Excluding the couples already clustered, the total pool of cases was randomly split, and a *k*-means cluster analysis was conducted with Euclidean distance measure between cases with data from 3,746 couples.

The number of clusters was set to seven, and initial cluster centers were predefined based on the agglomerative cluster results. To allow the program freedom of clustering (thereby allowing replication of the smaller sample results), only three levels of initial cluster centers (0, 1, 2) were set for each cluster based on the standardized means of the variables in the first phase (that is, whether the standardized variables were zero or below, greater than zero, or greater than one standard deviation above the mean).

Given these initial cluster centers, the clustering program classifies each case to the group with the closest center, computes the new cluster centers, and relocates cases to the newly formed clusters. This procedure (classification with single iteration) is particularly useful for clustering a large number of objects. The resulting group means were again subjected to multivariate analysis of variance and indicated significant differences between groups across the clustering variables. An analysis of variance with a Scheffe range test for differences in variable means across groups showed that the clusters were well-differentiated.

To validate the classification further, this procedure was repeated with data from the second subsampel (*n* = 3221). The results indicated that, despite some differences in magnitude, the two samples produced similar profiles. The rest of the analyses and results are presented here for the first (and larger) of the two samples[3].

Seven Types of Couples

Figure 1 shows the profiles of the seven clusters using the *positive couple agreement* (PCA) scores. These scores range from 0-100% and represent the level of couple consensus. While the standardized scores were used for the cluster analysis, the PCA scores are presented in Figure 1 because they are easier to understand and are contained in the PREPARE computer reports.

Table 1 presents the unstandardized group means and standard deviations for the nine clustering variables. Additionally, Table 1 show the results of the analyses of variance for differences between groups in each variable, as well as the Scheffe range test results. For each variable, clusters are presented in ascending order of variable means,

and clusters that were not significantly different with a predetermined level of $p < .01$ are underlined.

As Table 1 and Figure 1 show, 40% of the couples were classified into Type 1, labeled Devitalized marriage. This type is characterized by dissatisfaction with all nine dimensions of the marital relationship. In contrast, 9% of the couples were classified into Type 7, Vitalized marriage. These couples show a high level of satisfaction with most every dimension of their relationships. They seem to be personally integrated and have strong internal resources, as well as agreement with external areas of their relationship. The other five marital types show a mixture of satisfaction and distress along the nine dimensions of marital quality.

Types 2 and 3 are characterized by dissatisfaction with many facets of their relationship, but they differ from the Devitalized couples by their higher level of adjustment in one of more relationship issues. Couples in Type 2, Financially focused, are characterized by having a single relationship strength, financial management, and dissatisfaction with six other relationship issues. It appears that money, or financial rewards, hold this type of couple together. Couples in Type 3, Conflicted, are low on many of the internal aspects of their relationship, such as personality issues, communication, conflict resolution, and sexuality. They may avoid or fail to settle issues between them and focus instead on external issues, such as leisure activities, the children, and their religious life.

Three marital types-4, 5, and 6-are characterized by moderate satisfaction with most of their relationship issues, with one problem area and one or two areas of relationship strength. Type 5, Balanced couples, communicate well and are highly satisfied with their problem-solving strategies. They also have higher than average agreement on leisure activities, child-rearing issues, and sexuality. It seems that these couples place a lot of value on their nuclear family, with a balance of quality relationship in both internal and external matters. Financial management, however, is a specific problem issue in the relationship. Type 6 couples, Harmonious, are highly satisfied with each other, with the expression of affection and sexual life in their marriage. They seem to be self-centered; the children may be seen as a burden and the parenting role as a source of distress. Finally, couples in Type 4, Traditional, are dissatisfied with their sexual relationship and with the way they communicate, but they have strong and satisfactory relationships with the extended family and friends.

Characteristics of Marital Types

Table 2 shows the percentage of wives and husbands in the seven marital types who have expressed global dissatisfaction with the marriage and who have considered divorce or separation. The table also shows the frequency of couples in each type where both husband and wife expressed global dissatisfaction and/or had considered divorce. Clearly, both husbands and wives in Devitalized couples (Type 1) are least satisfied, followed by the Financially focused and the Conflicted (Types 2 and 3, respectively). These three types also seem to be less stable, judging by the frequency of husbands and

wives that have considered divorce. In over one half of the Devitalized couples, both the husband and the wife had considered divorce. On the other side of the scale, Vitalized couples (Type 7) show the greatest general satisfaction, and Balanced and Harmonious couples (Types 5 and 6) also express global satisfaction with their marriages.

There are three points worthy of note in Table 2. First, comparison of the frequencies in the two parts of the table suggests that marital stability goes hand in hand with marital quality in most happy and most distressed marriages, but not necessarily in the middle range. For example, Balanced couples had a high level of general satisfaction, but both husbands and wives in this type considered divorce (27.1%) more frequently than did couples in Types 4 (18.8%) and 6 (16.3%).

Second, Table 2 suggests that even well-adjusted couples are not immune to marital shakiness. Nearly one of every four wives in the Vitalized type, despite a quality relationship in most areas of their marriage, had considered divorce. Finally, it is clear that wives are generally less satisfied with the relationship than are husbands in all seven marital types.

Table 3 provides demographic characteristics of the couples in the various marital types. A rank order of the types on each characteristics is also provided. The results presented in Table 3 help build the demographic profiles of these couples. For example, Devitalized couples (Type 1) tended to be younger, had been married for a shorter period of time, and had lower income than did couples in other types. Additionally, a greater percentage of minorities are classified in this type. They tend, more than other types, to have come from broken marriages (divorced parents) and to have been previously divorced themselves. Traditional (Type 4) and Vitalized (Type 7) couples, on the other hand, tend to be older, to have been married longer, and to be largely whit and Protestant. Vitalized couples also tend to be in their first marriage, to have come from intact families, and to be better off economically than most other couples.

DISCUSSION

The interest in classifying marriages along multidimensional criteria has grown out of conceptual, methodological, and clinical needs. Conceptually, it has been recognized that the marital relationship is a multidimensional phenomenon and that couples vary not only in degree of satisfaction with their marriage, but also in their level of satisfaction (or distress) with various facets of their relationship. Methodologically, it becomes clear that while the unidimensional measure of marital relationships is not valid, there is a need to reduce the great variety of relationship patterns into a smaller number of types that share common characteristics. Clinically, there is an emerging need for clinicians to get reliable information about marital relationships that can be useful for assessment and intervention and that is based on valid scientific procedures rather than on idiosyncratic impression.

In the present study, a reliable and clinically useful assessment tool, ENRICH, was used to assess marriages across multiple dimensions of their relationship, and multiple clustering approaches were used to reduce the range of relationship patterns to seven marital types. The exceptionally large sample of couples used in the classification process and the unique method for analyzing the couple as a unit increase our confidence in the reliability of this typology.

Results of the study provide a seven-profile typology of marital relationships. Vitalized couples are characterized by a high degree of satisfaction with all aspects of their marriage; Devitalized couples are typified by pervasive unhappiness with all relationship issues. Financially focused couples demonstrate overall dissatisfaction with the marriage, with adjustment in only one marital dimension: money management. Conflicted couples show dissatisfaction with couple issues and positive experience with external activities, whereas the Harmonious are well-adjusted in their intimate relationship but demonstrate less satisfaction with some external aspects of marital life. For the Traditional couples, relationship issues are a source of distress, while religious life and interaction with the extended family provide marital resources. Finally, Balanced couples express satisfaction with both internal and external couple issues despite some specific areas of difficulty.

The relationship profiles delineated in this study are supported by results of previous typological studies of marital relationship. The marital profiles proposed by Snyder and Smith (1986), for example, although derived by different clustering methods and by using a different marriage assessment tool, provide evidence substantiating the Balanced and Vital marital types found in the present study.[4]

Using a sample of 3,260 couples who took ENRICH, Fowers and Olson (1993) replicated five of the seven types found in this study. The five types of marriage they identified were Devitalized, Conflicted, Harmonious, Traditional, and Vitalized. The Financially oriented and Balanced types were not found in this study. Like the present study, their typology was based on the ENRICH marital inventory, but they used a different approach to computing couple scores and different clustering procedure.

Nearly three decades ago, Cuber and Haroff (1965) suggested that marriages could be categorized into five types: Conflicted-habituated, Devitalized, Passive-congenial, Vital, and Total. Despite the fact that the nature of their study (descriptive) and the typological approach (heuristic) are quite different from the one reported here, there are remarkable parallels between the Cuber and Haroff typology and the present, empirically derived typology. For example, our Devitalized type is quite comparable with Cuber and Haroff's Devitalized marriage. Cuber and Haroff suggested that these couples, despite their distress and disharmony, get along well enough with each other, or they stay together because of lack of alternatives.

The Financially focused couples and Conflicted couples were very similar to Cuber and Haroff's Conflicted-habituated marriage. They all had conflicts and dissatisfaction with communication and with the way conflicts are resolved. They are

also dissatisfied with the personal characteristics of their partners and may be involved, as Cuber and Haroff described it, with bitter personal attacks. These two types also shard some characteristics in common with Cuber and Haroff's Passive-congenial marriages. Like Passive-congenial marriages, Financially focused couples seem to devote themselves to their careers rather than to the relationship; and like Passive-congenial marriages, the Conflicted couples seem to gain their satisfaction not so much from each other as from their outside relationships.

The Vitalized relationship profile derived in the present study is most closely related to what Cuber and Haroff described in their Total marriage: They get along very well with each other, difficulties are well-resolved, and they are satisfied with almost every aspect of the relationship. The Balanced and Harmonious couples, on the other hand, seem to represent two variations of what Cuber and Haroff describe in their Vital marriages. Like Vital marriages, both Balanced and Harmonious couples may have disagreements and specific areas of difficulty and conflict, but, overall, they experience a strong and positive relationship.

The first three marital types discussed above, Devitalized, Financially focused, and Conflicted seem to have characteristics of what Cuber and Haroff (1965) viewed as utilitarian marriages, which may be based on convenience or lack of a better alternative, whereas the latter three resemble what they viewed as intrinsic marriages. Traditional couples, as defined in the present study, seem to have characteristics of both intrinsic and utilitarian marriages. Like couples in utilitarian marriages (Types 1, 2, and 3), they have low-to-moderate adjustment in many of the internal dimensions of their relationship, such as communication, conflict resolution, and sexuality; however, they are not as critical of each other's personality as these couples, they show considerably less distress with the marriage than do other utilitarian couples, and their marriage seems to be as stable as other intrinsic couples.

Are Happy Families All Alike?

In his classic novel, *Anna Karenina,* Leo Tolstoy stated that: "All happy families resemble one another, but every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." The results of this study suggest that neither happy marriages nor unhappy marriages are alike. Although unhappy couples tend to be unhappy with all aspects of their relationship (Type 1), some of the distressed couples have a quality relationship in certain areas (Types 2 and 3). Likewise, although some happy couples are satisfied with all aspects of their relationship (Type 7), most couples have areas of strength as well as areas of special concern.

Although these results may hardly be surprising for marriage and family therapists, they may set some new directions for research on marriages. Clearly, marital quality cannot be studies along a single dimension. The results indicated that a single measure of marital satisfaction does not capture the complexity and variety of relationship patterns. Furthermore, the results strongly suggest that marital stability is related more to the type of relationship than to global satisfaction. Theoretically, the

question then becomes: "What are the predictors and consequences of having a certain type of relationship?" rather than "What are the predictors and consequences of divorce?"

Clinical Implications

The typology may offer a beginning scheme for classifying couples into common areas of strength and problem, as well as a new set of question that need to be observed. For example, which type of marriage is more likely to seek therapy? Which type of relationship has a better prognosis, a higher rate of success in marital therapy? Are certain types of marital relationship related to certain presenting problems? It may be hypothesized, for instance, that Harmonious couples (Type 6), who have a high-quality sexual life but are low in children and parenting, are more likely to have a child with a presenting problem.

Clinically, this couple typology may enable a therapist to obtain a differential diagnosis and develop a treatment plan specifically linked to the assessment. In other words, a treatment plan could be developed that would be most relevant for the various types of couples. More specifically, the first three types (Devitalized, Financially focused, and Conflicted) have few areas of strength and are the most distressed. They would require the most intensive marital therapy because of their lack of strengths. The Traditional couple (Type 4) would have a base of strength to build on, but they lack communication and conflict resolution skills. It is unlikely that the three types most satisfied with marriage (Types 5, 6, and 7) would seek marital therapy unless something dramatic (an affair) or traumatic (crisis with a child) would happen to the couple.

In closing, it has been suggested (Olson, 1981) that typological studies of couples and families using a multidimensional approach can also help bridge research, theory, and practice. This paper is on example of how this approach using the ENRICH Inventory can help in the assessment process and can also provide ideas about therapeutic intervention.

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NOTES

[1]Whereas scores for the other nine scales represent degree of satisfaction and compatibility between the respondent and his/ her spouse (e.g., "I am very satisfied with how my partner and I talk with each other," "My partner and I seem to enjoy the same type of social or recreational activities"), the Equalitarian Roles scale measures attitudes toward traditional or egalitarian roles (e.g., "I believe that the woman's place is basically in the home," or "In our marriage, the husband should be as willing to adjust as the wife"). Therefore, high (or low) scores on the Equalitarian Roles scale cannot be directly compared with scores on the other ENRICH scales.

[2]More generally, the couple's score (C) formula is:

$$C = \frac{h + w}{2} - k \frac{|h - w|}{2}$$

where: $1 \geq k \geq 0$

In this equation, the couple's mean score [$(h + w)/2$] is corrected downward by their absolute discrepancy score ($|h - w|/2$). The value of the constant (k) for correction may

range between zero and one, and preferably be greater than zero and smaller than one. If $k = 1$, the discrepancy gets a weight equal to the mean score; consequently, the couple's score would be equal to the lower of the two scores. For example, if the wife's score on a scale is 40 and the husband's score is 15, then, when $k = 1$,

$$C = \frac{15+40}{2} - 1\frac{|15\text{-}40|}{2} = 27.5\text{-}12.5 = 15$$

If $k = 0$, no correction is made for discrepancy, and the couple score is equal to the mean score ($C = 27.5$).

The exact value of k is not yet known and should be subjected to future empirical research (sensitivity analysis of various k values.) For the present study, we assumed $k = .5$ (midrange between 0 and 1) in computing couple scores. Thus, for husband's and wife's scores as shown above, the couple's score would be:

$$C = \frac{15+40}{2} - 0.5\frac{|15\text{-}40|}{2} = 27.5\text{-}6.25 = 21.25$$

It may be noticed that the larger the discrepancy (disagreement) between the husband and the wife, the lower the couple's marital quality score and *vice versa*. For example, for a couple with the same mean score (27.5), but with a smaller discrepancy between them (say, 30 and 25), the couple's score, with $k = 0.5$, would be 28.75.

[3]More information on the second (validating) sample may be obtained by writing to the first author.

[4]Snyder and Smith (1986) also found couples like Financially focused couples that had multiple areas of marital distress and a single area of strength. Unlike the Financially focused profile, however, Snyder and Smith's couple were characterized by a single dimension of strength in either role sharing (husbands' Type V) or in family-of-origin issues (wives' Type V). It should also be noted that these investigators did not find a relationship profile similar to our Devitalized couples.