THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Relationship Satisfaction of Cohabiting and Married Women and Men

by

Marie Joyce Watts

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

CALGARY, ALBERTA

OCTOBER, 1998

0-612-38553-1

ABSTRACT

This research analyzes data from the General Social Survey (10) in order to determine the effect of gender and marital status on relationship satisfaction (using a sub-sample of cohabiting and married individuals). Logistic regression is performed on the data and the results indicate that the overall model provides little explanation for relationship satisfaction. Gender is not associated with relationship satisfaction. Marital status is statistically associated with relationship satisfaction but not in the way expected; cohabitors are less satisfied with their relationships than are married individuals.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks are due to Dr. Frideres who has provided the guidance required to put forth this work. Thanks also to David Pevalin who provided some assistance in the analysis.

Finally, endless appreciation to habibi, Dan, whose understanding and support makes things happen.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

One of the most important elements of society is individual happiness. Overall happiness or satisfaction with one's life is certainly important to individuals. Therefore, an examination of the factors which may contribute to a sense of satisfaction are important to understanding a society and how individuals fare in that society. It is interesting to know under what conditions individuals will be more satisfied with their situation. One aspect of overall satisfaction with one's life is satisfaction with one's primary intimate relationship. This dyadic relationship, be it married or cohabiting, is central in one's life.

This thesis will examine the satisfaction with one's partner (relationship satisfaction) to determine some of the factors which effect it and how these may differ by the institutionalized status of a relationship. It compares married and cohabiting heterosexual couples, a topic which has received very little attention. Although considerable research has been carried out on marital satisfaction, this study looks at relationship satisfaction in order to include both married and unmarried couples. The underlying perspective of this research is that the institution of marriage (the role expectations and exchange relationships associated with it) may effect relationship satisfaction. As well, gender differences in the perception of relationship satisfaction are important. Therefore, an examination of the many variables associated with relationship satisfaction, including the socio-demographic, relationship, background, and attitudes, is necessary.

Cohabitation (sometimes referred to as "common-law unions") has been increasing in prevalence in recent years. In fact, between 1981 (when Census data was first available) and 1986 cohabitation increased by 37% and between 1986 and 1991 it increased by 49% in Canada (Statistics Canada, 1991). This is a remarkable increase but the most outstanding increase was in the province of Newfoundland where rates of cohabitation increased by 80% between 1981 and 1986 and 98% between 1986 and 1991. In the past, cohabitation was seen by many as an activity of youth; this has largely changed. While more than 60% of those who are cohabiting are under 35 years of age, the number of older individuals who cohabit is also increasing. In fact, the age group with the highest rate of increase between 1986 and 1991 were those 45-49 which doubled their rate of cohabitation (Statistics Canada, 1991). With such rapid changes in the rate and demographic characteristics of cohabiting individuals it is important to examine these individuals.

The theoretical orientation of this thesis focuses on role theory and social exchange theory. Both theories allow one to account for individual behavior including both structural constraints and individual freedom. Role theory has traditionally been split between structuralist and interactionist perspectives. Structuralists focus on the overall structural framework of society and how this limits individual behavior. This is the most common type of role theory. Interactionists focus on the freedom of choice that individuals have in their behavior. However, a more general role theory which integrates both viewpoints is used in this thesis since both, together, provide a more complete explanation of behavior. Role expectations vary in their degree of consensus and conformity and these different types may be better explained using either a more structuralist or interactionist perspective. The expectation of conformity to social roles can cause role strain. Role strain is the stress which results from a difficulty in meeting the role expectations which one accepts. Involvements in multiple roles, as well as dissensus on role behavior, result in conflicting pressures on the individual.

Exchange theory provides a more complete explanation of behavior associated with roles, and can be used to complement role theory. For example, roles have varying levels of power which provide more or less rewards for the costs expended. As well, individuals in a relationship evaluate that relationship according to their expectations based on past experiences and observations of similar others (distributive justice). Those with whom one compares will be of a similar role (or role status position). Exchange theory proposes that individuals seek benefits while expending minimal effort or cost. In this way individuals evaluate relationships and choose actions according to whether or not they perceive them as being worth their while.

The data presented in this thesis is from the General Social Survey, Cycle 10. Collected in 1995 by Statistics Canada, the data has a sample size of 10,749 individuals over age 15. The General Social Survey is conducted every year, but the core content changes. The family was first included in GSS(5) (1995) as the core content and repeated in GSS(10). The examination of relationships in this study is limited only to heterosexual dyads. Therefore, only individuals who are either living together and married or are cohabiting are selected from the sample (6016 individuals). The unit of analysis is the individual and not the couple because it is the individual's perception and characteristics which are deemed important for this analysis. However, the respondent does provide some information on their partner. It is a cross-sectional design so individuals are only studied at one point in time. This research design does not allow for one to observe the actual changes of individuals which may confirm causal relationships but is the most common type of research and is of use when causal relationships are theoretically supported. As the data being used is secondary, there are limitations of the data in terms of variables measured, the type of operationalization that was undertaken, and the sample size. However, this data set is a random sample and much larger than any that could be collected by an individual researcher because of the costs (time and money) involved in data collection. It will also allow the results to be generalized to all Canadians.

In the present thesis, the dependent variable, relationship satisfaction (which includes cohabiting couples), is measured through a single question about the happiness with the relationship. Independent variables include socio-demographic, present relationship, background, and attitudes. The socio-demographic variables are religious denomination, frequency of attendance at religious events or meetings, gender, age, marital status, education level, employment status, province of residence, presence of children at home, and income. Present relationship characteristics are: duration of relationship, employment status of spouse, spouse's education, and age at start of relationship. Background characteristics include if the respondent's parents are divorced, and number of previous relationships (either cohabiting or married relationships), and attitudinal variables include gender role attitude and perception of equality in the relationship. The data will be examined through logistic regression since the dependent variable forms a dichotomy and several of the other assumptions necessary to carry out an ordinary least squares regression are violated.

The central hypothesis to be examined is that marital status is associated with relationship satisfaction. An examination of satisfaction with one's partner, comparing married and cohabiting couples, may shed light on the effect of marriage, as an institution, on individuals' satisfaction with their relationships. A statistical analysis of the data will provide such information through controlling for other variables. As there has been very little research conducted which compares married and cohabiting couples' relationship satisfaction, this analysis will provide crucial information from a large random sample of Canadians. Role and social exchange theories will be useful in explaining the differences which may emerge.

Chapter two reviews the relavent literature on relationship and marital satisfaction. Chapter three examines the theory which is used to explain the findings and develop the model. Both role theory and exchange theory are used as they can be complementary in explaining behavior and both allow for a structural and individual explanation. Chapter four discusses the research design and methodology used. This explains how the variables were measured and recoded for data analysis. The results are presented in chapter five. First the sample characteristics are described and then the results of the data analysis are explained. The final chapter presents the conclusions from the research project.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The satisfaction, quality, and stability of marital relationships has been the subject of much research since the 1970s. Therefore, only the most important and relevant findings are included for discussion. Initially, research focused on the effects of children on marital quality using the family life cycle approach. More recently, other factors such as division of household labor, cohabitation, and wives' employment became of interest in relation to marriage satisfaction. However, most of the research on marital satisfaction faces an underlying methodological problem of unclear and inconsistent conceptual and operational definitions of the key concept. This problem, along with an inconsistent definition of cohabitation, makes an analysis of the literature on the topic of marital status and relationship satisfaction difficult, with findings often being discrepant. However, these inconsistent findings also could be accounted for by the number of small and unrepresentative samples used in previous research. Finally, much of the research concerning relationship satisfaction is directed by previous empirical findings, as well as specific propositions, with no overall theoretical basis. As such, the lack of theoretical underpinning is most problematic in interpreting the results of previous research and giving direction to new research in this area.

Recently, cohabiting couples have become an area of interest in the study of relationship satisfaction. In accordance with this shift, the term "relationship satisfaction" has replaced "marital satisfaction" in order to include those couples who are not married. Cohabitation was initially seen as a deviant activity and early studies focused on the demographic characteristics of cohabiting individuals. Some came to see cohabitation as a stage in the courtship process. As a result, the effect which prior cohabitation has on marriage has been extensively examined. Cohabiting relationships were found to differ from married relationships, although the causal reasons for this are unclear. There is very little research which specifically compares married and cohabiting couples' relationship satisfaction, although differences in demographic and other attributes (such as the household division of labor) of married and cohabiting individuals have been examined.

The dependent variable of interest in this thesis is the relationship satisfaction of heterosexual individuals in dyadic social relationships where the couples share the same residence but are not, necessarily, legally married. The main relationship to be examined is between marital status (cohabiting or married) and relationship satisfaction. However, other socio-demographic and social factors may contribute to relationship satisfaction. These factors may have different effects for married and cohabiting individuals.

Many studies examine marital satisfaction and its various determinants. However, relationship satisfaction, which takes into account cohabiting individuals, has not been subject to the same level of scrutiny. Most studies focus on samples that are comprised of only married individuals or, in some cases, include cohabiting individuals within the married category. Therefore, throughout this literature review, marital satisfaction is frequently mentioned but not relationship satisfaction. However, different determinants of relationship satisfaction may exist for cohabiting individuals. Both research on marital satisfaction and relationship satisfaction are reviewed.

In many of the studies conducted on marital satisfaction little theory is evident. However, there are some general theoretical underpinnings for a few of the studies. These include social exchange, interactionism, and family life cycle. As well, many refer to various roles with regard to observed behavior. In fact, many look to role strain in regard to working women. In addition, there have been some who attempted to develop some form of explicit theory, such as Burr (1973) (based on symbolic interactionism) and Lewis and Spanier (1979) (a deductive theory). However, these studies have been criticized for lacking a unified theoretical base in that some of the propositions are not related to the theory and some parts of the theory are not linked to one another.

The literature will be examined through the areas of cross cultural research, methodological issues, and the findings of these previous studies with regard to the specific variables used in this thesis. These variables have been shown to be significant in prior research or are theoretically relevant and include socio-demographic characteristics, relationship characteristics, social background factors, and attitudes.

Cross Cultural Research

The determinants of relationship satisfaction may vary between societies. Additionally, the prevalence of cohabitation as well as social attitudes vary between societies. In terms of a cross-cultural examination of marital satisfaction, Kamo (1993) found different determinants of marital satisfaction between American and Japanese couples. An increase in age was found to be negatively related to marital satisfaction in the United States, but not in Japan. As well, husbands' income was important for the relationship satisfaction of Japanese wives but not for American wives. In regard to fairness, all except Japanese husbands found that a perception of equality of family responsibility resulted in a stronger feeling of marital satisfaction. Overall, the study found that American couples were more satisfied with their marriages than Japanese couples. However, the sample was not random and sample selection techniques differed between the two countries. For example, in the Japanese sample the couples selected were required to have a child between the approximate ages of 6 and 14 years, a requirement not present in the American sample.

Xu (1996) examined the dimensions of marital quality for women in rural China and found them to be consistent with the indicators found in American samples. Shek (1995) sampled married Chinese men and women and found that the duration of the marriage was associated with a decrease in marital satisfaction for women. Overall, men were more satisfied with their marriage than women.

Many studies of relationship satisfaction have been conducted in other countries without also sampling Canadian or American individuals for direct comparison and these will be discussed within the body of the literature review in the context of the variable being reviewed.

Methodological Issues

There are several important methodological issues raised by the previous research including the family development approach, conceptual and operational definitions, and sample selection. Marital satisfaction over the entire life-course has been looked at by Adelmann *et al.* (1996), who criticize family development approaches. The family development perspective examines different stages of family development which each family is expected to follow, such as childrearing and empty nest stages. These studies found marital quality to be determined by the family structure. The family life-cycle research tended to find a U-shaped curvilinear pattern where marital quality decreased when children were present. This approach has been criticized for the deterministic assumptions of the stages which families are expected to follow. According to Adelmann *et al.* (1996), when one uses the family development approach, one necessarily finds a link between family structure and marital quality because this variable is not controlled for in a cross-sectional study. In this way, research which uses the life-course perspective (not necessarily linked to family stage but separately examining length of relationship, age, and presence of children as well as certain life transitions) has found that the marital satisfaction of individuals without children also declines in the first few years of marriage. Therefore, it may not be the stage in the family life cycle which is important, but rather other causes which are sometimes associated (such as age, duration of relationship, and presence of children).

In the study of marital relations, there are few standard measures or concepts employed. Marital (or dyadic) adjustment, marital quality, and marital satisfaction are conceptually different, but are often not distinctly or consistently defined in the literature (Spanier and Lewis, 1980). Marital adjustment measures attempt to use quantitative measures of a harmonious and functional relationship through such elements as frequency of interaction. One common measure of this is Spanier's Dyadic Adjustment Scale. However, the objective reports of behaviors which are dimensions of marital adjustment may be influenced by the individual's subjective interpretation or satisfaction with the relationship (Sabatelli, 1988). "Marital quality" is a more frequently used term, and generally covers a wider range of dimensions, but this also has operational and even conceptual inconsistencies. The term "marital quality" is often used interchangeably with "marital adjustment" (although they may sometimes measure different concepts and be used separately). For example, Sabatelli (1988) describes the Dyadic Adjustment Scale as a measure of "marital adjustment" while Fincham and Bradbury (1987) refer to it as measuring "marital quality". In addition, the dimensions which are included in a scale often are not separate and have overlapping item content (Sabatelli, 1988). Furthermore, there is no consistency in the items to be included in a scale, nor is there consensus as to whether a single, global evaluation is adequate (often a global measure is included in the scale and weighted heavily) (Fincham and Bradbury, 1987).

This inconsistency in conceptualization and operationalization also applies to marital satisfaction. With regard to operationalization of marital satisfaction, some studies used a single question ("How satisfied are you with your relationship?") with Likert-type responses while others used a multidimensional measure. Some of the multidimensional measures used were unique (Ray, 1990; Vanyperen and Buunk, 1990) while others were standardized, like the ENRICH marital inventory (Lavee, Sharlin and Katz, 1996; Fowers, 1991). Perry-Jenkins and Crouter (1990) measured marital satisfaction using a series of semantic differential questions. As well, some marital satisfaction measures were used to measure marital quality more broadly. Therefore, generally, marital satisfaction and marital quality reflect different concepts, but nevertheless are sometimes measured in similar ways. Marital satisfaction is also included by some as an element of marital quality. Marital or dyadic adjustment is also referred to, but it often measures the same factors as those who claim to measure marital satisfaction. As well, marital happiness and marital satisfaction are frequently used interchangeably, although these terms may also be used in some research to refer to distinct concepts.

The examination and comparison of previous studies on the topic is made very difficult because of the wide inconsistencies in measurement and definition of key concepts. "Similar operational definitions are attached to different labels, and conversely, similar labels are attached to very different operational measures" (Johnson *et al.*, 1986, p. 32). This is a problem which has been discussed in the literature but not resolved. Therefore, not only are standard operational measures required in this area of research but so are consistent conceptual definitions of these terms. Some measures include items within the marital satisfaction scale that are used by others as independent variables. There are other flaws to the scales themselves, such as blending of units and objects, and confusion between subjective and objective characteristics (Johnson *et al.*, 1986; Sabatelli, 1988). In some cases, the same constructs used to explain the dependent variable are also included in the measurement of it, which is, of course, tautological and which may be the result of a general lack of theoretical models and definitions (Fincham and Bradbury, 1987). Because of this inconsistency and confusion about measurement and causal issues, some have suggested a single, global measure be used (Fincham and Bradbury, 1987); a suggestion heeded in this thesis.

Unfortunately, most of the studies carried out on the subject of marital satisfaction are not representative of the overall makeup of society. For example, some research selects a very small sample and/or certain characteristics, such as having children between the ages of 4 and 10 and being married for a certain number of years. Other studies limit their sample to couples who are in marital counseling (e.g., Fowers, 1991). Certainly, individuals who are seeking counseling for their marriage would have lower than average marital satisfaction and could not be used to extrapolate to any general population other than those couples who are seeking help for their marital problems.

For those studies which have a large and representative sample, most use the American National Survey of Families and Households. In fact, almost all the previous research uses American samples while some Canadian research has shown that factors surrounding marriage differ between the countries: Canadian marriages are longer, with a lower divorce rate, and Canadians marry at an older age (White, 1987).

Furthermore, cohabitation has been increasing very rapidly, as has the level of societal acceptance of this previously deviant behavior. This raises another methodological issue with previous research since studies conducted on cohabiting individuals 10 years ago may no longer apply, as a broader range of individuals may now take part in cohabitation.

The methodological and theoretical weaknesses of much of the prior research has produced inconsistent findings which makes comparison of research findings difficult. As well, there has been very little research directly comparing married and cohabiting individuals' relationship satisfaction. However, there are several determinants of satisfaction which are likely to apply to both married and cohabiting individuals.

Determinants of Satisfaction

The variables used in the present investigation are grouped into three main categories for the purposes of the review of the literature on marital/relationship satisfaction: socio-demographic characteristics, relationship characteristics, background factors, and attitudes. The variables reviewed are those which have been used in prior research and have been shown to be theoretically relevant.

<u>Socio-demographic Characteristics</u>

The socio-demographic variables include religiosity, gender, age, marital status, education, employment status, presence of children, and province of residence.

Religiosity:

Religiosity has been found to be a significant predictor of marital satisfaction (Heaton and Pratt, 1990). It is usually defined as a multidimensional concept with two broad dimensions: ideology (type and strength of belief) and ritualism (religious behavior) (Brinkerhoff and Mackie, 1985). When measuring religiosity there is a great variety of measures used in the research, with some including several measures of ritualism (such as frequency of religious attendance or frequency of prayer) and some measuring only the religious affiliation. It has been shown by Heaton and Pratt (1990) that marital satisfaction increases as the rate of attendance of religious activities increases. As well, not belonging to a religious denomination decreases marital satisfaction. Heaton and Pratt used data from a 1988 national survey in the United States (National Survey of Families and Households) with the indicator of marital happiness based on a Likert-type question of how "happy" one would describe one's marriage. Wilson and Filsinger (1986) also found a positive relationship between religiosity and marital adjustment, controlling for the effects of children and length of marriage. However, this study has the methodological weakness of a nonrandom sample: the respondents were selected by having clergymen announce a request for volunteers during the Sunday service. In addition, only white, Protestant, married couples were part of the sample.

One problem with many of these studies on religiosity is that they usually equate religiosity with Christianity. By including such components as strength of belief in the Bible and taking the Bible literally as part of the measure of religiosity they ignore non-Christian religiosity. As well, they only examine married individuals and not cohabiting individuals (in terms of religiosity and relationship satisfaction).

Gender:

Gender is also an important variable in the examination of relationship satisfaction (Dudley and Kosinski, 1990). Different factors are important to males and females in regard to determining their marital happiness (Lee, 1988). As well, males seem to have a higher level of marital satisfaction than females overall (Lee, 1988). Shelton and John (1993) found gender differences in the division of household labor with women spending more time on household labor than men. The terms "gender" and "sex" are often used interchangeably although, technically, gender refers to a socially constructed identity and sex refers to a biological nature (Lips, 1993). In fact, many studies use these terms interchangeably, and in many it is unclear what the exact measure is; some refer to the individual as husband or father (terms which are gendered) (e.g., Kaslow and Robison, 1996; Axinn and Thornton, 1993; Statistics Canada, 1991; Heaton and Pratt, 1990; Perry-Jenkins and Crouter, 1990; also see Thompson and Walker, 1989). One must assume that a respondent has a gender identity and that they will respond to any question regarding either sex or gender with the same response. As it is generally one's sex that determines one's gender it is rare for one's gender identity to differ from their sex and, therefore, the individual's gender can usually be inferred from their sex (which is the term used in this survey). Sex is commonly used as an indicator of gender (e.g., Nock, 1995; Lewis *et al.* 1977).

Age:

Family life cycle stage has been shown to exhibit a curvilinear relationship to marital quality for women (but not men), and Suitor's research seems to imply that age has no effect (1991). Ray (1990) found that age was a significant factor in determining marital satisfaction for women (but not for men) in 42 dual-career married couples. A study of married individuals with children in the United States found that increasing age has a negative relationship to marital satisfaction (Kamo, 1993). Additionally, cohabiting individuals tend to be younger than married individuals, so this variable must be controlled (Hobart and Grigel, 1992; Sweet and Bumpass, 1987). Many previous studies examined the age of children in the home or the length of the marriage, but the age of the individuals is not mentioned as being a factor (Adelmann *et al.*, 1996). However, age may be correlated with both age of children and length of marriage, and so should be examined independently.

Marital Status:

Marital status, in this undertaking, is restricted to those individuals who are in relatively long term relationships (whether cohabiting or married). In terms of the difference between cohabiting and married couples, the relationships have been shown to have different characteristics and the individuals to have different values. For example, work patterns, division of household labor, fertility, and gender role attitudes all vary between married and cohabiting couples (Clarkberg *et al.*, 1995). Prior research has shown that cohabiting individuals are less happy with their relationship than married individuals (Nock, 1995). In terms of comparing married and cohabiting women, Shelton and John (1993) stated that cohabiting women were, overall, more similar to single, noncohabiting women than to married women. In terms of the household division of labor the differences in hours of housework between single, cohabiting and married men are very small but the amount of housework increases for women from single to cohabiting to married (South and Spitze, 1994). The gender gap in hours of housework is much larger among married couples than cohabiting (South and Spitze, 1994).

There have been many different operational definitions of cohabitation which may or may not specify the number of months living together (e.g., Thornton, Axinn and Hill, 1992; Jackson, 1983; Stafford, Backman and Dibona, 1977; Segrest and Weeks, 1976). Macklin (1972) also specified that the couple must "share a bedroom for at least four nights per week for at least three consequtive months." However, some researchers give no definition whatsoever (Leifbroer and Gierveld, 1993; Risman *et al.*, 1981). When they are provided, these definitions vary considerably, which presents many problems in comparing studies. Moreover, most studies do not explicitly define the variable. As well, respondents who are not given a definition of cohabitation may respond to the marital status question according to their perception of the specific dynamics of the relationship (they may be living together but not feel that they are yet serious enough to be cohabiting) or their own idea of what an official or legal cohabiting relationship must be. It is also possible that an individual would avoid labeling themselves as a cohabitor because they perceive it as carrying a negative stigma, or because they fear legal consequences resulting from an admission of cohabitation on a form (a fear of it becoming official).

The cause of the differences in attitude and behavior between married and cohabiting couples is unclear. Some researchers contend that the type of person who chooses to cohabit is less traditional and conventional, and therefore cohabitation may attract different types of people than those who marry. Otherwise, cohabitation itself may be the causal factor which would account for the differences. The two relationships differ in terms of the institutionalization of the partnership. Nock (1995) created three categories of individuals in order to compare them: those who are cohabiting, those who cohabited with their spouse before marrying them (presently married), and those who married without cohabiting. This allowed him to compare the factors associated with the type of individual (those who cohabit) and the type of relationship. In addition, the sample was restricted to relationships of less than 10 years in order to compare more accurately the two types of relationships, since cohabiting relationships are generally shorter in duration. Nock found that cohabitors are less happy with their relationships than are married individuals, but that this difference may be due to the level of commitment and relationship with parents. He contends that the normative structure and enforced intimacy associated with the institution of marriage explains the lower levels of relationship satisfaction found in cohabiting relationships. Nock's study is one of the very few which examines the effect of marital status on relationship satisfaction or happiness. Many studies examine the impact of cohabitation on subsequent marriage, but this ignores the institutional impact which marriage itself may have on a relationship.

There is considerable research on the effect of cohabitation on subsequent satisfaction of marriage. In the study by Nock (1995), it was found that married individuals who had cohabited prior to marriage were very similar (in regard to all variables tested) to those who did not cohabit prior to marriage. Any differences which occurred between the two married groups (those who did and did not cohabit prior to marriage) was less than half of the difference between present cohabitors and married individuals. This suggests that the structure and institution of marriage is the main cause for the difference between married and cohabiting couples. Nock did not find a statistically significant difference between those married individuals who did and those who did not cohabit prior to marriage, in terms of their marital happiness. White (1987) found that premarital cohabitation actually increased marital stability when controlling for age at marriage and length of marriage. This finding runs counter to much of the research carried out on this topic which reports that married couples who cohabited with each other prior to their marriage reported lower marital satisfaction (Demaris and Rao, 1992; Thomson and Collela, 1992). One explanation for the increased risk of marital disruption, a related measure to marital satisfaction, in couples who cohabited prior to marriage was that when time spent cohabiting is counted as length of marriage the differences would decrease. However, Demaris and Rao's (1992) results did not confirm this. White (1987), using a representative probability sample of Canadians, accounts for the contradictory results of his study and previous studies by explaining that previous researchers used smaller, nonrepresentative samples from small regions, as well as being subject to the standard inconsistency in the definition of cohabitation

Education:

Level of education also has been shown to be another important variable. Kaslow and Robison (1996) found that as education level increased so did marital satisfaction. However, their sample was more highly educated than the general American population. As well, they used a "network" sampling technique with a sample size of only 57 couples

(Kaslow and Robison, 1996). Other studies produced contradictory results (e.g., Elder *et al.*, 1990). Demographically, cohabitors have a lower level of education than married individuals, so it is important to control for this difference (Sweet and Bumpass, 1987).

Employment Status:

Employment status may have an effect on relationship satisfaction. Lupri and Frideres (1981) found that women who are employed are more satisfied with their relationships. However, increased number of hours worked per week by women has been shown to decrease marital satisfaction for women (in terms of their belief that divorce was possible) (Blair, 1993). Additionally, employment status may also be related to gender role attitudes. Perry-Jenkins and Crouter (1990) found that the congruence of role behaviors and role beliefs are related to higher marital satisfaction. Therefore, men who have traditional gender role attitudes and do few household tasks have higher marital satisfaction than those who do more household tasks (Perry-Jenkins and Crouter, 1990). It could also follow that women who have traditional gender role attitudes but are employed will have lower marital satisfaction. A qualitative study on marital satisfaction found that employment status of a woman had both negative and positive aspects (Malarkey, Bootsma, and Vyn, 1990).

Presence of children:

Presence of children as well as an increase in family size generally decreases marital satisfaction (Ray, 1990; Peterson, 1990). However, this finding is not consistent, as Lye and Biblarz (1993), for example, found no effect of presence of children at home on marital satisfaction. The age composition of the children at home has been found to have no impact on perceived marital quality (Lavee, Sharlin and Katz, 1996). White and Edwards (1990) studied those whose children had left home and found that their marital satisfaction increased. The effect of presence of children in cross-sectional studies has recently been questioned, as the effect may truly be the result of the duration of the relationship (Glenn, 1990).

Province:

The province of residence has not been examined in regard to relationship satisfaction. Wu (1995), who used the previous family-oriented General Social Survey (GSS5), dichotomized province for those who reside in and outside of Quebec in the study of prior cohabitation and postmarital cohabiting. He created this dichotomy because of the demographic differences between Francophones and Anglophones. For example, Wu and Baer (1996), using data collected in 1984 of women 18 to 49 years of age, found that French Canadians had more nontraditional attitudes concerning marriage and gender roles. Quebec has higher rates of cohabitation (Statistics Canada, 1996), however, other regional differences may also be important.

These socio-demographic characteristics are important factors for relationship satisfaction and most are commonly included in research on relationship satisfaction. Of course, province of residence is uncommon in research because most research is not Canadian and many Canadian studies do not sample from more than one province.

<u>Relationship Characteristics</u>

The characteristics of one's spouse and of the relationship itself are, of course, crucial in one's determination of relationship satisfaction. Present relationship characteristics include the following variables: duration of relationship, employment status of spouse, age at start of relationship and spouse's education. Some of these factors have received more attention in previous research than others but each may be important.

Duration of relationship:

The duration of the relationship will be an important variable in separating the various factors associated with the family stages (such as presence and age of children and age of respondents). The U-shaped pattern of marital satisfaction (found in the family life-cycle research) may exist as a function of the relationship duration independent of these other factors. Previous research has found that, for women, length of the relationship leads to greater marital satisfaction (Ray, 1990). On the other hand, Lavee, Sharlin and Katz (1996) sampled 287 married Israeli couples and found no relationship between duration and marital quality. Lye and Biblarz (1993) also found no relationship in an American sample. However, little research has measured the independent effect of duration of the relationship on relationship satisfaction, so conclusions must be viewed with some skepticism (Glenn, 1990).

Employment status of spouse:

Men whose spouses are employed have higher relationship satisfaction than those whose spouses are not employed; this was found to be one of the most significant determinants of men's relationship satisfaction (Lupri and Frideres, 1981). A qualitative study found both negative and positive aspects to women's employment which impacts on marital satisfaction of the spouse (Malarkey, Bootsma and Vyn, 1990). Many studies concerning employment and relationship satisfaction tend to examine either the effect of women's employment on the relationship quality or to examine the problems of dual earner couples while ignoring the effect of men's employment status (for example Malarky, Bootsma and Vyn, 1990; Ray, 1990).

Age at start of relationship:

Previous research has shown a positive relationship between age at marriage and marital stability (Demaris and Rao, 1992; Teachman and Polonko, 1990). However, Bahr, Chappell and Leigh (1983) found that there was no relationship between age at marriage and marital satisfaction. Bahr, Chappell and Leigh (1983) sampled 704 American couples in their first marriage and measured age at marriage as ages 13-17, 18-19, and 20 or more. They chose to collapse the age into the three categories based on previous research which shows that those who marry before the age of 20 have substantially higher rates of marital disruption. Because they were surprised by these findings they recoded age at marriage several different ways and attempted to control for the possibility that many teenage marriages may have already divorced and not entered the sample. Despite their efforts, age at start of the relationship only had a small (and not statistically significant) effect.

Spouse's Education:

Lye and Biblarz (1993) found that the educational attainment of the spouse was not statistically associated with marital satisfaction. However, spouse's level of education has not been included in many studies so the relationship between it and relationship satisfaction cannot be interpreted.

The characteristics of one's present relationship, which include the characteristics of one's spouse, have been shown to have an effect on relationship satisfaction but many of the findings have been contradictory on the effect of these issues. As well, some of these characteristics have been largely ignored in previous research.

Background Circumstances

Past experiences can have many lasting effects on behavior and perceptions. There are several factors from an individual's past that may affect one's determination of satisfaction with the present relationship. The first variable measures if the respondent's parents were ever separated or divorced. The second involves the respondent's previous relationships by measuring the number of previous cohabiting relationships or marriages.

Parental divorce:

Webster *et al.* (1995) found that parental divorce had no effect on the marital quality of married couples when the divorce occurred when the respondent was a child (16 years old or less). However, several other studies have contradicted this. For example, Amato and Booth (1991) found that adults whose parents divorced while they were children reported lower levels of marital quality than those who grew up in continuously intact happy families. McLanahan and Bumpass (1988) found that women who spent part of their childhood in a one-parent family were more likely to divorce than those who did not spend any part of their childhood in such a family. Through testing several different models they determined that this increased risk of marital dissolution was not due to socioeconomic status but because of the lack of parental role models in a successful relationship. Additionally, Thornton (1991) found that individuals whose parents had divorced had much higher rates of cohabitation and this would indicate that parental divorce is important to control for.

Previous relationships:

Many have assumed that individuals who cohabit prior to marriage will have a lower marital relationship satisfaction because the type of person who cohabits is unconventional or cohabits because they have a lower quality relationship and they want to test it (Demaris and Rao, 1992). Another explanation is that individuals who cohabit are less committed to the institution of marriage. Much research has been undertaken specifically on the effect of prior cohabitation on marriage quality and stability (e.g., Hall, 1996; Thomson and Colella, 1992; Teachman and Polonko, 1990; Watson, 1983; Ridley, Peterman and Avery, 1978). Of course these studies only sampled married individuals and compared those who had previously cohabited and those who had not. However, even these findings have been contradictory. In fact, Watson and Demeo (1987) replicated their earlier study which found that prior cohabitation was associated with lower marital satisfaction in the first year of marriage and found that prior cohabitation had no effect. The methodology used in the initial and replicated study was the same, as were the general individual characteristics. Watson and Demeo (1987) conclude that the effect on marital adjustment is due to a factor which they did not measure in either study. Teachman and Polonko (1990), although their sample only included high school graduates, found that cohabitation prior to marriage increased the risk of marital dissolution. However, when they controlled for the total length of the relationship (including time spent cohabiting) prior cohabitation had no effect on marital dissolution. However, Demaris and Rao (1992) did not find that the effect of prior cohabitation on marital dissolution was due to the greater total time spent by cohabitors in the union.

Vemer *et al.*(1989) conducted a meta-analysis of remarriage satisfaction and found that the number of previous marriages may not be important as there were only very small statistically significant differences between those in their first marriage or a remarriage. Hobart (1991) also found no significant difference in marital adjustment when he compared those in their first marriages and those who were remarried. The number of previous cohabiting relationships was also found not to be significant in Nock's (1995) study when controls were included. Stets (1993) used the National Survey of Families and Households (with 9,643 households sampled) to examine the relationship quality of married and cohabiting individuals. Stets found that prior relationships, especially prior cohabitation, resulted in a decrease in quality of present cohabiting or married relationships. However, when socio-demographic controls were included which may be associated with the type of individuals who cohabit, the association between prior cohabitation and the current relationship diminished. Stets went further and found that it was only if an individual had cohabited with someone other than their current partner that their relationship quality was lower.

Attitudes

An individual's gender role attitude and perception of equality in the relationship are important factors for determining relationship satisfaction. Few studies examine attitudes in regard to relationship satisfaction (Glenn, 1990). However, it has been shown that it is an individual's perception or interpretation of the situation that is important and not actual behavior in determining their perception of their relationship (Lye and Biblarz, 1993; Kelley and Burgoon, 1991). In fact, there may be a discrepancy between one's actual situation and their interpretation of it. For exampie, many women who believe they are putting less into the relationship than their partner are, in fact, contributing more (Vanyperen and Buunk, 1990).

Gender role attitude:

Gender role ideology was found to be important to some of the measures of marital satisfaction that Blair (1993) used. A study of married couples (sample of 42 couples) found that those who held nontraditional gender role attitudes were more satisfied with their marriages (Aida and Falbo, 1991). For dual-earner married couples, Ray (1990) found that a nontraditional orientation was essential for a satisfying marriage. It has also been shown that couples who hold similar gender role attitudes have higher marital satisfaction (Bowen and Orthner, 1983), and that marriage solidifies traditional gender role attitudes even in couples who cohabited prior to marriage (Kotkin, 1983). Using a longitudinal study, Amato and Booth (1995) demonstrate that when wives' gender role attitudes become less traditional, their perceived marital quality decreases, though the opposite occurs for husbands.

Gender role attitudes are measured and defined in many ways. For example, Amato and Booth (1995) used a seven-item Likert scale while Vanyperen and Buunk (1991) used a 17-item Likert scale; few of the scale items were similar. As well, Aida and Falbo (1991) asked the single question of whose duty it was to provide the family income (with those who said the duty was equally shared classified as egalitarian and those who did not agree termed traditional). Therefore, as with the dependent variable relationship satisfaction itself, problems of inconsistent measurement make comparison of research results difficult.

Perception of equality:

In regard to the perception of equality in the relationship, Suitor (1991) found that satisfaction with the division of household labor was a key determinant of marital happiness. It is the perception of fairness, and not the actual division of labor itself, which is important (Greenstein, 1996). Peterson (1990) drew a snowball sample of 143 married adults in

Australia. Those who had been married for more than ten years without children or were married previously were excluded from the sample. She found that there was a U-shaped pattern of perceived marital equity for husbands over the family life cycle, but the pattern for women was stable. Lennon and Rosenfield (1994) contend that women who have fewer alternatives and economic resources are more likely to view the division of labor as fair. When someone determines the fairness in their relationship they compare their rewards to those they think they deserve so that actual behavior may be unrelated to one's perception of the situation. The definition of equality used in this thesis is meant to reflect the perception of an equal sharing of responsibilities. The frequency of arguments over chores and responsibilities will be used as an indicator of a perception of inequality in household labor and has been used in previous research. Vanyperen and Buunk (1990) used equity theory to guide their examination of equity and relationship satisfaction. Equity refers to obtaining rewards equal to input in the relationship. This is related to (but not the same as) equality where individuals contribute equally. Vanyperen and Buunk used broad measures of equity, (144 exchange elements) which included how equal partners were in terms of such things as intelligence and attractiveness as well as global measures of equity. The longitudinal design allowed them to find support for equity causing relationship satisfaction and not the reverse. However, like many studies of relationship satisfaction, the sample design is poor. A mixture of individuals and couples were gathered through newspaper advertisements and only approximately half of the individuals were again measured one year later.

Conclusion

Although marital relationships have been studied quite extensively over the past 30 years, there are still fundamental weaknesses in the area. First is the lack of theoretical guidance to research, with many studies providing ad hoc explanations for results. Second, the definition of the variable associated with relationship quality/satisfaction, appropriate terminology, as well as measurement of the concept, are inconsistent. This is key to a scientific evaluation of the area and may account for the many contradictory results found in previous research. Third is the scarcity of studies using Canadian samples. However, the major void in previous research is on the topic of relationship satisfaction for cohabiting individuals, especially in regard to a comparison with married individuals. These relationships have been shown to differ in their characteristics, and a comparison of the two relationships may shed some light on the subjective aspects of the experience, which may in turn be explained by the legal and social status of the relationships. By filling this void, the present examination will provide some insight into the different subjective experiences of individuals who are either married or cohabiting.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

One of the central issues in Sociology is that of structure and agency. The degree to which an individual is controlled by the overarching social structure or is free to act independently of restrictions has been central to sociological analysis and marks one of the greatest splits in the field (Ritzer, 1992). The conflict between such perspectives is analogous to, and linked with, the prominent division of macro and microsociology. Macrosociological analysis generally uses a quantitative method with a theoretical focus on group behaviors, and the theories involve an examination of large scale structural motives for behavior, or an analysis of larger groups. On the other hand, microsociological analysis examines individual behavior with a theoretical explanation which focuses on the more psychological motives and interpersonal interaction through a qualitative method. Recently, many sociologists have come to accept that these opposing viewpoints fall on a continuum and an integration leads to a more complete view of society (Ritzer, 1992; Eisenstadt and Helle, 1985). Role theory and social exchange theory both can account for the structural and free choice aspects of social behavior.

The concept of role was one of the first concepts which allowed for an integration of the two accounts of human behavior. It enabled one to see individuals as being constrained by structures while still having some freedom to act. However, the traditional split exists within the area of role theory as two distinct orientations, structural and interactionist, mirror the schism in sociology overall. Recently many role theorists have agreed that a convergence of the viewpoints into an integrated role theory would be beneficial, and have sought such a blend (Baker and Faulkner, 1991; Stryker and Statham, 1985; Turner, 1979).

Role theory emerged in the 1930s with Mead, Moreno, and Linton providing its basis, although there were important precursors such as Durkheim, Cooley, and Sumner (Thomas and Biddle, 1966). Even from the beginning there were inconsistencies in the basic conceptual definitions. George Herbert Mead (1934) used the concept of "role-taking" in regard to the self. He believed that the self is defined in relation to others through taking the role of the generalized other. It is in this way that individuals, through witnessing patterned interactions, can imaginatively rehearse alternative behaviors and anticipate what the reaction will be by others (Mead, 1934). However, an accurate taking of a role depends on individuals sharing the meaning. Mead represented symbolic interactionism and stressed the evolution of roles through social interaction. He showed that the self is separate from social structure and behavior (J. Turner, 1978).

Moreno used the concepts developed by Mead and added that of role-playing (Moreno, 1953). He saw different types of roles which are regulated by different types of expectations. Moreno believed that individuals perceive the behaviors of a role and imitate others in their role enactment (Biddle, 1986).

Linton, an anthropologist, made an important distinction between status (position) and role (1936), whereby a status is a set of rights and duties which, when followed, constitute the performance of a role (role is the dynamic aspect of status). This is an important distinction for role theory. Individual behavior is linked with social structure since an individual is assigned to a status (or several statuses).

With this as the historical basis for role theory, an introduction to the basic concepts is important. One must start with a definition of role. This however, immediately brings to focus the inconsistency in role theory and the split between interactionists and structuralists. Role is a term that is commonly used, but the definition and underlying assumptions are inconsistent. Theories of all kinds use the concept of role. In fact, Biddle (1986) points out that at least ten percent of all articles in sociological journals use the term "role" technically. There are differences, however, in the definition of the concept, in the assumptions made about roles and the explanations for role (Biddle, 1986).

Role theory assumes that "...human beings behave in ways that are different and predictable depending on their respective social identities and the situation." (Biddle, 1986, p.68). However, role can variously be seen as expectations of behavior, a social position, or characteristic behavior. This disagreement over the basic concept has been a common criticism of role theory (with some discounting the utility of the entire field). Still, there has yet to be one commonly accepted specific definition of role. However, as with the macro-micro split in sociology and the structural and interactionist role perspectives, one can gain a more complete view of society by integrating seemingly opposing theories. As such, one can see all these playing a part in the definition of a role.

The dramaturgical or theatrical metaphor is obviously essential to an understanding of role. This perspective sees individuals as performing a role as part of a play in conjunction with other actors and before an audience (Biddle, 1986). Therefore, role theory is concerned with scripts or expectations for behavior known by all, patterned and characteristic social behaviors, and parts undertaken by participants (Biddle, 1986, p.68)

Role Theory: A Critical Examination

In this discussion, the following general definition of a role will be used: "role" is a social position which involves situationally specific expectations of individuals who occupy this social position. Most role theorists would agree to this definition. Nevertheless, there are many issues raised by such a definition including, where do role expectations come from? Is the individual aware of these prescriptions for behavior or following them automatically? Can an individual change expectations? Is there flexibility permitted in enacting role behavior? What defines a social position? Does an individual have more than one role? These questions, as well as a discussion of consensus and conformity, will guide our examination of role theory.

Origin of Role Expectations

The first question we pose is, from where do role expectations come? Most role theorists agree that expectations generate behavior, but there is some disagreement on the origin of these expectations. Structuralists believe that role expectations are the result of shared norms (Biddle, 1986). Individuals follow these norms and induce others to follow them. Interactionists downplay the importance of norms in favor of attitudes, and situational negotiation within a structural framework providing general limits. Additionally, individuals anticipate the behavior of others and imitate behavior. These are complementary and, as Biddle (1986) notes, should all be examined as ways in which role expectations are made. Biddle claims that norms, beliefs, and preferences all contribute to the explanation of role expectations (1986). If one asserts that norms are the basis of the expectations that society holds for individuals in certain positions, then one must ask how actors learn or know these expectations.

Socialization is the general process through which actors learn other's expectations for individuals in particular positions (Stryker and Statham, 1985). For Turner, an interactionist, individuals learn a role as a gestalt and not a behavioral inventory (1985). In this way, individuals learn from a specific experience by assigning meaning to the experience and not by memorizing the details of the behavior. This allows an individual to enact appropriate behavior even in a new situation. For structuralists, however, internalization of norms is the focus. An individual internalizes norms associated with a role and then enacts them automatically, or an individual may internalize certain norms and use discretion in enactment.

Mead's idea of role taking is important for role theory. This is the process of anticipating the behavior of others with whom one is interacting (Stryker and Statham, 1985). It is through previous experience and cues that one forms an opinion of the other's (sometimes referred to as the "alter" in role theory) viewpoint (or role) in order to anticipate the responses of one's own actions. One can conclude that both explanations of role learning can apply in certain situations, depending on such factors as the degree of consensus on the norm, the completeness of the role guidelines, or the degree to which an individual agrees with the role.

Heiss (1981) delineates three types of socialization: anticipatory, explicit, and in-service. Anticipatory socialization is a common concept in role theory although it has slightly different definitions. Merton (1966) sees it as individuals taking on the values of a group which they anticipate belonging to. For Heiss (1981), anticipatory socialization involves an actor unintentionally learning behavior for a role which he or she will not play until a future time (such as a wife or husband) by being unintentionally taught either through interaction or by observing others. Explicit socialization also trains an individual prior to adopting a role, but it is done intentionally. For example, a girl may be intentionally (explicitly) taught how to cook by a parent but also unintentionally taught about gender roles when she sees that her brothers are not taught to cook. The final type of socialization is in-service training. This involves an individual getting either intentional or unintentional instruction on appropriate role behavior while already in the role (Heiss, 1981). An example of this may be a husband prompting his wife on her behavior during a business get together or a visit from family.

Awareness

The degree to which expectations are internalized and acted on automatically, or individuals are aware of the expectations and choose to follow them (or not) for their own benefit while anticipating evaluation by others is important in a discussion of role. The discussion of socialization leads to the question of awareness including self awareness, awareness of the difference between self and role, and the awareness of choices. As will be seen, levels of awareness vary by situation. From an extreme structuralist perspective, individuals are totally constrained by social structure and totally unaware of these controls.

Individuals simply internalize and comply with norms. However, from an extreme interactionist perspective, the structural constraints are almost nonexistent, since it is individuals who, in the process of interaction, create any structure, and this would be altered in every interaction. Individuals improvise a role that fits with the roles others are improvising simultaneously allowing for creative intelligence (Turner, 1985). One could contend that, in a more moderate form, both perspectives apply. From the interactionist view of a series of improvisations, one could infer that underlying these improvisations were general role expectations. If an individual, by understanding others' vantage points, improvises a role to interact effectively with others, one could assume that role expectations are a starting point for this interaction. By making one's behavior fit within the interaction, one is conforming to general role expectations. However, as with the idea of the gestalt mentioned earlier, a role imparts general behaviors, and individuals, through interaction, create the specific behaviors. In this way, interaction is seen as a description of the mechanism through which general role expectations are enacted, allowing for a freedom in specific action (that left undefined by general roles). In terms of structuralism, in some situations, for some behavior, an individual may not be aware that he or she is following a role; however, in many situations one knows that there is pressure to behave in a certain way and is able to choose how to perform. The conditions under which this occurs could be related to the degree of consensus about the norm involved, the importance of the role to the individual, and the number of roles he or she has.[1]

One's understanding of roles comes through interaction with others. An accumulation of role experiences shapes one's perception of one's self (Zurcher, 1983). This self conception provides a sense of personal continuity as the roles are enacted in a variety of settings (which may be unrelated to the setting where the behavior was learned).

---

[1]This is discussed in more depth in the section concerning consensus and conformity below.

In each setting the individual makes compromises between their self conception and the role demands of a specific situation and this provides an identity (Zurcher, 1983).

Another type of awareness is reflexivity. Reflexivity indicates that the self is an object to itself (self consciousness) (Turner, 1966). An individual may or may not be reflexive and this may be related to an awareness of the difference between the self and the role and an identification with the role. If the role has been completely internalized (also assuming that the role has complete consensus and provides a detailed description of behavior) then an individual will follow it without reflexivity. An individual becomes aware of the self through interaction. It is when there are differences between the self and the role expectations that one becomes aware of the self (Stryker and Statham, 1985).

Also important is the differentiation between self and role. If an individual is able to see the self and the role as separate then he or she can intelligently choose whether or not to conform or seek to alter expectations. Turner's (1966) notion of "standpoint" is useful when examining this issue. One can adopt the standpoint of the role or see the role as separate from one's self while still enacting the appropriate behavior. Turner differentiates three different standpoints (1966). In the first standpoint the individual adopts the standpoint of the role, identifies with it and is not reflexively aware. In the second standpoint the individual is reflexively aware and the role remains as an object. The individual sees that he or she and the role are separate but still uses the role to guide and validate his or her action. The last type of standpoint is also reflexive and involves the individual seeing the role as interacting with their own behavior. In this way the individual lacks detailed direction from the role and behaves according to the anticipated effect. Therefore, one can see two components of role-taking: awareness of the role and identification with the role.

Turner (1985), however, disagrees that the reflexive individual either conforms or decides not to conform. He sees this as a major difference between structuralist and interactionist role theory. Turner concedes that this may occur when the opportunities for creative role making are minimal, but that only happens when the situation is pathological and not part of normal interaction. He believes that conceiving of role behavior as centering around conformity or scheming nonconformity leads to a rigid view of behavior and this does not allow for the fluidity and creativity of action. However, Stryker and Statham (1985), also from the interactionist view, believe that individuals are not necessarily self reflective. In fact, it is only in problematic situations where the reflective self exists. They believe, presumably like Turner, that it is in problematic situations where individuals are aware of the constraints and choose to conform or not. However, unlike Turner, Stryker and Statham believe that this occurrence is common in modern society.

Changeability of Roles

The fourth question raised by the use of role theory is regarding to what extent roles can be altered. Obviously interactionists assert that roles (such as they are) are changeable, but structural role theory can also allow for this. There are several points within this issue: the degree to which roles are constantly evolving through interaction, the possibility of altering structurally defined roles, and the capacity for flexibility within a role. First, from an interactionist viewpoint, roles are both negotiated (and continually renegotiated) as well as pre-determined (providing a fixed role as a starting point for interaction) (Turner, 1985). The difference between structural and interactionist role theory, again, is their understanding of which is most common, structured or negotiated roles. Interactionists assume that roles are not usually pre-determined and even if they are, they may be questioned by actors as inappropriate. Interactionists, such as Turner, see behavior as continually and creatively emerging in the process of interaction. In interaction, individuals anticipate other's actions and resposes and roles provide a framework within which to interact. Actors make their roles and then communicate this to others using cues (J. Turner, 1978). Turner (1985) describes this as "role making". Roles are made in three ways: gaps in roles leave room for creativity, individuals make an effort to determine roles that others are playing, and individuals also emit cues to others of their own role (J. Turner, 1978). However, Turner still maintains that this is done in connection with a structured role (1985).

When one focuses on the structural aspects of role, then one must ask if a structured role can be altered. Norms themselves emerge from ongoing activities (Homans, 1966). As well, individuals may (depending of degree of consensus) interpret and modify role expectations (Zurcher, 1983). Therefore, just as societal norms may change with time, so may role expectations.

Flexibility in Behavior

The capacity for flexibility in role enactment is an issue which has been underlying much of the previous discussion. It is related to how individuals learn roles as well as an individual's freedom from deterministic structures. This issue is also related to issues of role strain and conformity which will be discussed in the next section. J. Turner (1978) conceives of three sources of expectations: those from the script, from other players, and from the audience. Therefore, flexibility in role enactment is related to general norms, and expectations (or willingness to loosen expectations) of those interacting with as well as those who may scrutinize this behavior. According to both perspectives, there is the possibility of flexibility in role expectations. Socialization may provide an individual with several versions of a role and a person's identity determines which they prefer (in association with the anticipated benefits) (Heiss, 1981). Role innovation is also possible when an individual sees benefit from combining elements from different roles or variations of a role. Besides role amalgamation, role assimilation and extension is possible (Heiss, 1981).

Social Position

One of the final questions to be asked with regard to the initial definition of role refers to the definition of social position (or status). Position refers to a recognizable category of persons (Thomas and Biddle, 1966). Some interactionist role theorists avoid this concept in their definition of role. Joas (1985) believes that the reference to position is unnecessary and confuses the concept of role. He prefers to define role as "...the normative expectation of situationally specific meaningful behavior." (p.44) However, this emphasis on situationally specific behavior may still have position as a present, but unmentioned, factor. In addition, if position is defined loosely, it can aid in providing a more complete definition of role. Therefore, position does not necessarily refer only to a formal position such as "secretary" or "man" but can refer to "an intellectual" or "a rock-climber" (Stryker and Statham,1985). In addition, a position may be achieved or ascribed (Davis, 1966). In this way, Thomas and Biddle (1966) define position as "...a collectively recognized category of persons for whom the basis for such differentiation is their common attribute, their common behavior, or the common reactions of others toward them" (p. 29). The use of position provides a basis for prediction of behavior based on the category and role expectations of a position. It also allows individuals to anticipate the behavior of others based on their position label.

<u>Number of Roles</u>

Individuals have many positions and, therefore, many roles. Merton (1966a) refers to "status sets" as "the complex of distinct positions assigned to individuals" (p.74) . He sees this as separate from "role-set" which is the array of roles associated with a social position (1966). It is the latter is that is most examined by theorists. The complexity of role-sets is determined by structure (Blau, 1995). The heterogeneity of the population linked with the amount of social barriers, and the strength of the social differences influence the complexity of a role-set (Blau, 1995).

The number and diversity of roles may allow for increased discretion in behavior. The number of roles may be related to reflexivity about roles and more complex identities (Berger, 1995). It can be argued that complex role-sets and interaction with individuals of diverse status produces more contradictions in expectations and, therefore, more discretion. This requires an individual to face the contradictions and, therefore, become reflexive of the role expectations. In this way structure induces reflexivity. Knowing one has been socialized allows one to see choices. The more diverse one's group memberships and roles, the more complex and unusual behavioral patterns become, and the more complex one's thinking and identities become (Berger, 1995). Therefore, one should belong to many diverse groups (or social circles) and have only a weak attachment to each. This would allow one to deal with the contradictions and to see the roles as separate from one's self. This provides one with a perspective on a role from the outside and increases tolerance of others, because one has access to multiple perspectives. In this way, multiple and contradictory roles can be beneficial. However, there are several problems which can also arise from multiple roles, such as role strain, that will be discussed in the section on role strain.

Consensus and Conformity

The concepts of consensus and conformity are central to an examination of role. Consensus refers to the extent to which others agree with role expectations. This may be in terms of general social acceptance or among actors in interaction. Role expectations can be formal or informal, expressed or implicit, individual or shared (Thomas and Biddle, 1966). As well, role expectations vary in terms of "...permissiveness, completeness, complexity, and in the degree to which they are codified and universal" (Thomas and Biddle, 1966, p103).

Definitions of roles can also be vague or contradictory (J. Turner, 1978). Many theorists believe that there is no consensus on most roles so different individuals may be taught different versions of appropriate role behavior (Heiss, 1981). In addition, even if there were general societal consensus on roles, the scripts are incomplete. In this way, specific behavior is left undefined and it is the gestalt of the role that guides behavior. This, once again, incorporates Turner's idea of role-making, in that individuals use this incomplete definition of role and fill in the blanks according to their preferences.

Conformity is a topic which encompasses many of the elements present in the previous discussion. Conformity involves the awareness of actors, flexibility of roles, and reasons for conformity. An individual may not conform to a role if lacking role knowledge (Heiss, 1981). This can occur when one has incomplete socialization or is placed in a situation where one cannot use one's general role guidelines to enact the specific behavior. This may occur when the individual or the society is changing rapidly.

If role expectations are assumed to be true, an individual will have no conception of choice and will automatically conform (Stryker and Statham, 1985). For example, some gender roles are such a part of social structure that they are believed to be natural and, therefore, inflexible or changeable. However, as previously mentioned, it is only when an individual does not have a problem with the role (there is no conflict between the role and the self) that an individual is unaware of role. Some have criticized structuralist role theorists for not being able to harmonize individuals internalizing norms and then not obeying them. Goode (1966) suggests that even if an individual has internalized the norms of the society, an individual may not be committed to those norms and, therefore, may not conform.

The degree of conformity is also related to the degree of consensus on the role expectations. A lack of consensus creates an opportunity for flexibility and innovation in role enactment. As mentioned with regard to consensus, the vagueness of roles allows for individual creativity. Therefore, the specificity of the role expectations also impacts on conformity. If role expectations are clear and specific and there is high consensus then conformity is likely (Stryker and Statham, 1985).

There are many ways in which conformity happens. It can occur through the internalization of role expectations. As well, the alter (the other with whom one is interacting) may require the individual to obey role expectations (Goode, 1966). Additionally, because behavior may be witnessed by others (besides the individual and the alter) these others may censure inappropriate behavior (Heiss, 1981). This can also be explained by referring to these three sources of expectations as the script, other players, and the audience (Turner, 1985) or personal, interpersonal and organizational factors (Van Sell *et al.*, 1981). In this way, if an individual wishes to renegotiate role behavior, he or she must first get the alter to agree, and then this behavior must be ratified by outsiders. For example, if a husband and wife agree to renegotiate their roles, this behavior would be scrutinized by others outside the relationship, and pressure may be brought upon them to conform. The various techniques of social control will not be reviewed here, but social control is essential to an understanding of conformity. Consequently, individuals with more power or a higher prestige position may have greater discretion in role enactment as they have more power in a role negotiation (Berger, 1995).

Role as Resource

Recently, some role theorists have posited that roles are a resource (Baker and Faulkner, 1991; Callero, 1994). Actors adopt a role in order to gain access to resources and behaviors that are only available through that position (Callero, 1994). In this way an individual claims a role and then gains the position associated with that role (Baker and Faulkner, 1991). Callero (1994) defines role as a cultural object. This theory attempts to lessen the importance of structure and focus on the positive aspects of role. In this way the role is not a limitation but an opporunity which brings with it additional resources. Yet, it still maintains that roles differ in their accessibility and this would be the result of structure. As well, roles still delimit appropriate behavior. However, despite the differences, the general propositions put forth by Callero (1994) could also be made using a more traditional definition of role.

Role Strain

Conformity to social roles can cause role strain. Role strain is the stress that results from a difficulty in meeting the role expectations which one accepts (Heiss, 1981).

Involvement in multiple roles, as well as dissensus on role behavior, result in conflicting pressures on the individual. There are various types of role strain posited by different researchers, such as role conflict, role overload, role ambiguity, role discontinuity, and role malintegration (Biddle, 1986; Heiss, 1981). Role conflict and role ambiguity are the two general types which encompass many of the other forms. Therefore, only role conflict and ambiguity will be discussed. As well, there are objective and subjective aspects of role strain. Most research focuses on the subjective, perceptual dimension alone (Van Sell *et al.*, 1981). As well, the measures of the concepts of role conflict and ambiguity are inconsistent in empirical research (Van Sell *et al.*, 1981). It should be noted that, as with any stress, a small amount can enhance performance and satisfaction (Van Sell *et al.*, 1981).

If an individual feels confronted by incompatible role expectations, then an individual experiences role conflict (Gross *et al.*, 1966; Biddle, 1986). There are different sources of role conflict: incompatible expectations from one person (alter), between two alters, between the individual and the role, between two roles being held, or a lack of time to enact all expectations (Van Sell *et al.*, 1981). Role ambiguity exists when an individual lacks clear information about role expectations, how to enact that behavior, or what will result from such behavior (Van Sell *et al.*, 1981).

An individual experiencing significant role strain will usually seek relief. There are several ways to cope with role strain: an individual can attempt to redefine the situation or, in the extreme, may withdraw from the situation. The situation may be redefined in several ways, depending on where the problematic expectations originate (Heiss, 1981; Stryker and Statham, 1985). One strategy is to compell others to alter their perceptions of the differences between the individual's behavior and role expectations. Another is to change one's own perception of the discrepancy. One may also try to modify the actual difference in behavior by having others change their expectations. One could align behavior with the expectations or discontinue a role.

As mentioned earlier, one can seek to renegotiate one's role expectations with alters but the effectiveness of this depends on the agreement of others, the range of possible choices, and the level of detail of the norms for that role (Heiss, 1981). Individuals who have more control over this process of negotiation are more likely to reduce the role strain experienced. It is those individuals with high status or position in society who have the most power (Berger, 1995). However, individuals in very low positions may not have role expectations enforced (Heiss, 1981).

An individual can also prioritize roles in order to enact those which are most important to them (Stryker and Statham, 1985). One has a greater tendency to locate one's self in a role when that role requires many resources to attain and maintain (Turner, 1985). Those roles that are most closely related to the self and important to one's identity are placed high on the hierarchy of preferred roles (Zurcher, 1983). Dominant roles serve to influence other role enactments as well as which future roles to adopt or reject. For example, women who experience role conflict between family and work roles may assert the family role as dominant and seek to minimize the effect of the work role by choosing a flexible job that allows them to spend the required time at home.

Role Theory: A Convergence

Role theory has many variations and can be seen as a perspective used by researchers from differing theoretical viewpoints. However, if one merges the two major types of role theories (interactionist and structuralist) a more general and complete theory emerges. Each perspective focuses on different aspects of social life (both of which are important) and as each examines the details of either interaction or structural frameworks an integration provides detailed knowledge of the entire picture. Structural role theory has been the most common, and many researchers, in attempting to integrate the two theories, start from the structuralist view and integrate interactionist ideas. Many of the assumptions of structural and interactionist role theory are compatible.

Different behaviors and expectations may have differing explanations, and only by using both types of theories can all varieties of behavior be explained. If one looks at a role which has a high degree of consensus and conformity, a focus on the structural aspects of role may be appropriate. Gender roles, as well as the roles of husband and wife, are roles which have a high degree of consensus. In fact, gender roles may even be seen as "natural", or a "truth", so that there is no conception of choice in the role (Stryker and Statham, 1985). In addition, these are roles are present in many areas of interaction, unlike the role of secretary, which may only be important in the work context. As well, gender roles are usually known and used in all types of interaction. Therefore, these roles are important in almost all spheres of interaction and would then have a major impact on an individual's life. As these roles are so central, any difficulty one would have accepting or enacting these roles could cause problems, including a decreased satisfaction with the relationship. For individuals who are cohabiting, they cannot assume the role of husband or wife, yet they also may have problems enacting the role of boyfriend or girlfriend within a cohabiting relationship. Therefore, as roles provide expectations which may not fit together, or with the self, they may produce strain.

Exchange Theory

Exchange theory can be used to augment role theory as it focuses on some of the more micro level factors. Role theory is a general, large scale theory. Exchange theory is more of a middle range theory that states that individuals are constantly involved in social exchanges. Any voluntary behavior that is motivated by an expected return or response from another is social exchange (Heath, 1976). Social exchange theory is closely linked to economics and behavioral psychology. Individuals seek to maximize their rewards in their interactions with others while minimizing their costs. Additionally, there is a norm of reciprocity which states that individuals should reciprocate what is received from others (Nye, 1979).

Exchange theory is diverse, with most kinds including behaviorism or rational choice. Rational choice theory assumes that individuals do what they think will have the best overall outcome (Friedman and Hechter, 1990). Homans (1974) uses both these approaches, employing the concepts of stimulus, reward, satiation. Homans' work was fundamental to the development of the theory, but many others have expanded and altered his approach. Blau (1964), for example, emphasizes that social exchange can be observed everywhere but that power and fear also influence action. One can see that making a choice out of fear is still choosing the most rewarding alternative (in that the fear must represent a threat to be avoided). Therefore, one can see that social exchange theory and role theory are easily linked; different roles are associated with different amounts of power and prestige. The amount of power an individual has determines how one will fare in a social exchange. Those who have much power will tend to gain more than they give in a social exchange. Those with less power must be satisfied with less.

Nye (1979) calls the theory "choice and exchange theory" in order to emphasize the fact that while exchanges are not always made, choices are. An individual can choose not to make an exchange, but this decision is still motivated by social exchange (the exchange was not deemed worthwhile). In this way, exchange always involves choice, but not all choices require direct exchange. As well, Emerson (1987) suggests that an individual may not consciously make rational calculations to maximize profit. In fact, an individual cannot possibly know all the possible moves and outcomes of a social exchange (Emerson, 1987).

In exchange theory, rewards, costs, and profits are important (Nye, 1979). Rewards are the pleasures, satisfactions, statuses, relationships, experiences, and feelings which provide gratification (Nye, 1979, p. 2), while costs are those which are disliked. Nye, in extending Homan's view of costs, defines two types: punishments and rewards forgone. Profit is determined by the relative amount of rewards and costs associated with action or predicted to follow an action. Thibaut and Kelly (1959) provide two additional concepts useful in further understanding this effort to maximize profit: comparison level and comparison level for alternatives. Comparison level is the profit which an individual sees to be appropriate for him or herself based on past experience or comparison with similar others (in accordance with the salience of certain outcomes at the moment of decision). Roles can be seen to be important here because one would be comparing one's profits to those of other individuals in similar role positions. If an individual perceives that the profit (an evaluation of the rewards and costs) from a relationship is not what he or she deserves, he or she will be dissatisfied with the relationship. Comparison level for alternatives takes into account what one would receive if one were to leave one's present relationship or role. These alternatives change over time, and when an individual predicts (even when the costs associated with leaving the relationship are included) that he or she could fare better outside the present dyadic relationship, he or she will leave it. In this way, if the costs of leaving a relationship were high, an individual would remain in the relationship, even if it is not satisfying. The comparison level determines the satisfaction of the relationship, and the comparison level for alternatives determines the level of dependence on the relationship and relates to power. If an individual lacks power, their optimism for positive future outcomes decreases because, in the past, he or she has experienced high costs for modest rewards. In this way, their standard for judging their relationship (comparison level) is low (Thibault and Kelley, 1959).

In the examination of power relationships in dyadic exchange one must explain the power differential, and this is where more macrosociological exchange theory becomes important. In fact, exchange theory has traditionally been split along micro and macro levels of exchange. Those such as Levi-Strauss (1969), Heath (1976), and Ekeh (1974) have looked to the interactions between groups and institutions, while most early exchange theorists focussed on face-to-face exchange relationships. However, social exchange theory can be used to examine face-to-face interactions and interactions between large groups or institutions, as well as those in normatively defined groups (Nye, 1979). Friedman (1987) suggests that it is not how individuals make choices between alternatives but where these alternatives come from that should be focussed on. This more structural exchange theory allows one to see how the exchange relationships are created. Blau (1987) even looks at positions, as in role theory, to account for the pattern of social relationships and not individual motives. These overall patterns create external constraints and opportunities for social relations based on social positions.

When looking beyond a dyadic exchange, Coleman (1987) sees an optimal level whereby any change that benefits one individual will make at least one other person worse off. Coleman also explains that an organization is required to overcome people's motive to benefit themselves at the expense of others. However, he shows that even an action that seems to benefit others over one's self still provides the benefit of rewards from those others who one has helped. It is the internalization of norms which allows for indirect exchange instead of direct exchange. An individual can do someone a favor and receive something in return from a third individual (Blau, 1964).

Therefore, like role theory, social exchange theory can be used to examine both micro and macro level phenomena. "Norms and roles guide but do not completely determine interactions" (Uehara, 1990, p.524). This explanation of behavior using both free will and social structure is explained, as in role theory, by the fact that the norms of the various roles an individual may hold can be incompatible. This incompatibility may result in an individual being forced to break a norm or choosing to do so regardless of the compatibility of roles. Recently theorists have looked at social networks using social exchange theory (Cook, O'Brien, and Kollock, 1990; Cook and Emerson, 1978; Uehara, 1990). They have also seen the importance of exchange theory for linking micro and macro levels of study.

An Integrated Perspective

The roles of a husband or a wife and a cohabiting "boyfriend" or "girlfriend" are different because of the gender role differences, as well as institutional differences. In a comparison of married and cohabiting roles, one can look to the institutionalized nature of marriage. Role performance is more carefully prescribed and supervised for institutionalized relationships (Kotkin, 1983). Cohabiting relationships lack the same prescriptions or even an identifying name (like husband or wife). The married role is often more invasive of a person's interaction; the role status of married individuals is frequently made clear in interaction through the wearing of a wedding ring and the renaming of a woman to "Mrs." (not to mention the changing of her last name). Therefore, role strain is more likely for married individuals and as a result, they will likely be less satisfied with their relationship than cohabitors. It is the relationship itself which is the cause of the role expectations. As well, the roles associated with gender and marital status are pervasive and basic to the individual, and are integral to the intimate relationship. Even when other socio-demographic differences are controlled, there is a large gap between cohabiting and married women's time spent doing housework; cohabiting women are more similar to single women in their household labor time (Shelton and John, 1993). This research shows that it is not the presence of a man in the household that increases women's time spent on housework, but the role of a wife.

In terms of rewards and costs, married individuals will gain more social approval and security than cohabiting individuals, but less autonomy (in terms of role freedom). Also, married individuals will have less role ambiguity than cohabiting individuals. Married individuals will also have a lower comparison level of alternatives because they must go through the process of being legally divorced and live with the status of a divorced person as well as the economic consequences of divorce. In this way their costs of leaving are higher than the costs of cohabitors leaving the relationship. As well, their status may not be better than before if they lose part of their income and may also be stigmatized as a divorced individual. Cohabiting individuals have less costs associated with leaving the relationship. Therefore, the following hypothesis can be proposed:

Hypothesis 1: Marital status will be associated with relationship satisfaction.

Gender roles and relationships roles are intertwined; a husband must, necessarily, be a male. Gender roles are the expectations of behavior for men and women. This is displayed in such things as the division of household labor, type of clothing worn, mannerisms, and value associated with each. The research on gender roles has been extensively reviewed by Caycedo, Wang, and Bahr (1991), and shows that there are gender role differences and that these are important in determining relationship satisfaction. The gender of an individual is usually known immediately and gender role expectations are immediately imposed on interaction. As gender is a role with varying status, one's power to control role behavior and exchange will vary by gender. As such, a second hypothesis can be put forth:

Hypothesis 2: Gender will be associated with relationship satisfaction.

These basic hypotheses regarding gender and marital status will be tested according to the role and social exchange theories. An integration of role and social exchange theories allows for a more complete understanding of behavior, from the large scale structures down to individual interaction.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

The General Social Survey

The data used in this analysis is secondary in nature. The data was collected by Statistics Canada for the General Social Survey, Cycle 10, 1995 and included Canadians over 15 years of age. (The sample excluded residents of the Yukon and Northwest Territories and full-time residents of institutions.) This cycle of the GSS emphasized family, as did the study conducted five years prior (GSS5). The individual within the household who was to respond was randomly selected by the computer. The data was collected evenly between January to December 1995. Most of the sample was collected using the Elimination of Non-Working Banks technique of Random Digit Dialing. (In this way households without telephones were excluded, but this includes less than two percent of the population.) The telephone interview was conducted with the use of Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing methods which allowed for any inconsistencies to be immediately resolved with the respondent. It is a probability sample 10,749 in size. The response rate was 80.7%, which is extremely high (Statistics Canada, 1995).

Weighting

The sample was stratified for selection by province. Therefore, to be able to generalize to the population, a weighting factor was calculated by Statistics Canada which accounts for the geographical stratification, response rate, those with more than one telephone number, and number of persons in the household. When the weighting factor is applied to the data it results in a "sample size" in the millions which is meant to reflect accurately the total Canadian population. This can distort some of the statistical analysis and makes the quick observation of numeric differences difficult. Therefore, the weighting factor was manipulated in order for the number of cases to remain close to the actual sample size (as recommended by Statistics Canada, 1995). To do this, the weighting factor was divided by the mean of the weighting factor for each sub-population and then applied to the data. As a result of the utilization of the weighting factor, the results are generalizable to all Canadians.

Cross-Sectional Design

The sample is cross-sectional in nature (however, a previous cycle on this topic was done in GSS5). A cross-sectional design prevents one from certainty as to the causal nature of phenomenon and represents the population only at one point in time. As the survey does not remeasure the same individuals (is not a panel design), changes at the individual level cannot be determined, only trends at the aggregate level. A comparison of this sample and a previous sample collected five years earlier would allow one to analyze any trends that may have occurred. A comparison with other points in time would be the next step in an analysis to observe any change and differences in the applicability of the model.

Sample Selection and Dependent Variable

Only a portion of the total sample was selected for inclusion in this study: those who are presently married or cohabiting. As a result of this, the sample size is 6016 people. It is the individual, not the couple, which is the unit of analysis. The dependent variable is satisfaction with one's relationship with spouse/partner. This was measured using a Likert-type question with three response categories: "very happy", "fairly happy", and "not too happy". However, only two percent of the responses fall within the "not too happy" category (4320 cases in the first category, 1417 in the second, and 118 in the third). This is very common for questions on this subject, but it creates problems for the data analysis. Essentially, one has a dichotomous dependent variable.

Logistic Regression

The data do not satisfy the assumptions required for an ordinary least squares regression analysis. The residuals are not randomly distributed nor homoscedastic and, instead, form a series of three diagonal lines. In addition, the distribution is not normal but skewed and bimodal. These violations of the regression assumptions result from the nature of the dependent variable. Therefore, despite the robust nature of ordinary least squares regression, it cannot be used to analyze the data because some of the basic assumptions are seriously violated. One way to avoid this problem would be to create a scale for the dependent variable using several measures. However, the prior research in the area has been very unclear as to which variables should be included in a measure of relationship happiness, and recently several researchers have recommended the use of a global measure (such as the one being used) to avoid the confusion surrounding the issue (Fincham and Bradbury, 1987). For example, some researchers have included measures which could, logically, be causally related to relationship happiness in their scale of relationship happiness (see Fincham and Bradbury, 1987). The scales frequently used to measure various types of dyadic satisfaction or adjustment have also been criticized (Johnson *et al.*, 1986). In fact, Johnson *et al.* (1986) assert that the commonly used multidimensional measures of marital quality may be useful for clinical screening but not for research. There are some additional measures which could, reasonably, be included in a measure of relationship happiness or satisfaction, but these are not available in the present data set.

Therefore, logistic regression is the most prudent and comprehensive method of data analysis appropriate for the data. Logistic regression is a data analysis technique which is similar to multiple regression analysis but is more flexible in its assumptions. Ordinary least squares regression (OLS) has many assumptions which must be met. Although these assumptions can sometimes be violated without consequence (due to the robust nature of OLS) logistic regression, using maximum likelihood estimation, can provide superior results (Menard, 1995). When using a dichotomous dependent variable, logistic regression allows one to predict the odds of falling into one category as opposed to the other. Odds, unlike probability, is the ratio of the probability that an event will occur to the probability that it will not occur (Norusis, 1990, p. 49). Therefore, one can predict whether an event will occur and under which conditions.

When using logistic regression the underlying distribution need not be normal. As well, the relationship need not be linear (with random residuals). This is useful when a dependent variable is categorical and these OLS assumptions are violated. Logistic regression transforms the dependent variable from the probability to the odds and then the logit (log of the odds) (Menard, 1995). This allows for several ways to interpret the effects of each independent variable, with the odds ratio being the most clear. As with multiple regression, the overall fit of the model can also be evaluated. Notwithstanding the above, multiple regression (OLS) is a more powerful technique when the assumptions can be met and the dependent variable is continuous. However, when a categorical dependent variable is used, the specificity of the prediction is necessarily decreased; logistic regression provides an effective way to analyze this type of data. If the assumptions of OLS were met, it is likely that the results from maximum likelihood estimation would yield the same results as OLS for the regression coefficients (Menard, 1995).

The fit of the model can be evaluated by comparing the full model to the model with the constant only or to the perfect model (observed frequencies). Several other estimates of fit are provided, such as the likelihood of the observed results being obtained using the model.

The effects of individual independent variables are also known. The Wald test has a Chi-square distribution and is used to test the significance of the coefficients. Partial correlations are also known (reported as the R statistic) and can be used to determine the relative importance of the variables. The odds ratio is also provided, which allows for a more straightforward interpretation of the effect than the logistic regression coefficient (b coefficient measured in log odds of the dependent variable). The odds ratio can be interpreted in the original units of the variable. An odds ratio greater than one indicates that the odds of falling into the dependent variable outcome category increase when the independent variable increases (a positive multiplicative effect) (Menard, 1995). Since logistic regression uses a dichotomous dependent variable the outcome is described as the probability of falling into the category or not. This type of analysis is often used in medical studies to determine something such as the presence of cancer (Tabachnick and Fidell, 1996). This is a simple cancer/no cancer outcome which can be examined in regard to possible causes. A hypothetical example of an interpretation of an odds ratio of 1.3 would be a one unit increase in the independent variable (possibly age) would increase the likelihood of having cancer by 1.3 times or 30%. An exponential coefficient (odds ratio) of .6 would indicate that for those individuals who are vegetarians the odds of getting cancer are multiplied by .6. This means that they are 40% less likely than nonvegetarians to get cancer (1 minus .6).

The use of logistic regression necessarily decreases the specificity of explanation since the dependent variable is dichotomous. As well, one is predicting the likelihood of falling into only one of two categories. In addition, it measures the difference between categories of the independent variable in the likelihood of the presence of the dependent variable. A comparison of categories means that the larger the number of categories of the independent variable the less of an effect would be apparent.

Independent and Dependent Measures

The dependent variable (relationship satisfaction) is, therefore, recoded into a true dichotomous variable by dummy coding as "very happy" and "not very happy" ("fairly happy" or "not too happy"). Gender was dummy coded as female=0 and male=1 and is measured as the respondent's sex. Marital status was dummy coded with married coded as 1. The age of the respondent was measured using the five year grouping variable in the data set. Because of the nature of logistic regression, the large number of original age categories (65) tends to hide any relationship which may exist. The collapsed age variable has 15 categories which still approximates a continuous variable.

Religion was collapsed from 12 categories into four since several of the categories included only two percent of the responses. Dummy coding was also carried out. The categories are: no religious affiliation, Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Other Religious affiliation. Those who are affiliated with the United Church, Anglican, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Baptist or other Protestants create the Protestant category (each group contains about 100 people). Roman Catholics number 2566. Those with other religious affiliations include Eastern Orthodox, Jewish, other non-Protestants, and others.

Frequency of religious attendance is measured as attending at least once a week, at least once a month, a few times a year, at least once a year, not at all, and not applicable. Those who are defined as not applicable have been coded as not at all since those to whom the question is not applicable are those who do not have a religious affiliation.

Highest level of education attended by respondent was also collapsed from 11 categories to three based on the frequency of each. Additionally, it is not a continuous variable so it must be categorically coded. It is measured as those with post-secondary education, high school, or less than high school. Spouse's education is measured in the same way.

Employment status of respondent (as measured by their main activity in the past year) is coded as employed, unemployed, or employed at home ("keeping house"). Those who are unemployed include those who are retired, on maternity/paternity, have a long term illness, or are going to school. Spouse's employment is measured in the same way.

The number of children living in the household full-time was measured as a continuous variable. This is measured as having none, one, two, and three or more children living at home.

The province of residence is collapsed as Maritimes, Quebec, Ontario, and West. The Maritimes includes Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick. West includes Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia. All these categories include roughly the same number of people and represent geographic regions.

The duration of the relationship was calculated using the age of respondent at the start of the relationship and at the time of the survey into number of years of relationship duration. This variable appears to be associated with relationship satisfaction in a curvilinear pattern (quadratic polynomial) with a decline between 15 and 29 years of duration. However, due to the problems associated with polynomial equations, especially in regard to interpretation (see Pedhazer, 1982), the variable is dummy coded based on the shape of the curve (as recommended by Hardy, 1993). This is then coded as those together less than 5 years, 5 years up to 15 years, 15 years up to 30 years, and 30 years and more. This coding scheme also evenly distributes the frequency of responses between categories.

Income has a positively skewed distribution with the majority of respondents having a household income over $40,000. As well, there is a slight curvilinear relationship observed in the crosstabulation. Therefore, income is dummy coded as 0-$29,999, $30,000-49,999, $50,000 and up (based on the crosstabulation) in order to capture any curvilinear effects.

The respondent's age at the start of the relationship was derived from the two separate measures for cohabiting and married individuals. Previous research has shown that the age at the start of the relationship (marriage) is only important for those either under 20 or between 20 and 25 years of age because individuals have had less time to prepare for the new role (see Bahr, Chappel and Leigh, 1983). Age at the start of the relationship is, therefore, dummy coded as those less than 20, 20 up to 25, and 25 or older at the start of the present relationship.

Parental divorce was coded as one if the respondent's parents had ever separated or divorced.

The number of previous relationships includes both previous cohabiting as well as married relationships. Since only about four percent of the sample were not presently in their first union the variable was dummy coded as being in the first union or not (being in at least a second relationship).

Gender role attitude of the respondent was calculated using a scale of three items (determined through factor analysis) measured with Likert-type questions (with four response categories). The items are: belief that both the man and woman should contribute to the household income, belief that raising children is not a man's responsibility, and belief that a man's role is to bring enough money home for his family. The values of the first question described (belief that both men and women should contribute to income) were reversed in order to correspond with the responses for the other questions. Therefore, a low score on the gender role attitude scale indicates a traditional gender role attitudes. The scores range from 4 to 15.

Perception of equality in the relationship was measured using frequency of arguments over chores and responsibilities as an indicator. This Likert scale is coded as often, sometimes, hardly ever, or never. Those who have infrequent arguments over responsibilities will be assumed to perceive the relationship as equal.

Although the use of secondary data are limiting this data set provides much information on the relavent variables. In addition, the large sample size enables generalizations to be made to the entire Canadian population. Logistic regression is a useful technique when the assumptions of ordinary least squares regression are seriously violated. However, logistic regression compares categories and a reduction in the level of the specificity of the data results.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS

Sample Description

The sample consists of 6,016 individuals who are in a married or cohabiting relationship, taken from the larger sample of all 10,749 individuals. These individuals are all presently in a relationship with 858 describing themselves as being "common-law" and the other 5,158 married. In response to the question of how happy their relationship with their partner is, 74% said it was "very happy", 24% said "fairly happy", and 2% said it was "not too happy". With 14% of the sample (a sub-sample of the entire sample) being in a cohabiting relationship, there is enough so that oversampling is unnecessary.

Of the larger overall sample (including single individuals) 9% are cohabiting and 47% are married. However, according to the 1991 Census, 19% of the Canadian population are cohabitors (Statistics Canada, 1991). Yet, in a comparison of GSS(5) (1990) findings and Census (1991) findings, a 9% difference was also found, but with the Census underestimating the number of cohabitors (Statistics Canada, 1991). With the GSS(10) there is a 10% difference but the Census overestimates the number of cohabitors. The 1991 Census was the first to have cohabitation as a variable ("common-law union"). In the 1981 and 1986 Censuses, the information on number of cohabitors was derived from a question on the relationship between the person and other household members; prior to 1981 there was no measure whatsoever (Statistics Canada, 1991).

As the sample used for analysis includes only individuals who are either married or cohabiting, comparisons with the overall population (including all marital status categories) cannot be made. As Table 1 illustrates, this is a very evenly split sample in terms of gender, with 51% male and 49% female. The age range is 15 to 80 (those over 80 years old grouped as 80 and above). The mean age is 45.5 and the median age is 43. The standard deviation for age is 14.58. The mean household income category is $40,000 to $49,999 and the median is $50,000 to 59,999. Considering that continuous income data is not available and the sample includes only individuals in a couple, the mean and median income data is very similar to that of the population (Statistics Canada, 1996). Most of the sample has a high school diploma and 18% have a university degree. In terms of employment, 63% are employed. Those employed at home (described as "keeping house") as their main activity over the past year comprise 19% of the sample. Spouse's main activity (employment status) are almost identical to those values for the respondent. Twenty five percent of the sample is from Quebec and 38% from Ontario. Not including those without children, the mean number of children is 1.23 and the median number is one with a standard deviation of 1.13. The mean duration of the relationship is 18.58 years and the median is 14.8. The duration ranges from 0 to 64.4 years with a standard deviation of 14.89 years.

The sample being analyzed is a sub-sample of the General Social Survey selecting only those who are in a cohabiting or married relationship for inclusion in the analysis. While the demographic characteristics of the sample cannot be directly compared to the overall characteristics of the entire population, one gets an indication of composition of the sample.

Crosstabular Analysis

From the crosstabulation in Table 1, the association between marital status and relationship satisfaction (without any control variables) can be seen. There is a very small statistically significant association between marital status and relationship satisfaction, but it is very weak. In fact, knowing the marital status of an individual would only reduce the errors of predicting relationship satisfaction by .1%. Gender is not significantly associated with relationship satisfaction in the crosstabulation (Table 2). This would fail to support the hypothesis that relationship satisfaction is associated with gender. However, a more sophisticated analysis, which can include and control for the effects of other variables, may prove important in elaborating the relationship. Therefore, logistic regression is the next step in the analysis.

Table 1: Crosstabulation of Relationship Satisfaction with Marital Status

Count Percent	Cohabiting	Married	Marginal Totals
Very Happy	579 70.1%	3740 74.4%	4320 73.8%
Fairly Happy	228 27.6%	1189 23.6%	1417 24.2%
Not Too Happy	19 2.3%	99 2.0%	118 2.0%
Totals	826 14.1%	5028 85.9%	5855 100%

Goodman and Kruskall's Tau = .001 (p=.01)
Cramer's V=.034 (not significant at p=.01)

Table 2: Crosstabulation of Relationship Satisfaction with Gender

Count Percent	Males	Females	Marginal Totals
Very Happy	2229 74.7%	2090 72.8%	4320 73.8%
Fairly Happy	706 23.7%	712 24.8%	1417 24.2%
Not Too Happy	48 1.6%	70 2.4%	118 2.0%
Totals	2983 50.9%	2872 49.1%	5855 100%

Goodman and Kruskall's Tau = .000 (not significant at p=.01)
Cramer's V= .033 (not significant at p=.01)

Variable Descriptions For Logistic Regression Analysis

As discussed in the previous chapter, when using logistic regression it is sometimes necessary to recode the variables. A description of the sample with the coding used for logistic regression is provided in Table 3. The means, standard deviations, and ranges are provided for the continuous variables. For example, the mean frequency of religious attendance falls into category three, which represent those attending a few times a year. The possible scores range from one ("attending at least once a week") to five ("not at all"). For the variables which are dummy coded in the analysis, the percentage of cases in each category is provided instead of a mean. For example, 11.8% of individuals started their present relationship before the age of 20. The mean number of children is category two (those with one child living at home).

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Analysis Sample

Independent Variables	Categories	Mean*	Standard Deviation	Range	Cohabiting		Married	
					Mean*	Std dev	Mean*	Std dev
Married		85.7%	.350					
Male		51.0%	.440		51.1%	.500	51.0%	.500
Religious Denomination	Protestant	36.2%			18.5%		39.0%	
	No Religion	13.2%			21.7%		11.7%	
	Catholic	45.0%			57.7%		42.8%	
	Other Religion	5.7%			1.3%		6.5%	
Religious Attendance		3.3	1.636	1-5	4.2	1.262	3.2	1.650
Education	Post Secondary	44.7%			36.4%		46.1%	
	High School	32.5%			39.7%		31.2%	
	Less than HS	22.8%			23.9%		22.6%	
Spouse's Education	Post Secondary	37.3%			34.2%		37.8%	
	High School	38.3%			41.2%		37.8%	
	Less than HS	24.4%			24.6%		24.4%	
Employment Status	Employed	62.5%			71.9%		60.9%	
	Homemaker	19.1%			11.6%		20.4%	
	Unemployed	18.4%			16.5%		18.7%	
Spouse's Employment	Employed	60.3%			73.6%		58.2%	
	Homemaker	20.9%			11.1%		22.5%	
	Unemployed	18.7%			15.4%		19.3%	
Age at Start of Relationship	0 up to 20	11.8%			11.1%		11.9%	
	20 up to 25	42.1%			26.0%		44.8%	
	25 and older	46.0%			62.6%		43.3%	
Province	Ontario	37.9%			26.3%		39.9%	
	Maritimes	8.3%			6.5%		8.6%	
	West	28.9%			23.6%		29.8%	
	Quebec	24.8%			43.5%		21.7%	
Children at Home		2.04	1.062	1-4	1.7	.903	2.1	1.075
Perception of Equality		2.8	.928	1-4	2.8	.958	2.8	.923
Age		7.7	2.941	1-15	5.6	2.328	8.0	2.890
Second Relationship		18.7%			48.9%		13.7%	
Duration of the Relationship (years)	Less than 5	21.1%			61.2%		14.5%	
	5 up to15	26.5%			32.1%		25.5%	
	15 up to 30	27.8%			6.3%		31.4%	
	30 or more	24.6%			0.5%		28.6%	
Parents Divorced		12.1%			20.8%		10.5%	
Household Income ($1000's)	0 up to $30	21.7%			18.8%		21.2%	
	$30 up to $50	28.1%			32.4%		27.4%	
	$50 and over	50.2%			43.1%		51.4%	
Gender Role Attitude		11.2	1.874	4-15	11.6	1.915	11.1	1.86
Relationship Satisfaction	Very Satisfied	73.8%			70.1%		74.4%	

*Percent shown for categorical variables

Married and Cohabiting Individuals

There are several interesting findings shown in the second part of Table 3 when one compares cohabiting and married individuals along the variables measured. Married people are more likely to be Protestant than cohabitors with 39% of married respondents being Protestant and only 18.5% of cohabitors. The opposite is true for Roman Catholics which make up 57.7% of all cohabitors and only 42.8% of married individuals. A lower proportion of cohabitors claim no religious affiliation than married individuals. In addition, cohabitors attend religious events and services less frequently than those who are married. The mean category for attendance at religious events or services for cohabitors is "at least once a year", whereas for married respondents it is "a few times a year".

In terms of basic demographic differences, a lower proportion of cohabitors and their spouses have a post secondary education than do married individuals. As well, in terms of employment and spouse's employment, cohabitors are more likely to be employed, with few working as homemakers compared to married individuals. The same proportion of married and cohabiting respondents started their relationship under 20 years of age, but after that point large differences emerge. Married individuals are evenly split, in terms of age at the start of their relationship, between those who start between 20 and 25 and those who start later. However, most cohabitors (62%) start their relationship over the age of 25. While the mean age of cohabitors is lower than for married individuals cohabiting it is not primarily done by teenagers. In fact, according to the 1991 Census, there are more cohabitors over 45 years of age than under 25 (Statistics Canada, 1991). For almost half of cohabitors their present relationship is not their first relationship. It may be that, although relatively young, cohabitors started their present relationships at a later age because they were in other relationships prior. The large proportion of cohabitors who start their relationship at a later age is an interesting finding which has not been previously discussed in the literature. This should be pursued further, as it could shed some light on many previous descriptions of cohabitors, and may indicate a change in cohabiting behavior. As the numbers of cohabitors are increasing most rapidly for those over 35 years of age (Statistics Canada, 1991), and almost half of cohabitors are not in their first relationship, cohabiting may often be chosen by those who have divorced.

The proportional distribution of the province of residence of cohabiting and married individuals is quite different. Of cohabitors, 43.5% reside in Quebec. This is a large proportion when only 25% of the sample is from that province. In addition, only 21.7% of married individuals reside in Quebec. It is therefore important to have province of residence as a control variable in the analysis. Cohabitors have fewer children than married individuals but it is not rare for a cohabitor to have children. The mean for cohabitors falls between the categories of having none and one child at home. For married individuals the mean number of children at home is one. In terms of the perception of equality, with regard to equally shared responsibilities, cohabitors and married respondents are identical.

The duration of the relationship varies according to marital status. Most cohabitors are together less than five years, and most married individuals are together more than 15 years. In fact, less than 1% of cohabitors have been in their relationships for more than 30 years, while almost 30% of married respondents have. This is a dramatic difference which has been consistently found in previous research and will be an important consideration in the analysis. Another interesting difference is in the rate of parental divorce: twice the proportion of cohabitors' parents have divorced compared to married individuals. This may indicate that the type of individual who chooses to cohabit is different than those who marry, as some have suggested. Household incomes are quite similar for married and cohabiting respondents as are the gender role attitudes reported. In addition, in terms of the rates of relationship satisfaction, there is a 4% difference in the proportion who are very happy.

There are some interesting differences in the distribution of married and cohabiting individuals in the variables studied. These differences themselves are interesting in comparing married and cohabiting individuals. As well, these differences may prove to be important factors in the experience of individuals' relationships. In addition, these differences may, themselves, be related to relationship satisfaction so that when they are controlled in a regression analysis, differences in relationship satisfaction as a result of marital status or gender emerge.

Logistic Regression Analysis

Fit of the Model

Logistic regression analysis was performed using SPSS on 5734 cases (282 excluded because of missing values). In an examination of the findings (Table 4) one can see the effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable, relationship satisfaction. However, before an examination of the importance of individual factors, one must first examine the overall fit of the model. The fit of the model shows if there is a relationship between all of the independent variables together (as a model) and the dependent variable, beyond that possible by chance alone. A comparison of the constant-only model with the model including the constant and all independent variables is conducted to determine if the variables are related to the outcome. (That is, if they contribute to an improvement in the fit of the model.) The statistic used in this comparison is the "improvement" statistic which is a chi square measure of the improvement in fit of model including the independent variables, over the constant-only model. The full model analyzed is a statistically significant improvement over the model with the constant only. Therefore, the independent variables increase the predictive value of the model and the model is useful in explaining relationship satisfaction.

There is another method to assess the fit of the model which is a pseudo-R^2 (Menard, 1995). This measure approximates the coefficient of determination or explained variance of the model (R^2) in OLS regression and has an equally straightforward interpretation. R^2 indicates the proportion by which the use of the model reduces the error of prediction in comparison to the mean. This pseudo-R^2 is a proportional reduction in chi square and indicates how much the "badness-of-fit" is reduced. In this case, the full model reduces the errors of prediction by 7.5%. This is a small amount of reduction in error indicating that the model has a poor fit, therefore, the model does a poor job of predicting the dependent variable accurately.

Given that the model has a poor degree of fit, especially considering the large size of the sample, the contributions of the independent variables must be viewed with some skepticism. However, although the overall model may not indicate a strong relationship between the independent and dependent variables, a few of the variables may still be significantly related to the dependent variable.

Effects of Individual Independent Variables

To examine the individual variables and their effect on the dependent variable, one looks to the exponential logistic regression coefficients (odds ratio, exp-b). (This coefficient is similar to the regression coefficient or effect statistic in OLS.) First, one must determine if the effect of an independent variable on the dependent variable is statistically significant. This is done using the Wald statistic, which is chi square based. Given the large sample size, only variables which are significant at the $p < .01$ level are considered to be statistically significant.

As can be seen in Table 4, many of the independent variables are not associated with the dependent variable in a statistically significant manner. This is not surprising given the meager overall fit of the model. (The poor fit of the model indicates that there is little association between the independent and dependent variables.) In fact, a third of the independent variables in the model are found to have no statistically significant association with relationship satisfaction: gender, education, spouse's employment, age at start of relationship, having a previous union, and gender role attitude. These variables, when

controlling for the effects of the other variables in the model, do not effect relationship satisfaction.

Table 4: Logistic Regression Exponential Coefficients for Relationship Satisfaction

Independent Variables	Categories	Full Model Exp(b)	Trim Model Exp(b)	Left out category
Married		1.611**	1.583**	Cohabiting
Male		1.175		Female
Religious Denomination	No Religion	.745*	.747*	Protestant
	Catholic	.855	.838	
	Other Religion	.623**	.626**	
Religious Attendance		.916**	.920**	
Education	Post Secondary	1.159		Less than High School
	High School	1.220		
Spouse's Education	Post Secondary	1.479**	1.520**	Less than High School
	High School	1.332**	1.382**	
Employment Status	Employed	.767**	.765*	Unemployed
	Homemaker	.900	.813	
Spouse's Employment	Employed	.966		Unemployed
	Homemaker	.960		
Age at Start of Relationship	0 up to 20	.982		25 years and older
	20 up to 25	.856		
Province	Ontario	1.967**	1.963**	Quebec
	Maritimes	1.704**	1.685**	
	West	1.536**	1.531**	
Children at Home		.846**	.856**	
Perception of Equality		1.692**	1.688**	
Age		.877**	.902**	
Second Relationship		1.075		First Relationship
Duration of the Relationship	5 up to15years	.652**	.616**	Less than 5 years
	15 up to 30	.669*	.578**	
	30 or more	.798	.632*	
Parents Divorced		.753*	.749*	Parents not divorce
Household Income ($1000's)	0 up to $30	.786*	.782*	$50 and over
	$30 up to $50	1.154	1.150	
Gender Role Attitude		.984		
-2 LogLikelihood		6058.9	6087.3	
Improvement (Chi square)		494.5	479.9	
Pseudo R square		.075	.073	
Number of Cases		5734	5744	
*p=.01 **p=.001				

Marital status, however, is significantly associated with relationship satisfaction. In fact, married individuals are 61% more likely to be very happy with their relationship than cohabiting individuals. This is the effect of marital status controlling for all the other effects of the other variables on relationship satisfaction -- the effect of marital status holding all other things (independent variables) constant. Religious denomination and frequency of attendance, spouse's education, employment status, province, children at home, perception of equality, age, duration, parental divorce, and income are all associated with relationship satisfaction. Perception of equality in the relationship is the most important predictor of relationship satisfaction among the independent variables. However, given the large number of nonsignificant independent variables, a trimmed model is proposed which includes only those variables that were significant in the full model.

Those variables that are not statistically significant in the full model are eliminated and assumed to have no effect on relationship satisfaction. The resulting trimmed model has a slightly poorer fit than the full model. This difference is very small and indicates that, in fact, those independent variables which were not significant in the full model, do not effect the dependent variable. However, the modest decrease in fit of the trimmed model can be explained because, in the full model, the reduction in error may be shared among some of the nonsignificant variables since the trimmed model explains slightly less of the variance. As well, although no interaction effects were found to be significant, there may be some low level interaction taking place among some of the independent variables, since the effect of marital status increases in the trimmed model. However, in the trimmed model the relative importance of the variables changes little, with perception of equality remaining prominent.

With the exception of marital status, all of the logistic regression exponential coefficients in both the full and trimmed models are very similar. This would be expected since those variables eliminated were assumed to have no effect on relationship satisfaction. Therefore, the trimmed model will be used for an interpretation of the individual effects of the variables. However, due to the poorness of the fit of the overall model, these effects should be interpreted with caution.

Married individuals are, generally, more satisfied with their relationships. They are 58% more likely to be very satisfied with their relationships (as opposed to fairly satisfied) than cohabiting individuals. This would support the hypothesis that marital status and relationship satisfaction are associated, but not in the direction predicted. However, gender does not appear to be an important factor in determining relationship satisfaction. Being a man or woman should make no significant difference in one's level of relationship satisfaction when controlling for the effects of the other variables.

Religious denomination is significant for those in the "other religion" category (not Protestant or Catholic) in regard to relationship satisfaction. In fact, those who claim to belong to a religious denomination other than Protestant or Catholic are 37% less likely than Protestants to be very satisfied with their relationships. Those with no religious affiliation are also less likely to be very satisfied with their relationships than Protestants (by 25%). Catholics do not differ, statistically, from Protestants in terms of relationship satisfaction. An increased frequency of attendance at religious functions also increases one's probability of being very satisfied. When the frequency of religious attendance decreases by one unit (from weekly to monthly to a few times a year to once a year or to never) the odds of being very satisfied with one's relationship decrease by 8%.

The highest level of spouse's education (but not one's own education) is associated with relationship satisfaction. Those with spouses with a high school diploma are more likely to be very satisfied with their relationship than those with spouses without high school and those with spouses without a post secondary education are even more likely to be very satisfied with their relationship. One's own employment status is associated with relationship satisfaction, but spouse's employment status is not. Those who are homemakers do not have a statistically different probability of being very satisfied with their relationship than the unemployed. However, employed individuals are 23.5% less likely to be very satisfied with their relationship than unemployed individuals. Those who are employed are the least likely to be very satisfied with their relationship.

Regional differences in relationship satisfaction are also visible. Those who live in Quebec are less likely to be satisfied with their relationship than those in any other region of Canada when controlling for the effects of the other differences which may be present in the other variables. For every additional child living in the household (up to three), the odds of being very satisfied with one's relationship are multiplied by .856 (therefore, it declines by 14%). As the perception of equality with the relationship increases, so does the probability of being very satisfied with one's relationship. For every unit that an individual increases on the scale of the perception of equality with the relationship (ranging from one to four), the probability of being very satisfied with that relationship increases by 68%.

Those who have been together for less than five years are more likely to be very satisfied with their relationship than those who have been together longer. Those relationships 15 to 30 years in duration are the least likely to be very satisfying (42% less likely to be very happy compared to durations of less than five years). This shows that there is a curvilinear relationship between duration and relationship satisfaction. This effect holds true when controlling for the effects of age and presence of children. This may indicate that the finding of a curvilinear relationship between family stage and relationship satisfaction of family life cycle research is primarily an effect of the duration of the relationship.

The odds of being very satisfied with one's relationship are .749 times lower for those whose parents have divorced. This effect is controlling for marital status which is important since, as discussed earlier, cohabitors are more likely to have divorced parents than married individuals. Yet, the effect of parental divorce on relationship satisfaction exists for cohabiting and married respondents. Those with a low household income (under $30,000) have 21% lower odds of being very satisfied with their relationship as compared to those with an income of $50,000 or more. The results show that those earning in the middle category ($30,000 up to $50,000) appear to be the most likely to be satisfied, but this statistic is not statistically significant (a curvilinear association, however, is evident).

Some of the effects of the independent variables on the likelihood of being very happy with one's relationship are statistically and substantively significant. For example, the duration of the relationship is important, regardless of other correlated factors, in determining relationship satisfaction. Overall, however, the model does not provide much explanatory power for the outcome. Therefore, to examine further the differences between cohabiting and married individuals, and to search for a better fit to the model, separate logistic regression analyses were performed for cohabitors and married respondents. The results show that the model fits better for married individuals than for cohabitors. Only two of the independent variables in the trimmed model were significant for cohabitors (number of children, perception of equality). (The effect of the duration of the relationship for cohabitors alone cannot be interpreted using the present coding scheme because so few cohabitors are in the longer duration categories.) Using the full model, four independent variables become significant for cohabitors (frequency of religious attendance, number of children present, perception of equality, and age). It appears that some of the variables excluded in the trimmed model are important factors for cohabitors.

While there are several independent variables that are significantly related to relationship satisfaction in the model with cohabitors and married individuals combined, it appears that the model is more appropriate for married individuals. However, the trimmed model including marital status as a dependent variable does provide some useful information on factors associated with relationship satisfaction.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

The findings of this study are surprising in several ways. First of all, many of the individual effects of the independent variables are unexpected. Secondly, the hypothesized results are not confirmed by the results obtained in this study. Finally, there is the overall poor fit of the model.

Individual Effects

There are several independent variables which are not significantly associated with relationship satisfaction, but, as demonstrated in the literature review, some of these variables have, in the past, been related to relationship satisfaction. For example, age at the start of the relationship has been found to be significantly associated with relationship satisfaction in previous research (Demaris and Rao, 1992; Teachman and Polonko, 1990), but is not significant in this study. However, these studies actually measured age at marriage and only included married individuals or those who had been married. This is true for many of the variables in this analysis; most previous research only sampled married individuals and did not include marital status as an independent variable. Gender role attitude also has been found to be significant for relationship satisfaction in previous research (Blair, 1993; Ray, 1990), yet it is not significant in this thesis. However, as mentioned above, many of these studies only sampled married couples. Additionally, the measurement of gender role attitude can vary considerably and this also may account for the contradictory findings.

However, there have been contradictory findings by researchers involving many variables in this analysis, such as education, previous relationships, age, number of children, duration, spouse's level of education, and parental divorce. Some researchers have found the independent variable, level of education of respondent, to be significantly associated with relationship satisfaction, while others have not. Yet, many of these studies (e.g., Kaslow and Robison, 1996; Elder *et al.*, 1990) have not used random samples representative of the overall population. In the present study, which is generalizable to the entire population (of couples), education was not found to be associated with relationship satisfaction. However, it is an important variable to include, since cohabitors, in general, have a lower level of education than married individuals. Inconsistent findings were also found for the number of previous relationships. For this variable many different measures have been used in previous research, such as a previous marriage, a previous cohabiting relationship, or both (Nock, 1995; Stets, 1993; Vemer *et al.*, 1989). Therefore, in terms of having had a previous relationship (either cohabiting or married), for those who are either presently married or cohabiting, this study finds the factor not to be important in regards to relationship satisfaction. This specific analysis has not previously been performed. Age has been found to be related to relationship satisfaction in a number of ways: linear, curvilinear and not at all (Suitor, 1991; Kamo, 1993). The present research finds a positive linear association between age and relationship satisfaction. Duration has also been found to be linear, curvilinear or not at all associated with relationship satisfaction yet the present research finds a curvilinear relationship. Repondent's parents having divorced has had inconsistent results in regard to relationship satisfaction but this analysis finds that it is significantly associated with relationship satisfaction.

The perception of equality within a relationship has been measured in varying ways in previous research, yet it has been consistently associated with relationship satisfaction. The results from this sample also confirm this finding. In fact, it is the most important independent variable in the model for predicting relationship satisfaction.

Province or region of residence has not been previously examined in this context (as many studies only sample from one region or city or from American populations) and the results are surprising. In fact, region of residence is significantly associated with relationship satisfaction when controlling for the other independent variables. The predominance of certain religious denominations varies by region (Quebec has a large proportion of Catholics) but religious denomination is controlled for in the analysis. Therefore, region of residence itself impacts on relationship satisfaction. This finding is curious and may represent some other, unmeasured, factors which may vary by region (such as role expectations, level of social support, overall levels of stress or life satisfaction, or social acceptance of cohabitation).

Theoretical Explanations

Regarding the hypothesis of gender and relationship satisfaction, there is no statistically significant association between gender and relationship satisfaction either in the crosstabulation or the logistic regression analysis. The logistic regression analysis controls for many of the differences which may exist between men and women (such as level of education or employment status) that may not, themselves, effect relationship satisfaction. The lack of gender differences in relationship satisfaction contradicts most of the previous research which has found that men are generally more satisfied than women with their relationships. (In fact, it appears that men are slightly more likely to be very satisfied with their relationships, but it is not a statistically significant difference in this analysis.) This would indicate that gender roles have little impact on relationship satisfaction, which runs counter to the hypothesis made using role and exchange theory. This may be accounted for in several different ways. First, gender roles may no longer be associated with different levels of power that would allow males to benefit more from social exchanges and have more discretion in role enactment. The second explanation is that although there may be different role expectations for men and women, both may be associated with an equal amount of role strain and this could account for their similar level of relationship satisfaction. The third possible explanation relates to the comparison level described in exchange theory; one's satisfaction depends on the profit one expects from social exchange relationships compared to past experiences and the experiences of others with whom one compares one's self. Women could compare their situation (exchange relationship and corresponding level of profit) to that of other women and to their past experiences and not to men's situations or experiences. In this way, one only compares one's situation to those of others in a similar role position. Therefore, even though women may fare more poorly than men in dyadic exchange relationships, this would not affect women's perception of satisfaction, because they would not compare their situations to those of males. Exchange theory also states that individuals set their expectations according to their past experience of what profit they can expect from social exchange relationships. Following this, it is possible that when women look at their situations they are satisfied with less than men because it is what they expect they deserve and they do not expect that they could do better in a different relationship.

The second hypothesis proposed focused on marital status. The association between marital status and relationship satisfaction fails to reject the initial hypothesis. However, the association is not in the direction expected. The nature of this association is that cohabitors are less likely to be very satisfied with their relationships than are married individuals. The one previous study on this issue found the opposite (Nock, 1995). However, Nock's study was only generalizable to those with a relationship duration of less than ten years and the data was collected in 1987 and 1988 in the United States. Since the present study includes relationships of all durations and the data was collected more recently, the present study is more representative of Canadian individuals' relationship satisfaction in the 1990's. However, the findings of the study do not correspond to the direction of the association between marital status and relationship satisfaction that was theorized.

Once again, role and exchange theories may provide an explanation for the findings. First, with regard to the comparison level and reference group, cohabitors may compare their relationship and situation to that of dating individuals rather than married individuals. Those who are dating may have a higher level of relationship satisfaction because of the short duration and initial excitement, so that, in comparison, cohabitors may see their relationship, as less satisfying. However, were cohabitors to compare their situation, to those of married people, they might perceive their situation as more satisfying.

The second reason for cohabitors having a lower relationship satisfaction than married individuals may be due to the effect of the perceived role expectations (which were not measured in the data set used). As mentioned in chapter three, role expectations come from one's self, alters, and external observers. The degree of role strain is related to the conflict or ambiguity an individual perceives from these sources. Any strain that is experienced is the result of a subjective interpretation of expectations and conflicts in expectations. This perception is not measured and has not been comprehensively measured in any previous study. One study has measured one aspect of role expectations in connection to relationship satisfaction. The effect of the expectations of parents may be an important factor in the relationship satisfaction of cohabitors (and not married individuals) as Nock (1995) found that cohabitors had poorer relationships with their parents than married individuals. He also found that the quality of the relationships of cohabitors with their parents was key to determining their relationship satisfaction. There are two types of role strain, role conflict and role ambiguity, these could be differentially important for married or cohabiting relationships when comprehensively measured.

The conflict between the role expectations of one's self and those of others, for example, should be measured. Social approval is one aspect of the conflict between the role expectations of self and others, narrowly relating to the occupation of the position itself. This may be important factor that was not measured in this, or any previous, analyses. The perception of social approval of the role of cohabitors may effect cohabitors' level of relationship satisfaction. If the role is not deemed legitimate, then an individual will be discouraged from entering or maintaining that position. However, for a role which encompasses such a large part of one's life, any disdain by others of the cohabitor's situation (and the relationship itself) may weigh heavily on a cohabitor. The disapproval of one's lifestyle by someone with whom the cohabitor interacts (especially family) may adversely affect the cohabiting relationship. This could be a key factor for determining relationship satisfaction. Married individuals may also experience social disapproval but this may be less common as marriage is a socially sanctioned institution. Yet, very young people who marry may also be condemned for their position within that relationship. The inclusion of the perception of the social approval of one's marital status social position could greatly improve the power of the model in predicting relationship satisfaction, especially for cohabitors. A measure of perceived social approval could include general social approval but especially that of family and friends.

For example, parents may not agree that cohabiting is an appropriate role for an individual and might apply pressure on them to conform to approved roles for individuals who live together. This would create role strain for individuals since their role expectations conflict with those of others. Although the alter and the actor agree on a renegotiated role, the audience does not approve. Therefore, the role strain associated with roles may not be accurately measured in this analysis, and therefore the theoretical prediction may still be accurate.

Role ambiguity, the second type of role strain, could be especially important for cohabitors' relationship satisfaction. Role ambiguity exists when an individual lacks clear information about role expectations, how to enact that behavior, or what will result from such behavior (Van Sell *et al.*, 1981). Cohabitation is not an institutionalized relationship which would provide legal and social definition to the role. Cohabitants lack even a descriptive term for the role such as husband or wife. Individuals who are cohabiting may find it difficult to know how to refer to their partner in an introduction to others; there is no term for those who are more than a boyfriend but not a husband. The cohabiting role may lack clear role expectations and this could result in role strain for cohabitors. Role strain is stressful and role strain resulting from one's relationship role may result in the relationship itself judged not very satisfying.

A third explanation for the findings related to marital status and relationship satisfaction is that the level of investment in the relationship may vary between cohabiting and married individuals. For married individuals, even after divorce one may be legally obligated to the ex-spouse. Therefore, for married individuals, the increased costs associated with leaving the relationship may make staying in the relationship more attractive and make the relationship itself seem more satisfying than the same relationship for a cohabitor. Therefore, the alternatives to the married relationship are associated with greater costs than for cohabiting relationships. The level of commitment to the role may also vary between cohabiting and married individuals and this too may account for married individuals being more satisfied with their relationship than cohabitors. As Turner (1985) suggested, those roles which require the highest degree of investment to attain and maintain are more likely to result in an individual locating one's self within. The married role may require more investment than the cohabiting role and, therefore, may result in a greater commitment to the role itself. Consequently, married individuals will place that role high on the hierarchy of roles and will alter other role expectations to benefit the enactment of the married role. As well, when one has the self located within the role and acts on the role expectations without awareness one is less likely to be aware of the choices. In this way married individuals may be less aware of conflicts arising from the married role and may be more satisfied with their relationship than cohabitors.

Model Fit

The poor fit of the model, which contains many variables included in previous analyses, may be the result of including marital status as a variable. Since few studies included marital status as a variable, it could be that previous models were never associated with relationship satisfaction if marital status had been controlled for. Many of the previous models may have only applied for married individuals, yet, in this study the model fits poorly even for married individuals alone. Therefore, the poor fit of the model containing many variables from previous models may indicate that those models which accounted for relationship satisfaction no longer apply. This could be the result of a changing society or relationships. As well, since cohabitation is increasing so rapidly and including a greater variety of individuals (e.g., older individuals) the previous models which did measure cohabiting individuals may no longer apply.

In addition, there may be different types of cohabitors possibly based on their level of investment in or commitment to the relationship itself (not just the role). Some researchers have suggested that this is true (e.g., Stets, 1993). Individuals planning to marry the people with whom they are cohabiting may demonstrate an increased level of commitment, as Stets (1993) measured. The level of commitment was found by Nock (1995) to differ for cohabiting and married individuals. He measured commitment as perceived costs and benefits of separation (which would equate to the definition of investment used here). In any case, there may be different types of cohabitors, which may explain why the model does not fit for cohabitors as a whole. As a result, cohabitors should not be measured as a homogeneous group, but analyzed to determine whether or not there are differences within the group. Different factors may be important for each type of cohabitor.

Limitations and Advantages

The results of this study provide some important findings regarding the relationship satisfaction of married and cohabiting individuals. However, there are some limitations to the study. As the data used are secondary, one must accept the method as it is and must use only those variables which are included. In this way, secondary data forces one to use variables which might not have been measured in the way which one would have liked, and one is limited to those variables which are found in the data set. As well, the design is cross-sectional, so the causal nature of the association between the independent and dependent variables cannot be confirmed. This design does not allow one to follow a couple from cohabitation to marriage to see how their relationship is altered. However, a design such as that would also create problems regarding the exclusion of factors associated with the type of individual who cohabits before marriage or the duration of the relationship (as a result of cohabiting prior to marriage) or those who cohabit but do not marry. As well, within-couple comparisons cannot be made using this data, since individuals were measured and not their spouses. In this way, the perception of relationship satisfaction for both partners in the relationship cannot be compared.

The advantages of this study are that it uses relatively recent Canadian data from a large sample and uses a larger number of independent variables than most previous research. Additionally, it includes cohabitors in the sample and a measure of marital status in the model. In this way, the effect of marriage, as an institution, on a relationship can begin to be evaluated. These findings can be generalizable to all Canadian cohabiting and married couples.

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that much more research must be conducted on relationship satisfaction. Much of the previous research has resulted in inconsistent findings and has lacked a theoretical explanation. Many of the findings of this study are surprising in regard to both the initial theoretical position and previous research results. The poor fit of the model may indicate that previous models which were similar no longer apply. Furthermore, the factors which are associated with marital satisfaction may not be associated with relationship satisfaction for cohabitors (as the separate logistic analysis suggested) and this may indicate that they are fundamentally different relationships. Yet, it is also possible that a more completely specified model may account for the relationship satisfaction of both relationships.

Role and exchange theories, when integrated, provide an explanation of individual behavior through both structural constraints and individual freedom. Yet, role theory itself also must be integrated in this way; structuralist and interactionist perspectives focus on different aspects of behavior and role expectations (constraints and freedom). Role strain, resulting from a difficulty in meeting role expectations, may effect the satisfaction which one gets from one's life and from one's intimate relationship.

The factors which relate to role strain and to relationship satisfaction have not been completely determined by this analysis. However, some factors which are not associated with one's level of relationship satisfaction have been found. This analysis shows that the institutional nature of the relationship is associated with relationship satisfaction. However, gender is not important in determining relationship satisfaction.

These are some of the important implications that arise from the findings of this research and many of them raise fundamental questions about our knowledge of societal relationships. Cohabiting and married relationships may be so different that one model may not apply to both. As well, it is possible that the social position associated with gender roles may not be as important as previously thought.

Future Research

The overall fit of the model used in this analysis is very poor and indicates that the model which was developed to explain the variation in relationship satisfaction is not very useful. Therefore, a more complete model must be developed. The poor fit of the model used in this study indicates that the model is misspecified, presumably, with important independent variables left out of the model. Ideally, a comprehensive measure of the subjective experience of role expectations and strains should be conducted. However, it is difficult to determine the perceived role expectations from all the sources (self, alter, and others) or even those which the individual holds for one's self. An in depth interview may be required to determine an individual's perception of role expectations, where they come from, how they are dealt with, and the extent to which role strain may impact one's life. Consequently in a quantitative study, the present model could be used, with the addition of some of the available information on role expectations, such as the measure of the quality of the relationship with parents used by Nock (1995).

Additionally, a determination of types of cohabitors should be sought. Cohabitors should not be measured as a homogenous group but analyzed to determine the differences within the group. Different factors may be important for each type of cohabitors that further research could determine in order to develop a better specified model for all types of relationships. However, it may also be determined that no one model applies to cohabiting and married relationships.

The finding that region of residence is associated with relationship satisfaction should lead to a search for the factors which may be associated with region of residence. It is these underlying factors which may be associated with region but which may have an independent effect on relationship satisfaction that may be important to understand in order to determine a proper causal model of relationship satisfaction.

As well, much more research must be carried out which directly compares married and cohabiting individuals. There are very few studies which have examined this issue and, as this study as shown, there is much to learn.

Research methodology is another area where future research should concentrate. The large number of small and nonrepresentative samples and the varying qualifications for inclusion in the sample may account for some of the inconsistent findings. As well, most samples are American and many of these studies use the same sample for analysis. More rigor is required in the research methodology used in future research.

Finally, as researchers have been reiterating for years, the most important direction for future research is the development of consistent conceptual and operational definitions of the key concepts such as cohabitation, and relationship satisfaction. These serious definitional inconsistencies may account for many of the contradictory findings. The lack of consistency almost renders much of the research useless since it is almost impossible to compare findings. In fact, this problem may be masking changes which may occur over time, since the findings cannot be reliably compared.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adelmann, Pamela *et al.* 1996. Marital Quality of Black and White Adults Over the Life Course. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 13 (3):361-384.

Aida, Yuki and Toni Falbo. 1991. Relationships Between Marital Satisfaction, Resources, and Power Strategies. *Sex Roles* 24 (1/2):43-56.

Amato, Paul and Alan Booth. 1995. Changes in Gender Role Attitudes and Perceived Marital Quality. *American Sociological Review* 60:58-66.

Amato, Paul and Alan Booth. 1991. Consequences of Parental Divorce and Marital Unhappiness for Adult Well-Being. *Social Forces* 69 (3):895-914.

Axinn, William and Arland Thornton. 1993. Mothers, Children, and Cohabitation. *American Sociological Review* 58 (2):233-246.

Bahr, Stephen, C. Bradford Chappell, and Geoffrey Leigh. 1983. Age at Marriage, Role enactment, Role Consensus, and Marital Satisfaction. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 45:795-803.

Baker, Wayne and Robert Faulkner. 1991. Role as Resource in the Hollywood Film Industry. *American Journal of Sociology* 97 (2):279-309.

Berger, Bennett M. 1995. Introduction to the Transaction Edition. Pp. vii-xi in *Social Roles & Social Institutions*, edited by Judith Blau and Norman Goodman. New Brunswick, USA: Transaction Publishers.

Biddle, B.J. 1986. Recent Developments in Role Theory. *Annual Review of Sociology* 12:67-92.

Blair, Sampson Lee. 1993. Employment, Family, and Perceptions of Marital Quality Among Husbands and Wives. *Journal of Family Issues* 14 (2):189-212.

Blau, Peter. 1995. Multigroup Affiliations and complex Role-Sets. Pp. 37-51 in *Social Roles & Social Institutions*, edited by Judith Blau and Norman Goodman. New Brunswick, USA: Transaction Publishers.

Blau, Peter. 1987. Microprocess and Macrostructure. Pp. 83-100 in *Social Exchange Theory*, edited by Karen Cook. Newbury Park CA: Sage Publications.

Blau, Peter. 1964. *Exchange and Power in Social Life*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Bowen, Gary Lee and Dennis K. Orthner. 1983. Sex-role Congruency and Marital Quality. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 45:223-229.

Brinkerhoff, M. and Marlene Mackie. 1985. Religion and Gender: A Comparison of Canadian and American Student Attitudes. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*. 45 (2):415-429.

Burr, Wesley R. 1973. *Theory Construction and the Sociology of the Family*. Toronto: John Wiley & Sons.

Callero, Peter L. 1994. From Role-Play to Role-Using: Understanding Rose as Resource. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 57 (3):228-243.

Caycedo, Julio, Gabe Wang and Stephen Bahr. 1991. Gender Roles in the Family. Pp. 435-491 in *Family Research: A Sixty-Year Review: 1930-1990*, edited by Stephen J. Bahr. Toronto: Maxwell MacMillan Canada.

Clarkberg, Marin *et al.* 1995. Attitudes, Values, and Entrance in to Cohabitational versus Marital Unions. *Social Forces* 74 (2):609-634.

Coleman, James. 1987. Free Riders and Zealots. Pp. 59-82 in *Social Exchange Theory*, edited by Karen Cook. Newbury Park CA: Sage Publications.

Cook, Karen S., Jodi O'Brien, and Peter Kollock. 1990. Exchange Theory: A Blueprint for Structure and Process. Pp.158-181 in *Frontiers of Social Theory: The New Syntheses*, edited by George Ritzer. New York: Columbia University Press.

Cook, Karen S. and Richard Emerson. 1978. Power, Equity and Commitment in Exchange Networks. *American Sociological Review* 43:721-739.

Davis, Kingsley. 1966. Status and Related Concepts. Pp. 67-73 in *Role Theory*, edited by Bruce Biddle and Edwin Thomas. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Demaris, Alfred and K. Vaninadha Rao. 1992. Premarital Cohabitation and Subsequent Marital Stability in the United States. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 54:178-190.

Dudley, Margaret and Frederick Kosinski, Jr. 1990. Religiosity and Marital Satisfaction: A Research Note. *Review of Religious Research* 32 (1):78-86.

Eisenstadt, S.N. and H.J. Helle. 1985. *Micro-Sociological Theory*. London: Sage Publications.

Ekeh, Peter. 1974. *Social Exchange Theory: The Two Traditions*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Elder, Glen Jr. *et al.* 1990. Linking Economic Hardship to Marial Quality and Instability. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 52:643-656.

Emerson, Richard. 1987. Toward a Theory of Value in Social Exchange. Pp. 11-46 in *Social Exchange Theory*, edited by Karen Cook. Newbury Park CA: Sage Publications.

Fincham, Frank D. and Thomas N. Bradbury. 1987. The Assessment of Marital Quality. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 49:797-809.

Fowers, Blaine. 1991. His and Her Marriage: A Multivariate Study of Gender and Marital Satisfaction. *Sex Roles* 24 (3/4):209-221.

Friedman, Debra. 1987. Notes on "Toward a Theory of Value in Social Exchange". Pp. 47-58 in *Social Exchange Theory*, edited by Karen Cook. Newbury Park CA: Sage Publications.

Friedman, Debra and Michael Hechter. 1990. The Comparative Advantages of Rational Choice Theory. Pp. 214-229 in *Frontiers of Social Theory*, edited by George Ritzer. New York: Columbia University Press.

Glenn, Norval. 1990. Quantitative Research on Marital Quality in the 1980's. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 52:818-831.

Goode, William J. 1966. Norm Commitment and Conformity to Role-Status Obligations. Pp.313-317 in *Role Theory*, edited by Bruce Biddle and Edwin Thomas. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Greenstein, Theodore. 1996. Gender Ideology and Perceptions of the Fairness of the Division of Household Labor. *Social Forces* 74(3):1029-1042.

Gross, Neal *et al.* 1966. Role Conflict and Its Resolution. Pp 287-296 in *Role Theory*, edited by Bruce Biddle and Edwin Thomas. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Hall, David. 1996. Marriage as a Pure Relationship: Exploring the Link Between Premarital Cohabitation and Divorce in Canada. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 27(1):1-12.

Hardy, Melissa. 1993. *Regression with Dummy Variables*. Sage University Paper series on Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, 093. Newbury Park CA: Sage Publications.

Heath, Anthony. 1976. *Rational choice & Social exchange*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Heaton, Tim and Edith Pratt. 1990. The Effects of Religious Homogamy on Marital Satisfaction and Stability. *Journal of Family Issues* 11 (2):191-207.

Heiss, Jerold. 1981. Social Roles. Pp. 94-129 in *Social Psychology: Sociological Perspectives*, edited by Morris Rosenberg and Ralph Turner. New York: Basic Books, Inc.

Hobart, Charles and Frank Grigel. 1992. Cohabitation Among Canadian Students at the End of the Eighties. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 23(3):311-337.

Hobart, Charles. 1991. Conflict in Remarriages. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage* 15:69-86.

Homans, George C. 1974. *Social Behavior: Its Elementary Forms*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.

Homans, George C. 1966. Norms and Behavior. Pp.134-135 in *Role Theory*, edited by Bruce Biddle and Edwin Thomas. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Jackson, Patrick. 1983. On Living Together Unmarried: Awareness Contexts and Social Interaction. *Journal of Family Issues* 4 (1):35-59.

Joas, Hans. 1985. Role Theories and Socialization Research. Pp.37-53 in *Micro-Sociological Theory*, Volume 2, edited by S.N. Eisenstadt and H.J.Helle. London: Sage Publications.

Johnson, David R. *et al*. 1986. Dimensions of Marital Quality. *Journal of Family Issues* 7 (1):31-49.

Kamo, Yoshinori. 1993. Determinants of Marital Satisfaction. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 10:551-568.

Kaslow, Florence and James Robison. 1996. Long-Term Satisfying Marriages. *The American Journal of Family Therapy* 24 (2):153-170.

Kelley, Douglas and Judee Burgoon. 1991. Understanding Marital Satisfaction and Couple Type as Functions of Relational Expectations. *Human Communication Research* 18 (1):40-69.

Kotkin, Mark. 1983. Sex Roles Among Married and Unmarried Couples. *Sex Roles* 9 (9):975-985.

Lavee, Yoav, Shlomo Sharlin and Ruth Katz. 1996. The Effect of Parenting Stress on Marital Quality. *Journal of Family Issues* 17 (1):114-135.

Lee, Gary. 1988. Marital Satisfaction in Later Life: The Effects of Nonmarital Roles. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 50:775-783.

Lennon, Mary Clare and Sarah Rosenfield. 1994. Relative Fairness and the Division of Housework. *American Journal of Sociology* 100 (2):506-531.

Levi-Strauss. 1969. *Elementary Structures of Kinship*, Rev. ed. Boston: Beacon Press.

Lewis, Robert A. and Graham B. Spanier. 1979. Theorizing about the Quality and Stability of Marriage. Pp.268-294 in *Contemporary Theories About the Family*, Volume 1, edited by Wesley Burr *et al.* New York: The Free Press.

Lewis, Robert *et al.* 1977. Commitment in Married and Unmarried Cohabitation. *Sociological Focus* 10 (4):367-374.

Liefbroer, Aart and Jenny De Jong Gierveld. 1993. The Impact of Rational Considerations and Perceived Opinions on Young Adults' Union Formation Intentions. *Journal of Family Issues* 14 (2):213-235.

Linton, Ralph. 1936. *The Study of Man*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc.

Lips, Hilary. 1993. *Sex and Gender*, 2nd ed. Toronto: Mayfield Publishing Company.

Lupri, Eugen and James Frideres. 1981. The Quality of Marriage and the Passage of Time. *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 6 (3):283-305.

Lye, Diane and Timothy Biblarz. 1993. The Effects of Attitudes Toward Family Life and Gender Roles on Marital Satisfaction. *Journal of Family Issues* 14 (2):157-188.

Macklin, Eleanor. 1972. Heterosexual Cohabitation Among Unmarried College Students. *The Family Coordinator* 41 (4):463-472.

Malarkey, Robert, Marya Bootsma and Carol-Ann Vyn. 1990. Marital Relations and Canadian Women in the Urban Work Force. *International Journal of Sociology of the Family* 20:163-179.

McLanahan, Sara and Larry Bumpass. 1988. Intergenerational Consequences of Family Disruption. *American Journal of Sociology* 94:130-152.

Mead, George H. 1934. *Mind, Self & Society.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Menard, Scott. 1995. *Applied Logistic Regression Analysis.* Sage University Paper Series on Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, 106. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications.

Meneghan, Elizabeth and Roby Parcel. 1990. Parental Employment and Family Life: Research in the 1980's. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 52:1079-1098.

Merton, Robert K. 1966. The Social Dynamics of Status-Sets and Status-Sequences. Pp. 74-76 in *Role Theory*, edited by Bruce Biddle and Edwin Thomas. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Merton, Robert K. 1966a. Anticipatory Socialization. Pp.347-349 in *Role Theory*, edited by Bruce Biddle and Edwin Thomas. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Moreno, J. L. 1953. *Who Shall Survive?* Beacon NY: Beacon House Inc.

Nock, Steven. 1995. A Comparison of Marriages and Cohabiting Relationships. *Journal of Family Issues* 16 (1):53-76.

Norusis, Marija. 1990. *SPSS Advanced Statistics User's Guide.* Chicago: SPSS Inc.

Nye, F. Ivan. 1979. Choice, Exchange, and the Family. Pp.1-41 in *Contemporary Theories About the Family*, Volume 2, edited by Wesley Burr *et al.* New York: The Free Press.

Pedhazer, Elazar. 1982. *Multiple Regression in Behavioral Research*, 2nd ed. Toronto: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

Perry-Jenkins, Maureen and Ann Crouter. 1990. Men's Provider-Role Attitudes. *Journal of Family Issues* 11 (2):136-156.

Peterson, Candida. 1990. Husbands' and Wives' Perceptions of Marital Fairness Across the Family Life Cycle. *International Journal of Aging and Human Development* 31(3):179-188.

Ray, JoAnn. 1990. Interactional Patterns and Marital Satisfaction Among Dual-Career Couples. *Journal of Independent Social Work* 4(3):61-74.

Ridley, Carl, Dan Peterman and Arthur Avery. 1978. Cohabitation: Does it Make for A Better Marriage? *Family Coordinator* 78 (2):128-136.

Risman, Barbara et al. 1981. Living Together in College: Implications for Courtship. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 43 (1):77-83.

Ritzer, George. 1992. *Contemporary Sociological Theory*, 3rd ed. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Inc.

Sabatelli, Ronald. 1988. Measurement Issues in Marital Research. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 50:891-915.

Segrest, Margaret and M. O'neal Weeks. 1976. Comparison of the Role Expectations of Married and Cohabiting Subjects. *International Journal of Sociology of the Family* 6:275-281.

Shek, Daniel. 1995. Gender Differences in Marital Quality and Well-being in Chinese Married Adults. *Sex Roles* 32 (11/12):699-715.

Shelton, Beth Anne and Daphne John. 1993. Does Marital Status Make a Difference? *Journal of Family Issues* 14 (3):401-420.

South, Scott and Glenna Spitze. 1994. Housework in Marital and Nonmarital Households. *American Sociological Review* 59:327-347.

Spanier, Graham and Robert Lewis. 1980. Marital Quality: A Review of the Seventies. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 42:825-839.

Stafford, Rebecca, Elaine Backman and Pamela Dibona. 1977. The Division of Labor Among Cohabiting and Married Couples. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 39:43-57.

Statistics Canada. 1996. *Canada Year Book 1997*. Ottawa: Minister of Industry.

Statistics Canada. 1995. *Public Use Microdata File Documentation and User's Guide*. General Social Survey, Cycle 10: The Family. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, Science and Techology 1997.

Statistics Canada. 1991. *Age, Sex, Marital Status and Common-Law Status*. Census Technical Reports; Reference Products Series. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, Science and Technology 1993.

Stets, Jan. 1993. The Link Between Past and Present Intimate Relationships. *Journal of Family Issues* 14 (2):236-260.

Stryker, Sheldon and Anne Statham. 1985. Symbolic Interaction and Role Theory. Pp.311-378 in *Handbook of Social Psychology*, Volume 1, 3rd ed, edited by Gardner Lindzey and Elliot Aronson. New York: Random House.

Suitor, J.Jill. 1991. Marital Quality and Satisfaction with the Division of Household Labor Across the Family Life Cycle. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 53:221-230.

Sweet and Bumpass. 1987. *American Families and Households*. New York: Russell Sage.

Tabachnick, Barbara and Linda Fidell. 1996. *Using Multivariate Statistics*, 3rd ed. California: Harper Collins College Publishers.

Teachman, Jay D. and Karen Polonko. 1990. Cohabitation and Marital Stability in the United States. *Social Forces* 69 (1):207-220.

Thibaut, John and Harold Kelley. 1959. *The Social Psychology of Groups*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Thomas, Edwin and Bruce Biddle. 1966. Background and Present Status. The Conceptual Structure. Pp.1-64 in *Role Theory: Concepts and Research*, edited by Bruce Biddle and Edwin J. Thomas. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Thompson, Linda and Alexis Walker. 1989. Gender in Families: Women and Men in Marriage, Work and Parenthood. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 51:845-872.

Thompson, Linda and Alexis Walker. 1982. The Dyad as the Unit of Analysis. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 42:889-899.

Thomson, Elizabeth and Ugo Colella. 1992. Cohabitation and Marital Stability. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 54:259-267.

Thornton, Arland. 1991. Influence of the Marital History of Parents on the Marital and Cohabitational Experiences of Children. *American Journal of Sociology* 96 (4):868-894.

Thornton, Arland, William Axinn and Daniel Hill. 1992. Reciprocal Effects of Religiosity, Cohabitation, and Marriage. *American Journal of Sociology* 98 (3):628-651.

Turner, Jonathan H. 1978. *The Structure of Sociological Theory*. Georgetown, Ontario: The Dorsey Press.

Turner, Ralph H. 1985. Unanswered Questions in the Convergence Between Structuralist and Interactionist Role Theories. Pp.22-36 in *Micro-Sociological Theory*, edited by S.N. Eisenstadt and H.J. Helle. London: Sage Publications.

Turner, Ralph H. 1979. Strategy for Developing an Integrated Role Theory. *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations* 7 (1):123-139.

Turner, Ralph H. 1966. Role-Taking, Role Standpoint, and Reference-Group Behavior. Pp. 151-158 in *Role Theory*, edited by Bruce Biddle and Edwin Thomas. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Uehara, Edwina. 1990. Dual Exchange Theory, Social Networks, and Informal Social Support. *American Journal of Sociology* 96 (3):521-527.

Van Sell, Mary *et al.* 1981. Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity: Integration of the Literature and Directions for Future Research. *Human Relations* 42 (1):43-71.

Vanyperen, Nico and Bram Buunk. 1991. Sex-Role Attitudes, Social Comparison, and Satisfaction with Relationships. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 54 (2):169-180.

Vanyperen, Nico and Bram Buunk. 1990. A Longitudinal Study of Equity and Satisfaction in Intimate Relationships. *European Journal of Social Psychology* 20:287-309.

Vemer, Elizabeth *et al.* 1989. Marital Satisfaction in Remarriage: A Meta-analysis. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 51 (3):713-725.

Watson, Roy. 1983. Premarital Cohabitation vs. Traditional Courtship: Their Effects on Subsequent Marital Adjustment. *Family Relations* 32:139-147

Watson, Roy and Peter DeMeo. 1987. Premarital Cohabitation vs. Traditional Courtship and Subsequent Marital Adjustment: A Replication and Follow-up. *Family Relations* 36:193-197.

Webster, Pamela *et al.* 1995. Effects of Childhood Family Background on Adult Marital Quality and Perceived Stability. *American Journal of Sociology* 101 (2):404-432.

White, James. 1987. Premarital Cohabitation and Marital Stability in Canada. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 49:641-647.

White, Lynn and John Edwards. 1990. Emptying the Nest and Parental Well-Being: An Analysis of National Panel Data. *American Sociological Review* 55 (2):235-242.

Wilson, Margaret and Erik Filsinger. 1986. Religiosity and Marital Adjustment. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 48:147-151.

Wu, Zheng. 1995. Premarital Cohabitation and Postmarital Cohabiting Union Formation. *Journal of Family Issues* 16 (2):212-232.

Wu, Zeng and Douglas Baer. 1996. Attitudes Toward Family and Gender Roles: A Comparison of English and French Canadian Women. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 27(3):437-452.18

Xu, Xiaohe. 1996. Measuring the Concept of Marital Quality as Social Indicators in Urban China. *Social Indicators Research* 37 (2):189-206.

Zurcher, Louis A. 1983. *Social Roles: Conformity, Conflict and Creativity*. London: Sage Publications.