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# The acculturation gap: Investigating the relationship between inter-partner acculturation discrepancy and parenting quality

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The Acculturation Gap: Investigating the Relationship Between Inter-Partner Acculturation  
Discrepancy and Parenting Quality

by

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Thesis Defense

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## Abstract

Parenting and relational factors have been investigated thoroughly in previous literature. However, considering the proliferation of multiracial individuals in the United States, it is concerning that many cultural components of American families have been neglected, including the impact of acculturation on parenting negotiation. In particular, the acculturation gap describes differences in acculturation and enculturation levels between family members. The acculturation-gap-distress model postulates that when members within a family context acculturate at different rates, to different degrees, or in different ways than other members, this discrepancy results in conflict. The present study evaluated the relationship between inter-partner acculturation discrepancy and perceptions of co-parenting quality and marital relationship satisfaction. More specifically, this study investigated whether greater acculturation gaps between partners of intercultural families were related to lower perceived co-parenting quality and marital relationship satisfaction. The findings indicate the greater the degree of difference between partners in terms of endorsement of majority cultural beliefs, attitudes, and practices in the U.S., the lower their perceptions of relationship satisfaction and co-parenting quality. In contrast, perceptions of differences in subscription to minority or home cultural beliefs, attitudes, and practices were not related to parenting quality. In addition, nearly all (96%) respondents indicated that they or their families had experienced at least one racial microaggression of late. Further, the average number of microaggressions received in the past six months was 35, suggesting that prejudice and discrimination are significant and prevalent experiences of intercultural families.

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The Acculturation Gap: Investigating the Relationship Between Inter-Partner Acculturation  
Discrepancy and Parenting Quality

### **Introduction**

While the United States has often been closely associated with phrases such as “melting pot” reflecting how its population is comprised of individuals from numerous racial and ethnic backgrounds seemingly since its conception, there has been a noticeable increase of intercultural parenting partnerships and, thus, a resulting growth of citizens who identify as biracial or multiracial relatively recently. In response to this cultural shift, psychological research examining the experiences of these individuals has similarly proliferated. Generally, this subset of the diversity literature has suggested a number of both positive and negative experiences and outcomes related to multiracial identity. Researchers have even posited some mechanisms that might contribute to the observed differences between mono- and multiracial individuals. However, a review of the available studies reveals very little empirical investigation concerning how the intercultural context of parenting relationships may contribute to the relatively unique experiences of their multiracial children.

Beyond the identified individual experiences of multiracial offspring such as intrafamilial microaggressions and social integration (Kalmijn, 2010), the extant literature suggests that a relevant phenomenon in intercultural partnerships is the acculturation gap (Basanez et al., 2014; Buki et al., 2003; Chen et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2013; Lui, 2015; Rasmi et al., 2014; Schofield et al., 2008; Sullivan et al., 2010). Although previous work has examined parent-child acculturation discrepancies primarily, it follows that acculturation gaps would be equally apparent within co-parenting partnerships, especially when dyads collaborate to make parenting decisions (Costigan & Dokis, 2006). However, there is a striking lack of research examining acculturation

discrepancies in intra- and intercultural families, despite the observed increase in multicultural households in the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Further, there are very few studies that have attempted to elucidate how intercultural and intracultural parenting partnerships are similar and/or different in terms of important relational factors including co-parenting quality, relationship satisfaction, and parental alliance. The primary aim of the current study is to narrow the gap in parenting and relationship quality literature so that it might reflect the changing cultural composition of U.S. families. More specifically, by examining the relationship between degree of acculturation gap and co-parenting quality, relationship satisfaction, and parental alliance, this study elucidated the nature of intercultural families.

### **Multiculturalism**

**In America.** When investigating the impact of culture, and especially difference in culture, on parenting quality, it is first pertinent to elucidate a proper definition of culture itself. Some popular elements of the term that have been utilized in psychological literature include: a pattern of behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes that are passed between generations, socialization concerning a group's values and ideas, and the distinction between groups based upon race, ethnicity, nationality, or religion (Cohen, 2009; Jahoda, 2012). Further it seems that defining culture has become a contested quest in the field which may reflect a multifaceted construct rather than an indescribable one (Chiu, 2014). However, some researchers have posited that this lack of universality has resulted in several, at times conflicting, definitions that pose obstacles for further empirical study (Jahoda, 2012). For the purposes of the current study, culture was defined as the socialization of a set of beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviors based upon one's membership in a group that is conveyed from one generation to the next in various ways. While racial and ethnic identity is the focus of the present study, a group may represent many identities,

including socioeconomic status, region of residence, or religion. Race involves one's group membership largely based upon the perception of one's physical attributes that are deemed important related minor differences in biology (however, it can involve one's self-identification), ethnicity involves one's group membership based upon cultural factors such as nationality, language, geographic region, practices, religion, etc. Based upon this definition of culture, multiculturalism may be defined as the coexistence between two, potentially conflicting worldviews or socialized values or behaviors.

**In parenting.** The latest U.S. Census data estimates that there now exists approximately 871,000 (871,464) interracial marriages and approximately 252,000 households containing multicultural partnerships as well as a shared biological child (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The number of multiracial individuals in the U.S. has increased by 32% between 2000 and 2010, a rate of growth that is exceeded only by Asian (43.3%) and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (35.4%) monoracial individuals. It follows that there has been a reasonable amount of research in recent history examining the psychological and educational outcomes for multiracial individuals in the U.S. However, despite the observed increase in intercultural families, there is a lack of empirical work describing these parenting partnerships and what the impact of their cultural differences may be on their decision-making or relationship quality. It may be that, as will be further discussed in the following sections, cultural difference between co-parenting partners may complicate the child-rearing decision process and negatively impact relationship outcomes such as marital satisfaction or co-parenting quality. However, without the examination of these families from the perspective of the active parents, descriptions of their potential strengths or challenges cannot be offered, nor potential interventions developed.

Due to the apparent lack of a viable model for describing the impact of acculturation discrepancy on relationship quality and other parenting-related outcomes, the available relevant literature will be organized in order to demonstrate what is known about intercultural families. More specifically, in the next section, intra-cultural and intercultural families will be presented in contrast in order to illustrate how conflicting worldviews may contribute to relationship variables. Later, various models of acculturation and enculturation will be described in order to provide a possible explanation for these observed differences and to convey why these variables will be captured in the current study.

### **Parenting: Intra-cultural vs. Intercultural Families**

A review of the available literature suggests that intra-cultural and intercultural couples, and consequently families, differ in a number of fundamental ways. For the purposes of the current study, intra-cultural couples were defined as those whose partners do not differ in terms of racial or ethnic identity, and intercultural couples were those whose partners differ in terms of racial or ethnic identity. This section will briefly summarize the extant empirical work describing the nature of intercultural partnerships, specifically in terms of parenting attitudes and behaviors, offspring outcomes and other salient factors, and methods of negotiating inter-partner differences. Following this discussion, more universal parenting factors will be defined to better describe discrepancies between intra- and intercultural families as well as their relevance to the current study.

**Parenting in intercultural families.** A number of studies have demonstrated that parenting attitudes and behaviors differ depending on parental cultural background (Cheah & Chirkov, 2008; Hofferth, 2003; Jambunathan & Counselman, 2002; Jambunathan, Burts, & Pierce, 2000; Julian, McKenry, & McKelvy, 1994; Wiemann et al., 2006). For instance, the

available literature suggests ethnic and racial differences in terms of discipline method (Jambunathan, Burts, & Pierce, 2000), paternal involvement (Hofferth, 2003), paternal support in adolescent pregnancies (Wiemann et al., 2006), parents' expectations for offspring (Jambunathan & Counselman, 2002), and several other domains. Additionally, in a study comparing parenting among five major ethnic groups, Jambunathan, Burts, and Pierce (2000) identified differences in general parenting attitudes characteristic of European American, Hispanic, African American, Asian American, and Asian Indian caregivers. The results indicated that African American, Asian American, and Asian Indian mothers more often demonstrated lower empathy and a tendency to find comfort in one's children than did European American and Hispanic mothers. Also, Asian American, Asian Indian, and Hispanic caregivers more frequently demonstrated inappropriate expectations for their children than did European American and African American participants. While the examined studies denote the impact of cultural heritage on various parenting factors in monocultural families, these differences in parenting may similarly be present in intercultural families and become especially important when examining the experiences of multiracial children.

**Multiracial children: Advantages and disadvantages.** Previous research investigating the experiences of multiracial or multiethnic children, or offspring resulting from interracial unions, has illuminated a number of potential differences between children in intra-cultural and those in intercultural families (Shih & Sanchez, 2009). Many of these differences may be characterized as relative disadvantages associated with multiracial membership (Bracey, Bamaca, & Umana-Taylor, 2004; Jackson, 2009; Sanchez, Shih, & Garcia, 2009). In a study investigating the interfamilial experiences of multiracial adults, researchers identified a seemingly unique occurrence for multiracial individuals, namely the reception of

microaggressions committed by their own family members (Nadal et al., 2013). The analysis of qualitative interviews suggested that multiracial respondents experience microaggressions commonly centered around several domains, specifically *isolation within family, favoritism within family, questioning of authenticity, denial of multiracial identity and experiences by monoracial family members, and feelings about not learning about family heritage or culture*. All respondents reported experiencing at least one type of familial microaggression. As experience of microaggressions has been empirically associated with negative psychological and physical outcomes in recipients (Nadal, 2011), it seems troubling that this experience is so pervasive for multiracial individuals, particularly within their own families.

In addition to microaggressions, researchers have described other negative experiences associated with being multiracial. Bracey et al. (2004) investigated the relationship between ethnic identity achievement, or the degree of exploration of, preference for, and participation in one's ethnic group culture, and self-esteem in monoracial and multiracial adolescents. The results suggested that across racial groups, greater ethnic identity achievement was related to greater reported self-esteem. Biracial individuals indicated lower ethnic identity achievement than monoracial minority individuals and subsequently demonstrated lower self-esteem than Black respondents. Relatedly, another study's findings indicated that a malleable racial identity, such as that experienced by many multiracial individuals, was associated with decreased psychological well-being (Sanchez, Shih, & Garcia, 2009). Specifically, the propensity to shift between racial identities depending on the social context predicted higher ratings of depressive symptoms in multiracial individuals. Further, the authors found that this effect was mediated by unstable racial regard, conceptualized as the level of consistency in the valence of one's personal feelings toward one's own racial identity.

While a large portion of the literature has investigated the vulnerabilities of people with a multiracial or multiethnic identity, some researchers have emphasized strengths associated with being part of an intercultural family (Binning, Unzueta, Huo, & Molina, 2009; Kalmijn, 2010; Quillian & Redd, 2009; Suyemoto, 2004). A shared theme amongst the literature within this domain has been the comparison of individuals in terms of social functioning. For instance, Kalmijn's study demonstrated how racial intermarriage predicted superior social integration in multiracial individuals as compared to monoracial individuals. The authors attributed this finding primarily to parental social factors, specifically, the propensity of mixed-race couples to reside in less racially segregated communities and to participate in more racially diverse social circles. Similarly, Binning et al. (2009) examined whether the perceived status of one's racial group (e.g., Caucasian was considered a high-status racial group) as well as one's monoracial or multiracial identity affected reported social well-being, stress, or positive affect. The results suggested that while there were no differences between low and high status groups in terms of the examined outcomes, multiracial individuals indicated lower levels of stress than low-status and high-status monoracial individuals, and greater positive affect than low-status, monoracial individuals. Additionally, multiracial participants reported greater prosocial behavior than low-status, monoracial participants and fewer experiences with social alienation than high-status, monoracial participants. The researchers attributed these benefits both to the hypothesized resilience that accompanies identifying amongst multiple racial groups despite social pressures to belong to a single group as well as to the social and perceptual fluidity empirically associated with being multiracial.

Another study examining the experience of multiracial individuals illustrated how this particular identity may serve as an adaptive tool in building one's social communities (Quillian

& Redd, 2009). The researchers evaluated differences between monoracial and multiracial adolescents in terms of their observed acceptance by their student peers, racial diversity of their friendships, and experience as a bridge between contrasting racial groups. The results indicated that multiracial adolescents were not only as likely to be accepted by others, but they were also more likely to facilitate connections between individuals from differing racial groups as compared to their monoracial peers. Additionally, multiracial students reported greater diversity in terms of the racial composition of their friendships than primarily White students.

Suyemoto (2004) similarly examined the social characteristics of multiracial individuals. Through the analysis of qualitative interviews and several Likert-format questions probing issues related to racial identity, the researcher identified several themes associated with multiracial identity in Japanese-European participants that are relevant to the current discussion. These themes included a heightened awareness of cultural cues, increased attunement to differing perspectives, elevated tolerance and appreciation for difference, aversion to the exclusion of others, and a persistent feeling of separateness or difference from, specifically monoracial, others. These themes were primarily attributed to respondents' multiracial identity, encouraged positive social interaction, and could be utilized as strengths in a treatment setting.

The cumulative findings of these studies suggest that multiracial identity may be associated with a number of advantages and disadvantages. However, it is difficult to distinguish these aspects of multiracial identity from the influence of parenting behavior in intercultural families, and it is arguably important to better understand the genesis of these differences to inform one's conceptualization of intercultural families as a whole. In order to better explain the process that facilitates the strengths and limitations experienced by biracial and multiracial offspring, it is important to evaluate how parenting may be characterized in intercultural

families. The following section will explore identified factors pertinent to intercultural households.

**Additional salient factors in intercultural families.** In addition to the issues previously discussed, there are a number of familial experiences that seem to be more salient for intercultural than intracultural parents. The literature indicates that personal experiences shape one's decisions, especially parenting decisions. Allowing that intercultural couples bring a greater diversity of life experiences to the parenting relationship, it is likely that conflict may arise in parental decision-making (King & Fogle, 2006). For example, one relevant study examined how parents incorporate information from multiple sources (i.e., parenting experts, extended family, personal experiences) when making decisions regarding their child's language development. Through the analysis of ethnographic interviews concerning parents' goals for and beliefs about language development, the researchers found that parents of intercultural families used their own experiences with bilingualism or biculturalism to refute expert advice and family members' experiences in favor of raising their children bilingual. Further, this source of information was the greatest valued of the three examined and was used to make predictions about the success of bilingual parenting and the benefits of their child becoming bilingual (King & Fogle, 2006).

Another pertinent study that conceptualized intercultural families not as those headed by partners from differing racial or ethnic backgrounds but as monoracial or monoethnic units that immigrated from their home country prior to procreating similarly illustrates how conflicting cultural viewpoints influence the parenting process (Nesteruk & Marks, 2011). The researchers attempted to explain how immigrant parents must bridge the gap between their home culture and their host culture when raising their children. The results of several semi-structured interviews

concerning parenting issues related to immigration (parents' perspectives, motivations, conflicts, and meaning-making of immigration) suggested that the parents selectively adopted certain host culture's practices while attempting to integrate values from their home culture. The researchers concluded that immigrant families' parenting attitudes and behaviors likely fell somewhere in the middle between those of their home and host countries'. Balancing two culture's parenting values seems to be a salient issue for immigrant parents and arguably for intercultural parents as well.

The available empirical work suggests that cultural composition of the parenting couple may impact not only parenting behaviors and attitudes but partner relationship quality as well. For instance, in their review of marital quality in intercultural relationships, Skowronski et al. (2014) concluded that a number of factors impacted the outcome of interest, including acculturation, language and method of communication, perceived familial support, societal attitudes, and gender role attitudes. Further, the authors stated that parents' attitudes about child-rearing as well as accommodating one's partner's cultural values were influential in terms of relationship quality and were often based on partner deference to his or her own culture of origin. Other researchers demonstrated additional evidence concerning relational challenges for intercultural couples, including perceived familial opposition to the partnership, language barriers and cultural discrepancies in communication, and heritage-based differences in parenting standards, specifically concerning ideal parenting behaviors and what values should be communicated (Rosenblatt & Stewart, 2004). Another study's results suggested that racial or ethnic background influences partner behavior in relational conflict. Specifically, the researchers found that Asian and Latino male partners more often utilized a conflict style characterized by forcefulness and confrontation with one's partner than did African American and Euroamerican

male partners (Lawton, Foeman, & Braz, 2013). While a number of these variables may be similarly influential in intracultural relationships, it is likely that they differ in several ways and that certain factors (i.e., acculturation, language, adoption or rejection of cultural values) are more salient for intercultural partnerships.

**Acculturation strategies.** As cultural mismatch between parents has been demonstrated to be influential in terms of intercultural parenting attitudes, behaviors, and offspring outcomes, it is pertinent to examine how this conflict is resolved in intercultural couples and, subsequently, family units. Prior literature has identified several different pathways that intercultural couples utilize in order to mediate their differences and communicate parenting decisions. As available relevant empirical studies are limited, the few applicable studies will be reviewed in depth in the following section.

Through qualitative analysis of interviews with 21 heterosexual, intercultural couples, Crippen and Brew (2013) found that there are a variety of ways partners negotiate cultural difference when forming a family and likened this process to that of an immigrant's acculturation to their new country (e.g., acculturation strategies). The dominant themes from these interviews could be classified on two dimensions: how partners perceived their differences and the degree to which there was mutual acculturation. The researchers identified five strategies couples adopted when deciding which values and traditions to communicate to their children characterized by degree of endorsement on the following dimensions: assimilation, cultural tourism, cultural transition, cultural amalgamation, and dual biculturalism. Those couples that utilized *assimilation* minimized difference and had a low degree of mutual acculturation. Those that fell into the *cultural tourism* pathway identified their differences, and one partner (usually the father) compromised and transcended these differences. Similar to cultural tourism, in *cultural*

*transition*, couples identified their differences and one partner, this time usually the mother, compromised and transcended these differences. Those that utilized *cultural amalgamation* too identified their differences, attempted to compromise or transcend them, and either adopted the values of their resident country and did not incorporate any of their partner's values into their own parenting decisions or worked together to create a hybrid culture when parenting. Finally, couples that identified within the *dual biculturalism* strategy tended to emphasize their differences, understand them to be an advantage for their children, and incorporate their partner's heritage into their own set of values.

**Paths to managing difference.** Similarly, other researchers have found that couples with fundamental differences in worldviews utilized a diverse set of strategies to negotiate their discrepancies when addressing the issue of parenting. Edwards, Caballero, and Puthussery (2009) investigated how interracial, interfaith, and both interracial and interfaith couples decide collaboratively which aspects of their heritage to communicate to their children and how they accomplish this in their daily life. The researchers interviewed partners of 35 intercultural couples separately and upon qualitative analysis found three prominent pathways towards resolution of difference: open individualized, mixed collective, and single collective. The *open individualized* path, similar to aspects of several acculturation strategies identified by Crippen and Brew involved transcending racial or faith identity and facilitating an adaptive response style in one's children. These couples resisted being defined only by their race or faith and hoped their children would feel similarly. The *mixed collective* path, like the dual biculturalism strategy previously discussed, involved encouraging one's children to understand all their racial and/or faith identities, how they differed, and to attempt to incorporate these sometimes-conflicting identities into a cohesive worldview. Finally, the *single collective* path, similar to the

assimilation strategy, involved parents exclusively communicating values from one heritage as well as asking one's children to choose a single identity for themselves. These paths towards negotiating cultural difference share some important aspects with the acculturation strategies previously defined in that parenting decisions were influenced by the dimensions of perceived interpartner differences and the degree of mutual acculturation of each partner (Edwards et al., 2009).

**Coping with stressors due to cultural difference.** Another way to conceptualize how intercultural couples resolve their conflicting world views is to examine how they respond to external pressures related to those differences. Bustamante, Nelson, Henrikson, Jr., and Monakes (2011) examined how cultural difference contributed to marital distress and what coping mechanisms intercultural couples utilized in response. The researchers found through semi-structured interviews that common stressors for these couples included differences in child-rearing practices, how one was oriented in time, expectations for one's self and one's partner based on gender, and external pressures from each partner's extended family. The majority of couples coped with these stressors in a number of ways: acknowledging gender-role flexibility in one's family of orientation, appreciating other cultures and their differences, deferring to the cultural preferences of one's partner, emphasizing similarities between partners, and incorporating aspects of each partner's heritage to produce a new, unique frame. These coping strategies share several factors with previously examined acculturation strategies (Bustamante et al., 2011; Crippen & Brew, 2013). Researchers found that for many families, the creation of a third space, or a set of values and traditions particular to one's family, was useful for negotiating their cultural differences. Additionally, how partners perceived their differences and the degree

to which they were willing to acculturate to their partner's heritage influenced what coping strategies they utilized in dealing with stressors related to cultural difference.

The examined studies' findings suggest that acculturation may be influential when negotiating differences. The present study posited that acculturation discrepancies are more salient for intercultural than intra-cultural families and may further complicate these negotiation processes. Inter-partner acculturation discrepancy may influence several general factors including co-parenting quality, relationship satisfaction, and parental alliance. Before considering in depth how inter-partner acculturation gap impacts parenting, these specific parenting qualities will be defined in the following sections.

**Co-parenting quality.** Co-parenting, similar to acculturation, has been conceptualized by some authors as a multidimensional construct describing the ability to negotiate difference and coordinate efforts in childrearing as well as a relationship ideally characterized by mutual support and collaborative leadership (Egeren & Hawkins, 2004; Feinberg, Kan, & Hetherington, 2007; McHale, 1995). Moreover, it is discriminated from marital or romantic relationship quality of parents, as it excludes any "romantic, sexual, companionate, emotional, financial, and legal" characteristics of the relationship that are not concerned with raising the child (Feinberg, 2003, p. 96). When placed within the context of a divorced parenting relationship, some have defined co-parenting quality as the aspects of this partnership that impact the children post-marital dissolution, such as interparental conflict, coordination, communication, and mutual respect (Macie & Stolberg, 2003).

Co-parenting quality has been associated with other parenting and relational factors in the literature (Schoppe-Sullivan et al., 2007). In a study investigating the relationship between marital satisfaction and parenting practices, the results suggested that interparental conflict,

cooperation, and triangulation mediated the association between the variables of interest (Pedro, Ribeiro, & Shelton, 2012). In other words, co-parenting quality mediated the relationship between partners' marital satisfaction and parenting practices of emotional support, control, and rejection. A longitudinal investigation of co-parenting in dual parent families with adolescent children found that amount of co-parenting conflict, here defined as frequency and intensity of disagreement concerning parenting practices, predicted later adolescent and parental adjustment (Feinberg et al., 2007). Poor co-parenting quality, in this case operationalized as amount of disagreement concerning childrearing, has also been associated with greater externalizing behavior issues in the child, even when controlling for general marital adjustment, suggesting that co-parenting quality may be distinct from marital quality and contributes to offspring outcomes (Mahoney, Jouriles, & Scavone, 1997).

In his review and theoretical paper on the impact of co-parenting quality on the family, Feinberg (2003) outlined a framework for a multifaceted conceptualization of this parenting factor. According to this author, co-parenting quality is comprised of parental agreement, delegation of parenting labor, support and undermining, and co-management of familial interactions. In addition, he posited that co-parenting quality influences child and parental adjustment via its impact on the partners. The author described that parental agreement is primarily concerned with the degree that caregivers share perspectives on childrearing targets that may be complicated by differences in caregivers' families of origin. Delegation or division of parenting labor involves the assignment of childrearing responsibilities, both daily and long-term, to each parent. According to Feinberg, lack of equality in this delegation between caregivers may lead to feelings of resentment, parental distress, and poor parent-child interactions. Support describes the caregivers' tendency to validate their partner's competency,

contributions, and decision-making within the parental role explicitly. Similar to the influence of egalitarian parenting labor division, undermining may contribute to parental stress and ultimately to negative outcomes for offspring. Finally, joint family management is concerned with the regulation of behaviors across the family system involving tasks such as communication within the interparental relationship, setting boundaries with others outside the interparental relationship, and negotiating role in larger interactions. Feinberg placed co-parenting within the family context, claiming that it is both influenced by and influences primary aspects of the family system, including individual caregiver characteristics, child characteristics, parental adjustment, and the support or stressors from the environment.

Co-parenting quality is important to consider when discussing parenting in general because previous studies have identified links between this factor and a number of outcomes (Brody et al., 1994; Feinberg, 2007; Katz & Low, 2004; McHale, Rao, & Krasnow, 2000). For instance, poor co-parenting quality, here described as greater co-parenting disagreement, predicted greater internalizing and externalizing issues in offspring in one study of new parental partnerships (Chen & Johnston, 2012). Further, this relationship was observed even when controlling for other influential factors including relationship satisfaction and parenting effectiveness. Impaired co-parenting quality has also been identified as contributing to negative child outcomes in domains such as academics and socioemotional skills (Brody et al., 1994). Still another study reported that co-parenting quality predicted child outcomes, such as delinquency, withdrawal, and aggression, independent of other related parental and relational factors, including marital violence and family interaction tendencies (Katz & Low, 2004). Taken together, the available evidence suggests that co-parenting quality is an important mechanism for partner and child outcomes.

There has been little research examining cultural considerations in co-parenting with few exceptions (Chance, Costigan, & Leadbeater, 2013; Doyle et al., 2013). In one study investigating the perceptions of co-parenting quality in African American fathers, researchers identified a number of salient themes from qualitative interviews, specifically, the importance of communication and discipline, giving effort towards the child's welfare, facilitating positive bonds within complex family structures, and gender-based parenting roles. While it specifies many similar aspects of the construct as previously discussed, including support and coordination, this particular conceptualization of co-parenting contrasts with previous models in that it suggests that caregivers consider the community and family structure in co-parenting decision-making. This factor is important to consider when discussing intercultural parenting specifically because the available literature has demonstrated that degree of acculturative differences between partners was related to co-parenting quality (Chance et al., 2013). Specifically, the researchers found that greater gaps in caregivers' behavioral acculturation were associated with both discrepant expectations for adolescent behavior and more negative perceptions of the co-parenting partnership.

The current study was an extension of previous research on co-parenting quality as it defined co-parenting quality as partners' perceptions of their romantic relationship in regards to co-parenting agreement, support, undermining, endorsement of partner's parenting, conflict exposure, and closeness (Feinberg, Brown, & Kan, 2012). By utilizing this operationalization of co-parenting relationship quality, ideally one is able to capture the multi-dimensionality of this partnership as indicated by the literature. Additionally, another relational factor was measured, namely relationship satisfaction, as the literature suggests a bidirectional relationship between marital satisfaction and the co-parenting relationship.

**Relationship satisfaction.** Relationship satisfaction, here termed dyadic satisfaction, was first proposed and verified as one aspect of a multidimensional construct called dyadic adjustment, which is defined as the evaluation of the dynamics and characteristics of a monogamous relationship (Spanier, 1976). Relationship satisfaction has similarly been described by other researchers as the degree to which one views their relationship as favorable (Roach, Frazier, & Bowden, 1981). Relationship satisfaction may be discriminated from relationship quality in that it is primarily concerned with a partner's general, holistic perception of their union in terms of it being favorable or not favorable, rather than a domain-specific (e.g., financial or parenting agreement) or qualitative description of the relationship's nature. Marital or relationship satisfaction has been included as one aspect of broader models of relationship quality, and is not captured in measures of co-parenting quality, which is, by definition, solely concerned with perceptions of the relationship directly related to child-rearing (Feinberg, 2003; Fowers & Olson, 1989). One conceptualization of relationship satisfaction limited its definition to one spouse's ratings of favorability regarding their partner's statements. In this case, relationship satisfaction was captured using partner's communication ratings during interaction exercises with their spouse (Howes & Markman, 1989).

This factor is important to consider when discussing parenting because relationship satisfaction appears to have an impact on numerous relational and child outcomes (Fishman & Meyers, 2000; Howes & Markman, 1989). In one study, Fishman and Meyers (2000) investigated the relationship between marital satisfaction and child psychopathology utilizing data from the National Survey of Families and Households. Marital satisfaction was here defined as ratings of happiness with regard to varied aspects of their romantic relationships. The authors found that both mothers' and fathers' ratings of marital satisfaction were significantly negatively

related to ratings of children's behavioral problems and psychological distress. In addition, for mothers, but not for fathers, this relationship was mediated by parent-child involvement. In another study investigating the impact of marital quality of child attachment patterns, the researchers found that marital satisfaction was positively related to child's degree of secure attachment and sociability and negatively related to child dependency (Howes & Markman, 1989). While these results seem informative, the sample was restricted to married partnerships and several racial and ethnic groups were either underrepresented or absent. Considering the cultural context of the U.S. today, it is critical that a greater diversity of parenting relationships be measured so that parenting factors in general may be understood.

While the research specifically investigating more diverse families is much leaner as compared to those studies examining intracultural families, relationship satisfaction has been observed to influence child and relational outcomes in intercultural families as well (Cruz et al., 2014). In one such study examining cultural implications in ratings of marital relationship quality, the researchers found that more similar endorsement of American cultural values between partners was significantly related to greater relationship satisfaction, especially when endorsement of values was high. In addition, greater similarity in Spanish language use between partners was related to greater relationship satisfaction. In this article, relationship satisfaction was assessed with a brief (5-item) questionnaire and defined as perceptions of happiness and strength concerning one's marital relationship. Acknowledging the impact of acculturation and enculturation discrepancies on perceptions of relationship satisfaction, it seems pertinent to measure this relational factor when attempting to describe intercultural parenting partnerships.

For the purposes of the current study, relationship satisfaction was defined as one partner's perception of favorability with regards to their romantic relationship. The relationship

of interest was limited to one's primary, monogamous, romantic partnership, and was inclusive of all sexual orientations and gender combinations. The current study added to the field by examining both relationship satisfaction and co-parenting quality within the cultural context of inter-partner acculturation discrepancy in families of greater diversity than previously examined.

### **Acculturation and Enculturation**

**Models of acculturation and enculturation.** While there is debate regarding the processes of acculturation and enculturation, there is some consensus concerning the definition of *acculturation* in that many posit that it involves an alteration of an individual's behaviors and attitudes resulting from the direct and extended interaction between the individual and a foreign, dominant culture (Moyerman & Forman, 1992; Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936). However, the term *enculturation* is not often referred to directly in the literature, but one may deduce from bidimensional models of acculturation (described in the following section) that it is commonly conceptualized as the degree to which an individual retains their heritage culture during extended interaction between the individual and a foreign, dominant culture. It was posited in the current study that this individualized process may be further complicated in intercultural units, in which each partner may come to the relationship at their own level of acculturation, and consequently may need to resolve conflicting attitudes and behaviors concerning both marriage and parenting together.

There is some contention in the field regarding whether acculturation may be considered a unidimensional or bidimensional construct (Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000). The unidimensional model posits that one's endorsement of attitudes and behaviors from one's home culture is inversely related to one's endorsement of attitudes and behaviors from one's host culture. In other words, as one's subscription to their new culture increases, their subscription to

their heritage culture decreases. In contrast, a bidimensional model of acculturation claims that one's alignment with each culture, or one's degree of acculturation and enculturation, is independent from the other. Therefore, from this framework, one must not necessarily sacrifice one's identity or heritage for the incorporation of new values from the current, predominant culture. In a direct comparison between these models of acculturation/enculturation, the researchers found that for Chinese Canadian participants, the scales measuring endorsement of heritage culture and mainstream culture were consistently (over three waves) independent and predicted distinct scores on various outcomes of psychological adjustment and personality, thus supporting a bidimensional model of acculturation/enculturation (from here on out referred to as *acculturation* for brevity). Further, the unidimensional model did not have increased predictive value beyond simple demographic variables such as time in the host country (Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000). Unidimensional models of acculturation do not accurately capture the experiences of many individuals. Specifically, these models do not explain both types of acculturative processes associated with adjusting to a new social environment.

One of the most prominent bidimensional models of acculturation is Berry's model of acculturation strategies (Berry, 1997). While unidimensional models of acculturation only allow for identification along a singular continuum from complete retention of one's heritage to full assimilation, bidimensional models account for more varied categorization based upon identification along the two continua of heritage and mainstream acculturation. Based upon the individual's high or low endorsement of each continuum, their acculturation strategy would be classified in one of four ways: assimilation, separation, integration, or marginalization.

*Assimilation* is similar to the unidimensional model in that it refers to a high level of endorsement of mainstream culture and low level of identification with heritage culture.

*Separation* refers to a high endorsement of heritage and low endorsement of mainstream culture. *Integration*, or biculturalism, involves a high identification with both heritage and mainstream cultures. Finally, *marginalization* involves low levels of subscription to both heritage and mainstream cultures. Thus, measuring only acculturation to one's host culture may neglect important information about one's relation to one's home culture and serve as an insufficient representation of the experience of intercultural couples.

Multidimensional models of acculturation seem to better illustrate the reality for many individuals in that they allow for a greater deal of variation in experience and a more complex understanding of biculturalism. There has been a reasonable amount of empirical data supporting Berry's model regardless of immigrant generational status (Miller, 2010). Additionally, the bidimensional model has demonstrated utility across several racial or ethnic identities (Jang, Kim, Chiriboga, & King-Kallimanis, 2007; Kim, Newhill, & Lopez, 2013). Kim et al. (2013) investigated how Mexican-American youth identified amongst Berry's acculturation typologies and whether participants indicated acculturation strategy predicted various educational outcomes. The results indicated support for this model of acculturation in that participants identified in one of five categories namely, marginalized, separated, moderately assimilated, integrated, and highly assimilated. Also, those who identified as separated reported significantly higher perceived educational achievement than those who identified as highly assimilated.

Despite some support for the bidimensional over the unidimensional model, a review of the current acculturation literature suggests that these processes may not be as easily categorized as previously thought. It may be that this process varies in terms of ease and extent of change by a number of important factors including ethnic or racial identity, migrant type (e.g., refugee, sojourner, asylum-seeker), and language (Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010).

For instance, in one study examining level of acculturation per the acculturation strategies model, the results indicated that Korean immigrants in the U.S. primarily identified with the integration and separation strategies. Further, the researchers found that those who were more integrated were younger, more educated, and married. While these findings arguably still support a bidimensional as opposed to a unidimensional model, they also suggest that identification within certain acculturation categories may vary by racial identity and age.

**The acculturation gap.** While the process of acculturation has been well-established as a significant part of many individuals' lives in the U.S., one way in which this phenomenon may impact intercultural families is through the concept of acculturation/enculturation discrepancy or acculturation gap. This impact is probably best illustrated by the acculturation-gap distress model: Specifically, this framework, rooted in a contextualist approach, stipulates that when members within a family context acculturate/enculturate at different rates, to different degrees, or in different ways than other members, this discrepancy often results in intergenerational conflict and even conflict between cultures (Szapocznick & Kurtines, 1993). For the purposes of clarity, it should be noted that while the commonly utilized term is *acculturation gap* this concept often refers to differences in both acculturative and enculturative processes. The cumulative findings of the available literature indicate acculturation/enculturation discrepancies between significant others, such as in parent-child relationships, cause both individual and interpersonal distress (Basanez et al., 2014; Buki et al., 2003; Chen et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2013; Lui, 2015; Rasmi et al., 2014; Schofield et al., 2008; Sullivan et al., 2010). One study investigating the impact of acculturation on intracultural, Chinese American families found that parent-child discrepancies in acculturation to Chinese culture, here defined as competence in Chinese language, was related to poorer adjustment in the child, specifically, greater incidence of externalizing issues (Chen et

al., 2014). Another study reported that greater acculturation discrepancies in Chinese mother-child relationships were associated with greater perceived uncertainty in parenting, difficulty in communication, and lesser perceived relational satisfaction as measured by scores on the Parent Success Indicator (Buki et al., 2003). Still another study examining acculturation in Mexican American intra-cultural families found that greater acculturation gap in father-child relationships was related to later negative outcomes, specifically parent-child conflict and child externalizing behavior issues (Schofield et al., 2008). This association was moderated by parent-child relationship quality, in that the impact of acculturation gap on child and relational outcomes was not significant in high-quality relationships. Taken together, these results suggest that acculturation discrepancy is influential in parent-child relationships, but that in order to predict the valence of this impact, acculturation gaps must be better understood.

Indeed, there is some evidence that the impact of acculturation/enculturation discrepancy on families may be more complex. According to one review, there is evidence that acculturation/enculturation discrepancies or gaps exist between children and parents, and between partners in monocultural families (Costigan & Dokis, 2006). The authors found that the original conceptualization of the acculturation-gap distress model failed to capture the individual variability in acculturation discrepancies; the simplest model did not incorporate the possibilities that parents might acculturate faster or further than their children, or that types of gaps might vary as a function of cultural identity, environment, or domain of acculturation. Further, while the original model assumes that acculturation gaps produce intergenerational conflict, the cumulative findings of several studies examined indicated that some families view these discrepancies as a strength (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007; Costigan & Dokis, 2006; Liu et al., 2008 as cited in Costigan & Dokis, 2006). This adapted acculturation-gap distress model posits

that, based upon their review of the relevant literature, differing patterns of acculturation/enculturation discrepancy from the expected pattern of the child acculturating faster or more to the mainstream culture than the parent is related to increased familial distress or other negative outcomes (Atzaba-Poria & Pike, 2007 as cited in Costigan & Dokis, 2006).

Generally, the findings of this review suggested that acculturation gaps in significant relationships have some impact on familial relations and that these influences and variations in outcomes need to be further explored.

While there is a reasonable amount of empirical work examining acculturation gap and its impact on various outcomes in intra-cultural parent-child and romantic relationships, there is a lack of research demonstrating how the acculturation gap may affect intercultural couples and intercultural parents. One notable exception is a study by Cruz et al. (2014) in which the impact of inter-partner acculturation/enculturation discrepancies on relationship quality in Mexican Americans was explored. The results suggested that when partners indicated similarly high orientations to the mainstream culture, wives perceived their husbands to be warmer and their relationship to be more satisfying. Additionally, when partners reported similarly high orientation to the heritage culture, here defined as proficiency in Spanish language, husbands perceived their wives to be warmer and wives perceived their relationships to be more satisfying. In summary, the degree of the inter-partner acculturation gap was inversely related to relationship quality in Mexican American dyads. Though this study is certainly relevant to the current discussion, the dyads utilized were monocultural and thus do not necessarily represent the impact of acculturation/enculturation discrepancies on intercultural dyads. Acknowledging the unique issues that these couples and families experience as previously discussed, it may be hypothesized that these acculturative/enculturative differences are more pronounced in

intercultural than intra-cultural dyads and are thus worthy of being investigated more fully. It may be, and it is similarly the position of this paper, that one's levels of acculturation and enculturation better capture one's cultural values as compared to categorical racial or ethnic identity. These discrete categories may not fully represent the individual differences within these identities. Further, in intercultural families, inter-partner acculturation/enculturation discrepancy may affect outcomes of relationship quality and co-parenting quality. Specifically, the available literature suggests that greater acculturation/enculturation discrepancy will be related to lower co-parenting quality and relationship satisfaction.

### **The Current Study**

The current literature suggests that intercultural families differ from intra-cultural families in important ways. Considering the increase in intercultural families in the U.S., the logical next step towards understanding parenting and relationship quality fully is to describe racially and ethnically heterogeneous parenting partnerships. As the available literature suggests that it is relevant to these dyads in particular, it is also pertinent to investigate how inter-partner acculturation discrepancy affects this process.

**Primary hypotheses.** The central aim of the current study was to investigate how acculturation and enculturation differences between partners in intercultural families relate to perceptions of co-parenting quality and relationship satisfaction. The primary hypotheses of the current study were as follows:

H1a: Greater degree of perceived inter-partner acculturation discrepancy will predict lower perceptions of co-parenting quality.

H1b: Greater degree of perceived inter-partner enculturation discrepancy will predict lower perceptions of co-parenting quality.

H2a: Greater degree of perceived inter-partner acculturation discrepancy will predict lower scores in terms of relationship satisfaction.

H2b: Greater degree of perceived inter-partner enculturation discrepancy will predict lower scores in terms of relationship satisfaction.

**Exploratory hypothesis.** The secondary aim of the current study was to describe the experiences of intercultural couples and their children considering the documented unique experiences of these families in the literature as well as the current political climate in the United States in which these family units may feel targeted or stigmatized. Thus, a measure of microaggressions was included to assess the following hypothesis:

H3: The majority of participants will endorse experiencing, or their partner or child experiencing, at least one microaggression in the past six months.

## Method

### Recruitment

Primary caregivers from two-parent intercultural and intracultural households were recruited to complete a brief online survey capturing basic demographic information, level of acculturation/enculturation, perceptions of co-parenting quality, and perceptions of relationship satisfaction for themselves and their parenting partners. Only one partner from each intercultural family completed the survey. Participants were primarily recruited through posts on social media groups (see Appendix A for a complete list of recruitment sites) and flyers distributed at multicultural events. Participants were at least 18 years old, English-speaking, and members of monogamous romantic parenting partnerships. Individuals were informed that participation in this study was completely voluntary and that they had the option to withdraw at any time without

consequence. Participants who expressed interest in participating in the study were provided a link to the online study.

### **Procedures**

After obtaining IRB approval from Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee (see Appendix B for a copy of the IRB approval letter), the principal investigator began recruitment. Participation in this study was entirely online using Qualtrics software and accessed by participants with any personal or public device with an Internet connection. Recruitment was open for three weeks in August 2017 (resulting in collection of 101 responses), closed during September 2017, and re-opened for two weeks in November 2017 (resulting in collection of remaining responses) following acceptance of an amendment allotting for increased enrollment. Participants who chose to follow the link to the study were first directed to a page briefly describing the study's purpose as well as what to expect from participation in the study. Informed consent was obtained prior to eligible individuals' participation in the study electronically. The study consisted of multiple questionnaires (see Appendix C for survey materials), lasting approximately 30 to 45 minutes. Identifying information (i.e., name) was collected while participants are accessing the Qualtrics platform to award extra credit to students for participation and then deleted to ensure confidentiality of all participant responses.

### **Measures**

**Demographic questionnaire.** The demographic questionnaire was created by the author, specifically designed for this study. Participants were asked to indicate personal information concerning, age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, level of education, employment status, generational status, and religious/spiritual identity. In the survey of parents,

participants were asked to indicate some of this information for their partners, in addition to their own responses.

**Stephenson Multigroup Acculturation Scale.** Degree of inter-partner acculturation and enculturation discrepancy was measured using the Stephenson Multigroup Acculturation Scale (SMAS; Stephenson, 2000). The scale's content was originally developed from preceding acculturation research, specifically Berry and Kim's (1988) bidimensional model of acculturation, in contrast with unidimensional models of acculturation that have been demonstrated to inaccurately illustrate the construct (Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000). The SMAS is a 32-item self-report measure that respondents rate on a 4-point Likert scale with the responses of *false*, *partly false*, *partly true*, and *true*. The SMAS is designed to be used across all ethnic groups and is comprised of two factors: One indicates degree of dominant society immersion or acculturation, and the other represents degree of ethnic society immersion or enculturation. Scores on each immersion subscale are assessed by calculating mean item responses and lower scores reflect greater acculturation or enculturation. In the current study, degree of inter-partner acculturation/enculturation discrepancy was operationalized as the difference scores between the participants' self-reports and the participants' perceptions of their partners' acculturation and enculturation experiences. At the time of this study, evaluating acculturation and enculturation discrepancies within intercultural couples using a single reporter was a novel use of the SMAS.

**Co-parenting Relationship Scale.** Perceptions of co-parenting quality was measured using the Co-parenting Relationship Scale (CRS; Feinberg, Brown & Kan, 2012). The scale's content was developed from previous empirical conceptualizations of co-parenting quality and captures co-parenting agreement, co-parenting support, co-parenting undermining, endorsement

of partner's parenting, exposure to conflict, and co-parenting closeness. The CRS is a 35-item self-report measure rated on a 7-point Likert from 0 (*not true of us*) to 6 (*very true of us*). Higher scores indicate greater perceived co-parenting relationship quality. In the current study, co-parenting quality was operationalized as partners' perceptions of co-parenting quality, with higher scores indicating greater perceived quality.

**Marital Satisfaction Scale.** Perceptions of marital satisfaction were measured using the Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS; Roach, Frazier & Bowden, 1981). The MSS is a 48-item self-report measure rated on a 5-point Likert ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The MSS measures marital satisfaction as an attitude, with items that are intended to measure affective responses that may change over time. In the current study, marital satisfaction was operationalized as the participants' ratings of marital satisfaction, with higher scores indicating greater perceived marital relationship satisfaction.

**The Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale.** Participants' personal as well as their perception of their partners' and children's' experience of racial and/or ethnic microaggressions were measured using the Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (REMS; Nadal, 2011). The REMS is a 45-item self-report measure rated on a 5-point Likert ranging from 1 (*I did not experience this event in the past six months*) to 5 (*I experienced this event 10 or more times in the past six months*). The REMS is comprised of six subscales probing six primary categories of microaggressions: Assumptions of Inferiority, Second-Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality, Microinvalidations, Exoticization/Assumptions of Similarity, Environmental Microaggressions, and Workplace and School Microaggressions. The Assumptions of Inferiority assesses microaggressions in which people of color are believed to be of lower status. The Second-Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality subscale evaluates microaggressions in

which a White individual is given preferential treatment over a person of color and in which people of color are stereotyped to be criminals or somehow deviant. The Microinvalidations subscale captures microaggressions related to dismissal of a person of color's thoughts, feelings, or experience. The Exoticization/Assumptions of Similarity subscale evaluates microaggressions in which people of color are valued for their otherness or are stereotyped to share characteristics with others who share their racial/ethnic identity. The Environmental Microaggressions scale assesses subtle prejudice that occur at the systemic or macro level. Finally, the Workplace and School Microaggressions subscale is concerned with covert racism that occurs in work and educational environments. In the current study, experience of racial and/or ethnic microaggressions was operationalized as the participant's ratings of microaggressions, with higher scores indicating more frequent experience of microaggressions.

### **Data Analyses.**

Data analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) – Version 22. Preliminary descriptive statistics were examined to assess for outliers, linearity, normality of distribution (including skew and kurtosis), and internal reliability. In order to evaluate whether gender of participant has an impact on variables measured, the data was evaluated for differences between mothers and fathers on ratings of acculturation, enculturation, co-parenting quality, and relationship satisfaction.

A power analysis indicated that a total sample of 67 participants would be needed to detect a moderate effect size ( $f^2 = .15$ ) with two predictors at 80% power using a bivariate correlation test with alpha at .05 (Soper, 2016).

## Results

**Participants.** Participants in this study were 221 parents in intercultural partnerships actively raising at least one shared child within their home. See Table 1 and Figure 1 for complete demographic information. The largest portion of participants were White (66.8%), female (93.7%), and heterosexual (83.3%). Participants' partners were generally Black or African American (41.2%), and male (85.9%). The average age of participants was approximately 36 years, and 35 years for partners. Intercultural couples' reported that their shared child was approximately 7 years of age. An overwhelming majority of participants were married or cohabitating with their partner (91%) and most worked full-time (59.5%), followed by those who were a stay-at-home parent or caregiver (19.1%). Many participants described their household economic status as "solidly middle-class" (48%) and indicated that their household income was between \$100,000 and \$149,999 (25.8%). The largest group of participants described their immigration status as fourth generation or greater (52.3%) while 38.8% of their partners were first generation immigrants and 35.6% were fourth generation or greater. Approximately 33% of participants, 37% of their partners, and 24% of their children spoke more than one language. Most participants indicated that they were "not at all religious" (41.2%) and "moderately spiritual" (40.7%). Seventy-five percent of participants completed at least some college, with the greatest percentage having completed a master's degree (33.5%).

Table 1

<i>Participant Demographics</i>		
Scale	<i>N(Valid Percent)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>
Gender		
Participant Gender		
Male	10(4.5%)	
Female	207(93.7%)	
Other	4(1.8%)	
Partner Gender		
Male	189(85.9%)	
Female	25(11.4%)	
Transgender	1(.5%)	
Other	5(2.3%)	
Age		
Participant Age		35.54(7.30)
Partner Age		34.63(11.82)
Child Age		7.35(8.13)
Sexual Orientation		
Heterosexual	184(83.3%)	
Lesbian	13(5.9%)	
Bisexual	16(7.2%)	
Pansexual	2(.9%)	
Other	6(2.7%)	
Relationship Status		
Married or living with a partner	201(91.0%)	
In a relationship but not living together	8(2.6%)	
Divorced	3(1.4%)	
Single	9(4.1%)	
Religiosity		
Not at all religious	91(41.2%)	
Slightly religious	47(21.3%)	
Moderately religious	56(25.3%)	
Very religious	27(12.2%)	
Spirituality		
Not at all spiritual	25(11.3%)	
Slightly spiritual	61(27.6%)	
Moderately spiritual	90(40.7%)	
Very spiritual	45(20.4%)	
Immigrant Status		
Participant Immigrant Status		
First	23(14.8%)	
Second	22(14.2%)	
Third	29(18.7%)	
Fourth or greater	81(52.3%)	

Table 1 <i>continued</i>		
Scale	<i>N</i> (Valid Percent)	<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )
Partner Immigrant Status		
First	62(38.8%)	
Second	27(16.9%)	
Third	14(8.8%)	
Fourth or greater	57(35.6%)	
Speak More than One Language		
Participant		
Yes	72(32.6%)	
No	149(67.4%)	
Partner		
Yes	81(36.7%)	
No	140(63.3%)	
Child		
Yes	52(23.5%)	
No	169(76.5%)	
Level of Education		
Less than high school	2(.9%)	
High school diploma	9(4.1%)	
GED	3(1.4%)	
Some college	39(17.6%)	
Trades school	2(.9%)	
Associates Degree	15(6.8%)	
Bachelors Degree	64(29.0%)	
Masters Degree	74(33.5%)	
Doctoral Degree	12(5.4%)	
Other	1(.5%)	
Employment Status		
Employed, Full-time (> 35 hours/week)	131(59.5%)	
Employed, Part-time	36(16.4%)	
Disabled	5(2.3%)	
Retired	2(.9%)	
Stay-at-home Parent or Other Caregiver	42(19.1%)	
Unemployed, Looking for Work	4(1.8%)	
Economic Status		
Very poor, not enough to get by	5(2.3%)	
Barely enough to get by	53(24.0%)	
Solidly middle-class	106(48.0%)	
Plenty of "extras"	47(21.3%)	
Plenty of "luxuries"	7(3.2%)	
Don't Know/Unsure/Prefer Not to Answer	3(1.4%)	

Table 1 *continued*

Scale	N(Valid Percent)	M(SD)
<b>Household Income</b>		
Less than \$10,000	4(1.8%)	
\$10,000 to \$24,999	13(5.9%)	
\$25,000 to \$49,999	28(12.7%)	
\$50,000 to \$74,999	36(16.3%)	
\$75,000 to \$99,999	34(15.4%)	
\$100,000 to \$149,999	57(25.8%)	
Greater than \$150,000	40(18.1%)	
Don't Know/Unsure/Prefer Not to Answer	9(4.1%)	

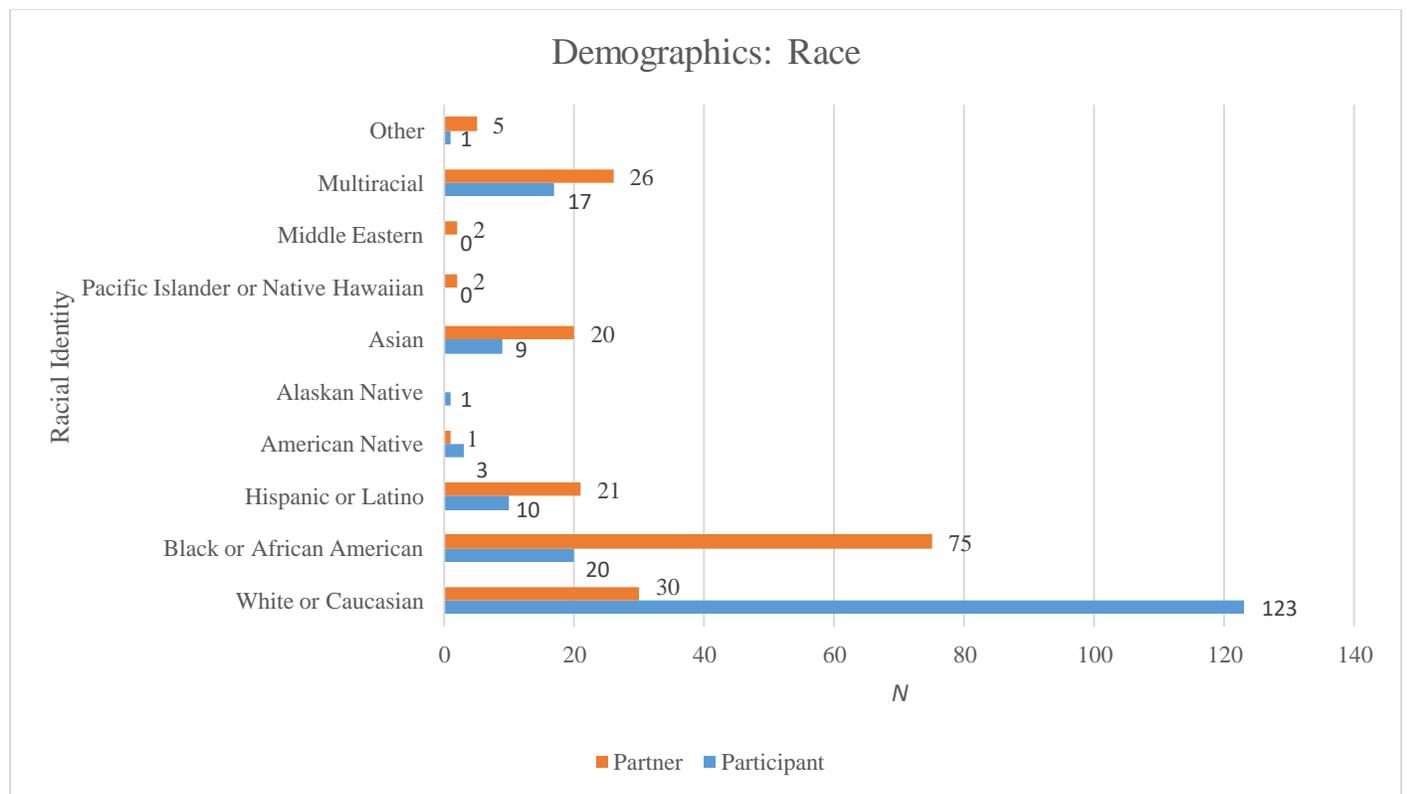


Figure 1. Participant Demographics, Race only

**Preliminary analyses.** All measures were evaluated for distribution normality, as indicated by visual analysis of frequency histograms depicting each variable in accordance with the literature (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). All measures were within normal range for skewness excepting for one subscale on the SMAS, which appeared slightly negatively skewed: Participant DSI. Considering that the majority of participants were Caucasian females of majority culture, it

follows that participants would endorse dominant society immersion most frequently and that distribution of this variable would be non-normal. Thus, for the sake of describing the sample, Participant DSI scores were used in the subsequent analyses. Next, visual inspection of histograms of dependent measures did support evidence of slight positive kurtosis in MSS Total scores. This suggests that the distribution of this scale may not be normal and is consistent with previous utilizations of this measure in the literature. Thus, the following results related to MSS total scores should be interpreted with caution. See Figure 2 depicting the CONSORT Flow Diagram.

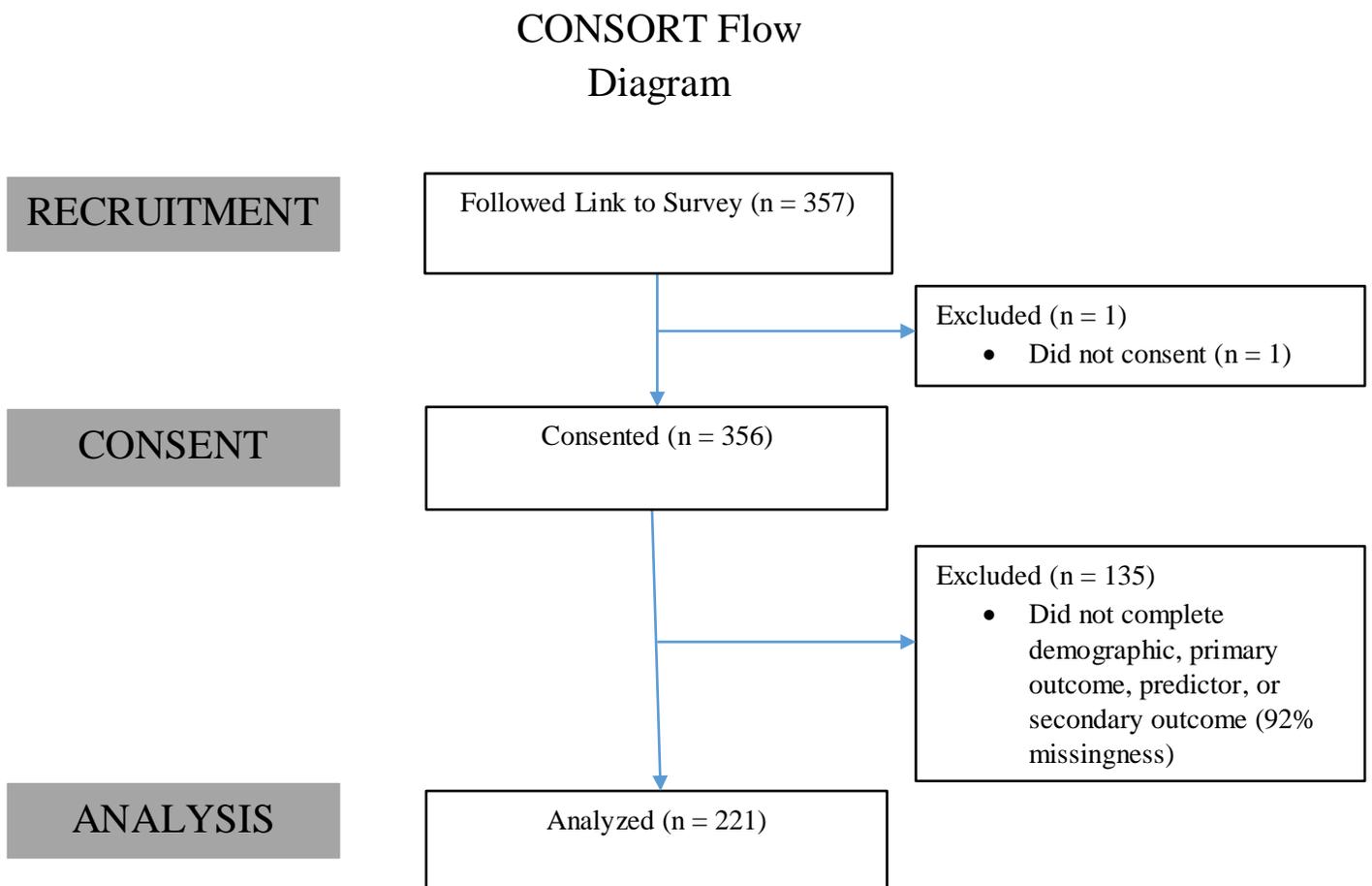


Figure 2. CONSORT Flow Diagram

All measures utilized were examined for internal reliability, using inter-item correlations. Previous empirical utilizations have indicated excellent internal consistency for the CRS, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from .91 to .94. In the current study, internal reliability for the CRS was good ( $\alpha = .81$ ). In previous studies, internal consistency for the MSS has been excellent with Cronbach's alpha at .97 and test-retest reliability at .76. In contrast, internal reliability in the current sample for the MS was poor ( $\alpha = .23$ ), possibly suggesting that the MS Total score does not represent a unitary construct in the intercultural family population. Alternatively, poor internal reliability may be attributed to missingness in the data (25.8% as compared to 17.6% for CRS). In previous studies, internal consistency of the SMAS ranged from Cronbach's alpha at .51 to .87 with reliability coefficients of .86 (entire scale), .97 (factor one only), and .90 (factor two only; Stephenson, 2000). In the present sample, internal reliability for the SMAS for participant and partner was good, ranging from  $\alpha = .88$  to .89. In previous studies, the internal consistency of the REMS was excellent with Cronbach's alpha at .91 for the entire measure, and values ranging from .78 to .87 for the six subscales. Additionally, previously published testing indicated high internal reliabilities for several racial groups (i.e., African Americans, Latina/os, Asian Americans, Multiracial individuals) ranging from .91 to .92. Similarly, internal reliability in the current study for the REMS was excellent ( $\alpha = .93$ ).

Independent samples t-tests were conducted to evaluate participant gender differences on primary and secondary outcome scores. Differences between male and female participants on the CRS, MSS, SMAS, and REMS were non-significant, suggesting that participant gender and their responses on included measures were not related. Bivariate correlations between portion of survey completed (56 to 100%) and primary and secondary outcome scores were computed to evaluate this relationship. Correlations between completion and all scales were non-significant,

suggesting that the percentage of the questionnaire that participants completed was not related to their responses on measures included.

Due to the high percentage of participants who did not complete the survey in its entirety (48%), primary analyses were run ( $N = 221$ ) both utilizing available case analysis (pairwise deletion), meaning for each bivariate correlation, only those participants with complete data for both relevant scales were included and with missing cases imputed using multiple imputation. Available case analysis and multiple imputation strategies assume that missingness is completely at random. Thus, Little's Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) test was conducted to assess whether the original data set violated this assumption. Analyses indicated that cases were missing completely at random for all scales,  $\chi^2(10) = 17.68, p = .06$ . Missingness appeared to increase over time, possibly indicating participants experienced fatigue. Alternatively, attrition might be attributed to discomfort or confusion in encountering questions related to culture and/or discrimination. Multiple imputation was conducted to address missingness for CRS, MSS, and REMS totals, and for SMAS-DSI and ESI Difference Scores. See Table 2 for a complete description of missingness organized by scale.

Table 2

<i>Missingness in the Data</i>		
<b>Scale</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
CRS	39	17.6
MS	57	25.8
SMAS		
Self DSI	102	46.2
Self ESI	102	46.2
Partner DSI	106	48.0
Partner ESI	106	48.0
REMS	116	52.5

**Descriptive statistics.** Means and standard deviations for primary and secondary outcome variables were calculated for the original data set and for the pooled imputed data set.

See Table 3 for complete descriptive statistics for primary and secondary variables.

Table 3

<i>Descriptive Statistics</i>			
	<b>Scale</b>	<b><i>M</i>(<i>SD</i>)</b>	<b>Pooled <i>M</i></b>
SMAS-DSI			
	Participant	3.60(.31)	
	Partner	3.50(.38)	
	Difference Score	.19(.27)	.18
SMAS-ESI			
	Participant	3.14(.79)	
	Partner	3.00(.85)	
	Difference Score	.52(.67)	.52
CRS Total			
		4.02(.60)	4.02
	Co-parenting agreement	4.06(1.13)	
	Co-parenting support	5.58(1.33)	
	Co-parenting undermining	1.78(1.03)	
	Endorsement of partner's parenting	5.25(1.13)	
	Exposure to conflict	2.04(.88)	
	Co-parenting closeness	5.26(1.18)	
MSS Total			
		139.30(9.34)	139.28
REMS Total			
		80.18(26.18)	80.27
	Assumptions of Inferiority	13.48(7.27)	
	Second Class Citizen/Assumptions of Criminality	10.70(5.58)	
	Microinvalidation	17.64(9.24)	
	Exoticization/Assumptions of Similarity	14.30(5.75)	
	Environmental Microaggressions	16.50(9.29)	
	Workplace/School Microaggressions	7.59(3.51)	

**Hypotheses 1a and b.** In order to determine the degree of inter-partner acculturation discrepancy, difference scores were computed between participants' ratings of their own and their partners' levels of acculturation and enculturation. A paired samples t-test indicated that pooled SMAS-DSI difference scores ( $M = .18$ ) were significantly different from SMAS-ESI difference scores ( $M = .52$ ),  $t(7) = -3.09$ ,  $p = .02$ . SMAS-DSI and SMAS-ESI difference scores were not significantly correlated. The findings suggest that the acculturation and enculturation

subscales are independent constructs in this sample. Bivariate correlations ( $N = 221$ ) were used to assess for relationships between acculturation discrepancy and ratings of co-parenting quality. White respondents ( $M = .78$ ) indicated greater levels of enculturation than did racial minority-identifying respondents ( $M = .79$ ),  $t(109) = 1.98$ ,  $p = .05$ . White and minority respondents did not differ significantly in terms of degree of acculturation.

If greater acculturation and enculturation discrepancy were significantly correlated with lower co-parenting quality, Hypotheses 1a and 1b would be supported. Perceived inter-partner acculturation discrepancy ( $M = .19$ ,  $SD = .27$ ) and overall co-parenting quality ( $M = 4.02$ ,  $SD = .60$ ) were negatively correlated ( $r = -.39$ ,  $p = .001$ ). Perceived inter-partner enculturation discrepancy ( $M = .52$ ,  $SD = .67$ ) and overall co-parenting quality were not significantly correlated ( $r = .05$ ,  $p = .68$ ). The CRS is comprised of seven subscales: Co-Parenting Agreement, Co-Parenting Support, Co-Parenting Undermining, Endorsement of Partner's Parenting, Exposure to Conflict, and Co-Parenting Closeness. Perceived inter-partner acculturation, but not enculturation, discrepancy was negatively correlated with Co-Parenting Agreement ( $r = -.35$ ,  $p < .001$ ), Co-Parenting Closeness ( $r = -.26$ ,  $p = .005$ ), Co-Parenting Support ( $r = -.34$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and Endorsement of Partner's Parenting ( $r = .30$ ,  $p = .001$ ) subscales. Thus, the current findings supported Hypothesis 1a, but not Hypothesis 1b.

**Hypothesis 2a and 2b.** Similarly, in order to evaluate the second hypothesis, bivariate correlations ( $N = 221$ ) were used to assess for relationships between previously computed difference scores in acculturation and enculturation and ratings of marital relationship satisfaction. If greater perceived acculturation and enculturation discrepancy were significantly correlated with lower marital relationship satisfaction, Hypotheses 2a and 2b would be supported. Perceived inter-partner acculturation discrepancy and marital satisfaction ( $M =$

139.30,  $SD = 9.34$ ) were negatively correlated ( $r = -.28, p = .001$ ). Perceived inter-partner enculturation discrepancy and marital satisfaction were not significantly correlated ( $r = -.004, p = .98$ ). Thus, the current findings supported Hypothesis 2a, but not Hypothesis 2b.

**Hypothesis 3.** To evaluate the third, exploratory hypothesis, participants' item ratings for the REMS were summed ( $N = 221$ ) to determine whether all participants, their partners, and/or their child(ren) had experienced at least one microaggression in the past six months. If the majority of participants' total REMS scores were greater than 45, meaning participants or their families had experienced at least one microaggression, the hypothesis would be supported. Ninety-six percent of participants endorsed that they personally experienced or observed that their partner or child(ren) experienced at least one racial microaggression in the last six months ( $M = 80.18, SD = 26.18$ ). White respondents ( $M = 17.95$ ) reported environmental microaggressions more frequently than did minority respondents ( $M = 13.94$ ),  $t(69) = 2.15, p = .04$ . Respondents with minority partners ( $M = 83.18$ ) reported more racial and/or ethnic microaggressions overall than did respondents with White partners ( $M = 69.56$ ),  $t(94) = -2.03, p = .05$ . Respondents with minority partners ( $M = 7.99$ ) reported more workplace or school racial and ethnic microaggressions than did respondents with White partners ( $M = 6.17$ ),  $t(54) = -3.04, p < .01$ .

The REMS is comprised of six subscales probing six primary categories of microaggressions: Assumptions of Inferiority, Second-Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality, Microinvalidations, Exoticization/Assumptions of Similarity, Environmental Microaggressions, and Workplace and School Microaggressions. On average, participants most frequently endorsed that their families experienced environmental microaggressions ( $M = 16.50, SD = 9.29$ ) and microinvalidations ( $M = 17.63, SD = 9.24$ ). More specifically, participants

indicated that their families experienced approximately 10 instances of systemic racism and eight dismissals of their experiences in the previous six months. Thus, the current findings supported Hypothesis 3. See Figures 3 and 4 for a summary of REMS Subscales.

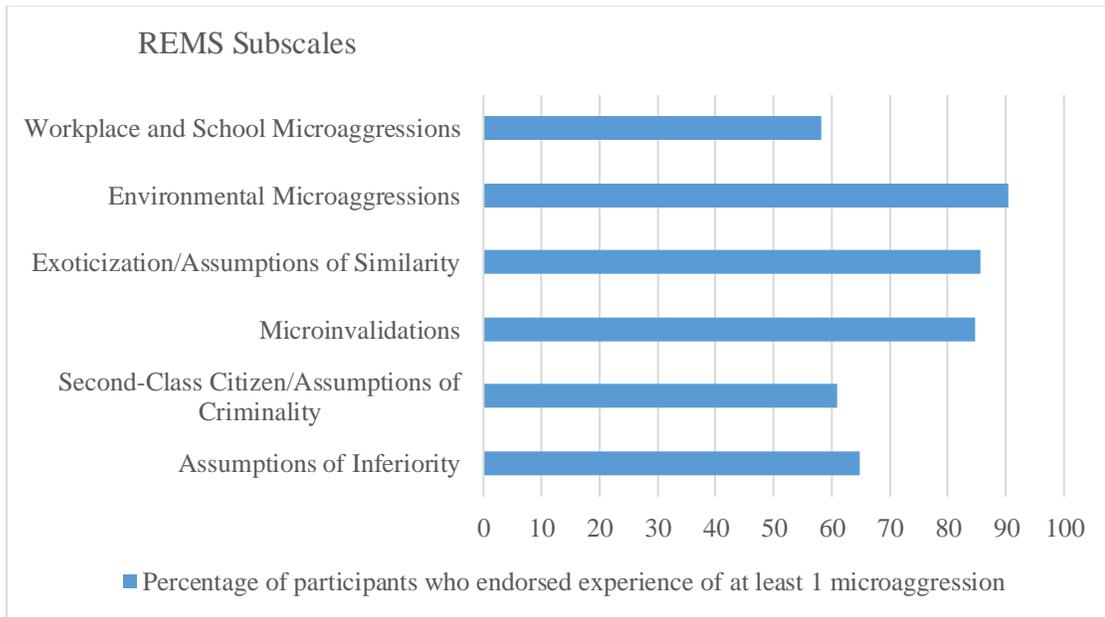


Figure 3. REMS Subscales Percentages

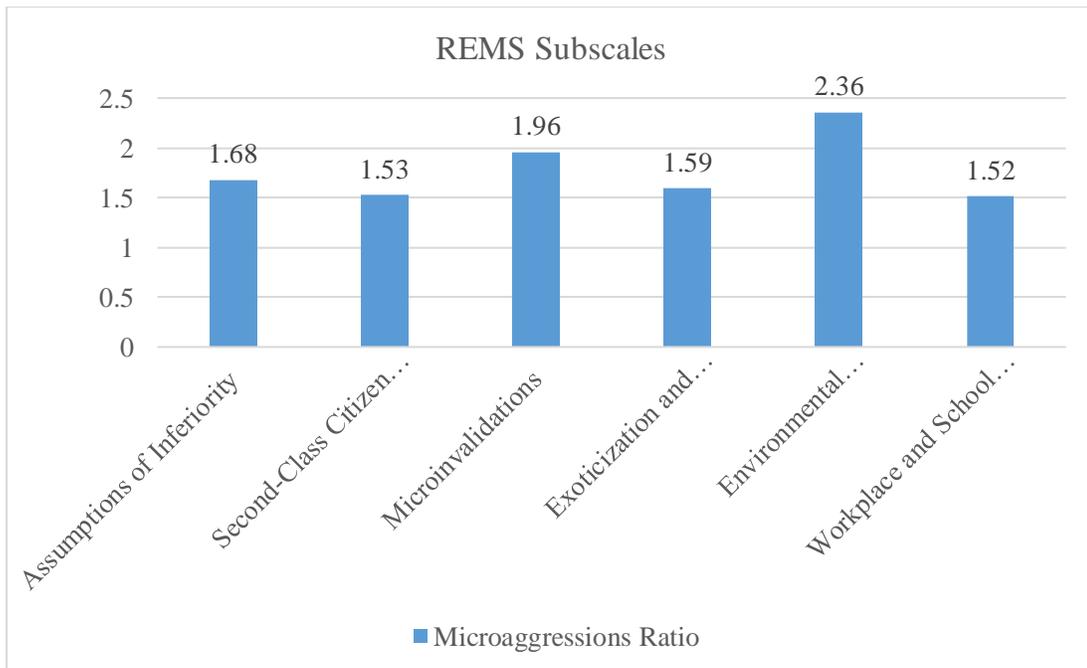


Figure 4. REMS Subscales Ratios

## Discussion

Intercultural families are increasingly common in the United States, yet empirical investigations of their experiences are noticeably absent from the psychological literature. Consequently, clinical work with racially and ethnically diverse romantic partnerships and families may be ill-informed. One experience unique to intercultural partnerships is the negotiation of potentially conflicting cultural beliefs, attitudes, and practices captured by partners' degree of acculturation to majority or host culture and enculturation to minority or home culture. This process may be further complicated when making co-parenting decisions. The acculturation-gap distress model predicts that greater discrepancy between parenting partners is related to lower perceptions of marital or romantic relationship satisfaction and co-parenting quality (Basanez et al., 2014; Buki et al., 2003; Chen et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2013; Lui, 2015; Rasmi et al., 2014; Schofield et al., 2008; Sullivan et al., 2010). Thus, the purpose of the current study was to explicate the relationship between degree of inter-partner acculturation and enculturation discrepancy and relationship satisfaction and co-parenting quality.

## Summary of Findings

The hypotheses of the current study were partially supported. Degree of acculturation gap between partners was negatively correlated with both relationship satisfaction and co-parenting quality, as predicted. However, degree of enculturation gap was not related significantly to any variables. Thus, the greater the degree of difference between partners in terms of endorsement of majority culture beliefs, attitudes, and practices in the U.S., the lower their perceptions of relationship satisfaction and co-parenting quality. In contrast, perceptions of differences in subscription to minority or home culture beliefs, attitudes, and practices were not related to

parenting quality. Additionally, more than 96% of participants reported that their families experienced at least one racial microaggression in the previous six months.

### **Explanation of Findings**

The interpretation of the current study's observation that inter-partner acculturation, but not enculturation gap, was related to parenting quality is an empirical question to be answered. A comparison of acculturative and enculturative differences between partners as perceived by a single respondent from the couple indicated that these scores differed significantly. One may posit that greater relative pressure for intercultural partners to endorse majority culture beliefs rather than those of their minority or native culture leads to significant impact on parenting and relationship quality when partners negotiate differences. Alternatively, acknowledging that most participants identified as Caucasian women, the current sample's perceptions may be biased due to respondents' lack of knowledge about minority cultural beliefs, attitudes, and practices or due to partners' ignorance of majority-minority cultural differences. Inclusion of both partners' perceptions of acculturation and enculturation may allow for greater accuracy in computing DSI and ESI difference scores and, subsequently, facilitate detection of a significant relationship across cultural dimensions.

The overwhelming majority of respondents reported that they, their partners, or their child(ren) experienced at least one racial microaggression in the last six months. Participants most frequently reported that their families experienced environmental microaggressions, exoticization or assumptions of similarity, or microinvalidations. Assuming that microaggressions may be less apparent to racial/ethnic majority-identifying (Caucasian) individuals than to minority-identifying individuals, this high percentage of reported prejudice is likely an underestimate of experienced prejudice and is suggestive of negative consequences of

the current U.S. sociopolitical environment. It is hypothesized that a greater number of microaggressions would be reported if a larger percentage of the sample identified as non-White, including a greater proportion of respondents who are potentially more vigilant or attuned to racial prejudice. A measure of microaggressions was included in the present study as the authors felt it was meaningful to describe the current experiences of diverse families considering the shift in leadership and content of public discourse following the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election.

### **Implications of the Current Study**

**Contributions to literature.** As previously stated, the parenting literature fails to describe racially diverse families. The present study is innovative as all measures included have not been utilized in characterizing intercultural parenting partnerships. While acculturative and enculturative differences and their association with relationship satisfaction and quality have been evaluated in monoracial parent-child units in the literature, the acculturation-gap distress model has not been assessed formally in romantic or co-parenting relationships. In addition, the frequency of experienced microaggressions has not yet been documented. Thus, the current study represents a novel use of the SMAS, CRS, MSS, and REMS and is the first to investigate the validity of the acculturation-gap distress hypothesis for intercultural parenting partnerships as perceived by a single partner.

**Limitations.** The current study had several notable limitations. Firstly, there was a high percentage of participants who provided incomplete questionnaire data. Later surveys (i.e., SMAS and REMS) in the questionnaire had the greatest proportion of missing data though an accurate explanation for this observation remains elusive. It is possible that fatigue and/or lack of incentive (e.g., monetary compensation) to complete the questionnaire negatively impacted respondent behavior. Alternatively, it may be that respondents experienced aversive emotions or

thoughts when encountering questions concerning culture that highlight inter-partner differences or about prejudice that might elicit painful memories. When offered a chance to suggest modifications for future iterations of the questionnaire, a few Caucasian respondents expressed confusion about SMAS prompts probing ESI, as their “native” culture is equivalent to American or majority culture. Others indicated frustration in completing the acculturation/enculturation survey due to uncertainty in responding for their partner. It may be that inclusion of the partner’s self-perceptions would shrink the proportion of missing data on the SMAS. Additionally, providing compensation for complete responses may motivate participants to persevere despite experiencing fatigue.

Other limitations of the present study included the characteristics of the sample. The modal intercultural partnership was a heterosexual marital relationship in which the female partner identified as Caucasian or White and the male partner identified as African American or Black. This is not necessarily representative of the range of intercultural parenting dyads in the U.S. and limits generalizability of the findings to families of differing racial backgrounds. In addition, most respondents were female and Caucasian, which may bias the data collected. This may be attributed to recruitment methods in which social media groups and forums were the primary data collection sites and were frequented by majority culture partners in interracial couples.

**Future directions.** The present study signifies the initial steps towards understanding the experiences of diverse parenting partnerships, and continued research evaluating intercultural families is warranted to inform inclusive clinical work with similar parents and multiracial individuals. Due to the novel target population and use of measures in the current investigation, there is a lack of relevant samples with which to compare our results. In general, the current

findings replicated similar observations in parent-child relationships in which greater acculturation gap was related to lower relationship quality (Buki et al., 2003; Schofield et al., 2008). However, in contrast to expectations outlined by the acculturation-gap distress model, enculturation discrepancy was not related to perceptions of relationship quality (Szapocznick & Kurtines, 1993).

Future investigations should strive to improve the representativeness of respondents in terms of race/ethnic identity and gender, perhaps through varied recruitment methods (e.g., online, face-to-face). It is also important to collect the perspectives of both partners in order to improve the accuracy of acculturation/enculturation and microaggressions data. These strategies may result in discovery of a significant relationship between enculturation discrepancy and relationship quality as well as greater report of racial microaggressions. Further, while current findings suggest a relationship between differences in culture and relational factors between romantic partners, the impact of inter-parent acculturation gap on the emotional, psychological, and social functioning of children in intercultural families is unknown and warrants empirical investigation.

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APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Recruitment Sites

Type of Site	Name of Site
Online	Craigslist (various by city)
Online: Social Media Group	<p data-bbox="597 432 857 457">Mommy’s chill spot</p> <p data-bbox="597 506 943 531">Moms of Biracial Children</p> <p data-bbox="597 579 1398 604">Canton-Belleveille-Ypsi and Surrounding Areas Mommy Swap</p> <p data-bbox="597 653 971 678">Interracial dating discussions</p> <p data-bbox="597 726 1344 751">The Mixed Family Community – Multiracial Families and</p> <p data-bbox="597 800 857 825">Raising Mixed Kids</p> <p data-bbox="597 873 1198 898">Just Like Me: Connecting Multiracial Families</p> <p data-bbox="597 947 1365 1041">MIX: INTERRACIAL CONNECTIONS FOR SINGLES &amp; COUPLES</p> <p data-bbox="597 1089 797 1115">Mixed Families</p> <p data-bbox="597 1163 938 1188">Survey sharing 2016/2017</p> <p data-bbox="597 1236 1027 1262">Chocolate &amp; Vanilla Swirl World</p> <p data-bbox="597 1310 1349 1404">“Perfect Swirl” teaching our mixed children that swirls are perfect.</p> <p data-bbox="597 1453 849 1478">The Mommy Grind</p> <p data-bbox="597 1526 932 1551">Ypsilanti Area Discussion</p> <p data-bbox="597 1600 1398 1703">Westland/Wayne/Canton/Plymouth/G.C and surrounding areas to buy, sell, trade</p> <p data-bbox="597 1751 1393 1776">Interracial Couples &amp; MixedRace Happy Families Worldwide</p> <p data-bbox="597 1824 818 1850">Biracial Children</p>

Home of the Woke

Unfiltered Mommies

Peaceful Parenting Families of Michigan

Interracial Relationship & Single World

Northville/Plymouth and Surrounding Area Community Site

WE'RE FOR LOVE, FUN & UNITY

Mommies and Daddies: The Parents Lounge

Beautiful Biracial Babies (new and improved)

Queer Multiracial Families\*

Parents of Multiracial Children

Multiracial Americans NATIONWIDE

Foreign, Inter-racial Relationships and Marriages

Multiracial Motherhood: Resources For Biracial Kids &

Interracial Couples

Read Your World: Teaching Literacy Skills with Diverse

Books

Biracial babies, children, adults. Are u or ur family or have questions.

Serious Interracial Dating

Parent Hacks

Ann Arbor Area Mamas Network

Natural Parenting Ann Arbor

Hair to ♥, Multiracial Families Discuss

Beauty and challenges: interracial, bi-racial and multi-racial  
families

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## Appendix B: IRB Approval Letter

**UHSRC Determination: EXEMPT****Date: July 10, 2017****To: Casiana Warfield****Eastern Michigan University****Re: UHSRC: # W20170629-1****Category: Exempt category 2****Approval Date: July 10, 2017****Title: The Acculturation Gap: Investigating the Relationship Between Inter-Partner Acculturation Discrepancy and Parenting Quality**

Your research project, entitled **The Acculturation Gap: Investigating the Relationship Between Inter-Partner Acculturation Discrepancy and Parenting Quality** has been determined **Exempt** in accordance with federal regulation 45 CFR 46.102. UHSRC policy states that you, as the Principal Investigator, are responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of your research subjects and conducting your research as described in your protocol.

**Renewals:** Exempt protocols do not need to be renewed. When the project is completed, please submit the **Human Subjects Study Completion Form** (access through IRBNet on the UHSRC website).

**Modifications:** You may make minor changes (e.g., study staff changes, sample size changes, contact information changes, etc.) without submitting for review. However, if you plan to make changes that alter study design or any study instruments, you must submit a **Human Subjects Approval Request Form** and obtain approval prior to implementation. The form is available through IRBNet on the UHSRC website.

**Problems:** All major deviations from the reviewed protocol, unanticipated problems, adverse events, subject complaints, or other problems that may increase the risk to human subjects **or** change the category of review must be reported to the UHSRC via an **Event Report** form, available through IRBNet on the UHSRC website

**Follow-up:** If your Exempt project is not completed and closed after **three years**, the UHSRC office will contact you regarding the status of the project.

Please use the UHSRC number listed above on any forms submitted that relate to this project, or on any correspondence with the UHSRC office.

Good luck in your research. If we can be of further assistance, please contact us at 734-487-3090 or via e-mail at [human.subjects@emich.edu](mailto:human.subjects@emich.edu). Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,  
April M Gravitt, MS  
Research Compliance Analyst  
University Human Subjects Review Committee

## Appendix C: Survey Materials

## Demographic Questionnaire

Please indicate your full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Which gender do you identify as?

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Gender-nonconforming
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Which gender does your partner identify as?

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Gender-nonconforming
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

What is your age in years? \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate your immigrant generation status:

- First
- Second
- Third
- Fourth or greater
- N/A

Please indicate your partner's immigrant generation status:

- First
- Second
- Third
- Fourth or greater
- N/A

Please indicate if you speak more than one language:

- Yes
- No

Please indicate if your partner speaks more than one language:

- Yes
- No

Please indicate if your child (any of your children) speak(s) more than one language:

- Yes
- No

Please indicate your sexual orientation:

- Heterosexual
- Gay
- Lesbian
- Bisexual
- Pansexual

Asexual

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

To what extent do you consider yourself a religious person?

Very religious

Moderately religious

Slightly religious

Not at all religious

To what extent do you consider yourself a spiritual person?

Very spiritual

Moderately spiritual

Slightly spiritual

Not at all spiritual

What is the highest level of education you have obtained?

Less than high school

High School Diploma

GED

Some college

Trades school

Associates Degree

Bachelors Degree

Masters Degree

Doctoral Degree

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

What is the current annual income of the household in which you reside?

Greater than \$150,000

\$100,000 to \$149,999

\$75,000 to \$99,999

\$50,000 to \$74,999

\$25,000 to \$49,999

\$10,000 to \$24,999

Less than \$10,000

Don't Know/Unsure/Prefer Not to Answer

What is the current economic status of the household in which you reside?

Plenty of "luxuries"

Plenty of "extras"

Solidly middle-class

Barely enough to get by

Very poor, not enough to get by

Don't Know/Unsure/Prefer Not to Answer

What is your current relationship status?

Married or living with a partner

In a relationship but not living together

Divorced

Widowed

Single

Is your current relationship monogamous?

Yes

No

Not Applicable

Family History: It is helpful for us to understand all of the parents and children in your immediate family currently. Please list below all of the children whom you currently take care of, anyone with whom you share co-parenting responsibilities, and yourself.

Relationship to you	First Name	Age	Currently living with you (Yes or No)?	Some people identify themselves as belonging to one or more racial groups. Please check the box(es) below that correspond to group(s) this person belongs to:
Self			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	*Checklist responses
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Checklist options:

- White or Caucasian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- American Native
- Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian
- Middle Eastern
- Multiracial
- Other

What is your current employment status?

- Employed, Full-time (> 35 hours/week)
- Employed, Part-time
- Disabled
- Retired
- Stay-at-home Parent or Other Caregiver
- Unemployed, Looking for Work
- Unemployed, Not Looking for Work

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For the purposes of the current study, it is important that you keep your current intercultural partnership and shared child(ren) in mind.

Stephenson Multigroup Acculturation Scale

Please indicate the answer that best matches *your* response to each statement.

1 *False* 2 *Partly false* 3 *Partly true* 4 *True*

1. I understand English, but I'm not fluent in English.
2. I am informed about current affairs in the United States.
3. I speak my native language with my friends and acquaintances from my country of origin.
4. I have never learned to speak the language of my native country.
5. I feel totally comfortable with (Anglo) American people.
6. I eat traditional foods from my native culture.
7. I have many (Anglo) American acquaintances.
8. I feel comfortable speaking my native language.
9. I am informed about current affairs in my native country.
10. I know how to read and write in my native language.
11. I feel at home in the United States.
12. I attend social functions with people from my native country.
13. I feel accepted by (Anglo) Americans.
14. I speak my native language at home.
15. I regularly read magazines of my ethnic group.
16. I know how to speak my native language.
17. I know how to prepare (Anglo) American foods.
18. I am familiar with the history of my native country.
19. I regularly read an American newspaper.
20. I like to listen to music of my ethnic group.
21. I like to speak my native language.
22. I feel comfortable speaking English.
23. I speak English at home.
24. I speak my native language with my spouse or partner.
25. When I pray I use my native language.
26. I attend social functions with (Anglo) American people.
27. I think in my native language.
28. I stay in close contact with family members and relatives in my native country.
29. I am familiar with important people in American history.
30. I think in English.
31. I speak English with my spouse or partner.
32. I like to eat American foods.

Please indicate the answer that you think best matches *your partner's* response to each statement.

1 *False* 2 *Partly false* 3 *Partly true* 4 *True*

1. I understand English, but I'm not fluent in English.
2. I am informed about current affairs in the United States.
3. I speak my native language with my friends and acquaintances from my country of origin.

4. I have never learned to speak the language of my native country.
  5. I feel totally comfortable with (Anglo) American people.
  6. I eat traditional foods from my native culture.
  7. I have many (Anglo) American acquaintances.
  8. I feel comfortable speaking my native language.
  9. I am informed about current affairs in my native country.
  10. I know how to read and write in my native language.
  11. I feel at home in the United States.
  12. I attend social functions with people from my native country.
  13. I feel accepted by (Anglo) Americans.
  14. I speak my native language at home.
  15. I regularly read magazines of my ethnic group.
  16. I know how to speak my native language.
  17. I know how to prepare (Anglo) American foods.
  18. I am familiar with the history of my native country.
  19. I regularly read an American newspaper.
  20. I like to listen to music of my ethnic group.
  21. I like to speak my native language.
  22. I feel comfortable speaking English.
  23. I speak English at home.
  24. I speak my native language with my spouse or partner.
  25. When I pray I use my native language.
  26. I attend social functions with (Anglo) American people.
  27. I think in my native language.
  28. I stay in close contact with family members and relatives in my native country.
  29. I am familiar with important people in American history.
  30. I think in English.
  31. I speak English with my spouse or partner.
  32. I like to eat American foods.
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## Coparenting Relationship Scale

For each item, please select the response that best describes the way you think that you and your partner work together as parents:

0 *Not true of us*   1   2 *A little bit true of us*   3   4 *Somewhat true of us*   5   6 *Very true of us*

1. I believe my partner is a good parent.
2. My relationship with my partner is stronger now than before we had a child.
3. My partner asks my opinion on issues related to parenting.
4. My partner pays a great deal of attention to our child.
5. My partner likes to play with our child and then leave dirty work to me.
6. My partner and I have the same goals for our child.
7. My partner still wants to do his or her own thing instead of being a responsible parent.
8. It is easier and more fun to play with the child alone than it is when my partner is present too.
9. My partner and I have different ideas about how to raise our child.
10. My partner tells me I am doing a good job or otherwise lets me know I am being a good parent.
11. My partner and I have different ideas regarding our child's eating, sleeping, and other routines.
12. My partner sometimes makes jokes or sarcastic comments about the way I am as a parent.
13. My partner does not trust my abilities as a parent.
14. My partner is sensitive to our child's feelings and needs.
15. My partner and I have different standards for our child's behavior.
16. My partner tries to show that she or he is better than me at caring for our child.
17. I feel close to my partner when I see him or her play with our child.
18. My partner has a lot of patience with our child.
19. We often discuss the best way to meet our child's needs.
20. My partner does not carry his or her fair share of the parenting work.
21. When all three of us are together, my partner sometimes competes with me for our child's attention.
22. My partner undermines my parenting.
23. My partner is willing to make personal sacrifices to help take care of our child.
24. We are growing and maturing together through experiences as parents.
25. My partner appreciates how hard I work at being a good parent.
26. When I'm at my wits end as a parent, partner gives me extra support I need.
27. My partner makes me feel like I'm the best possible parent for our child.
28. The stress of parenthood has caused my partner and me to grow apart.
29. My partner doesn't like to be bothered by our child.
30. Parenting has given us a focus for the future.

These questions ask you to describe things you do when both you and your partner are physically present together with your child (i.e., in the same room, in the car, on outings).

**Count only times when all three of you** are actually within the company of one another (even if this is just a few hours per week).

0 *Never*   1   2 *Sometimes (once or twice a week)*   3   4 *Often (once a day)*   5   6 *Very Often (several times a day)*

How often in a **typical week, when all 3 (or more) of you are together**, do you:

31. Find yourself in a mildly tense or sarcastic interchange with your partner?
32. Argue with your partner about your child, in the child's presence?
33. Argue about your relationship or marital issues unrelated to your child, in the child's presence?
34. One or both of you say cruel or hurtful things to each other in front of the child?
35. Yell at each other within earshot of the child?

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## Marital Satisfaction Scale

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements (**'spouse' may be substituted with 'partner' and 'marriage' with 'relationship' as it applies to your current relationship status**):

1 *Strongly disagree* 2 3 4 5 *Strongly agree*

1. I know what my spouse expects of me in our marriage.
2. My spouse could make things easier for me if he/she cared to.
3. I worry a lot about my marriage.
4. If I could start over again, I would marry someone other than my present spouse.
5. I can always trust my spouse.
6. My life would seem empty without my marriage.
7. My marriage is too confining to suit me.
8. I feel that I am "in a rut" in my marriage.
9. I know where I stand with my spouse.
10. My marriage has a bad effect on my health.
11. I become upset, angry, or irritable because of things that occur in my marriage.
12. I feel competent and fully able to handle my marriage.
13. My present marriage is not one I would wish to remain in permanently.
14. I expect my marriage to give me increasing satisfaction the longer it continues.
15. I get discouraged trying to make my marriage work out.
16. I consider my marital situation to be as pleasant as it should be.
17. My marriage gives me more real personal satisfaction than anything else I do.
18. I think my marriage gets more difficult for me each year.
19. My spouse gets me badly flustered and jittery.
20. My spouse gives me sufficient opportunity to express my opinions.
21. I have made a success of my marriage so far.
22. My spouse regards me as an equal.
23. I must look outside my marriage for those things that make life worthwhile and interesting.
24. My spouse inspires me to do my best work.
25. My marriage has "smothered" my personality.
26. The future of my marriage looks promising to me.
27. I am really interested in my spouse.
28. I get along well with my spouse.
29. I am afraid of losing my spouse through divorce.
30. My spouse makes unfair demands on my free time.
31. My spouse seems unreasonable in his/her dealings with me.
32. My marriage helps me toward the goals I have set for myself.
33. My spouse is willing to make helpful improvements in our relationship.
34. My marriage suffers from disagreement concerning matters of recreation.
35. Demonstrations of affection by me and my spouse are mutually acceptable.
36. An unhappy sexual relationship is a drawback in my marriage.
37. My spouse and I agree on what is right and proper conduct.
38. My spouse and I do not share the same philosophy of life.
39. My spouse and I enjoy several mutually satisfying outside interests together.
40. I sometimes wish I had not married my present spouse.
41. My present marriage is definitely unhappy.

- 42. I look forward to sexual activity with my spouse with pleasant anticipation.
- 43. My spouse lacks respect for me.
- 44. I have definite difficulty confiding in my spouse.
- 45. Most of the time my spouse understands the way I feel.
- 46. My spouse does not listen to what I have to say.
- 47. I frequently enjoy pleasant conversations with my spouse.
- 48. I am definitely satisfied with my marriage.

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## The Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale

Please indicate the number of times the described event occurred to you, your partner, and your child(ren) in the past six months. 'I' and 'me' can be replaced with 'my partner' or 'my child(ren)':

1 I did not experience this event in the past six months 2 I experienced this event 1-3 times in the past six months 3 I experienced this event 4-6 times in the past six months 4 I experienced this event 7-9n times in the past six months 5 I experienced this event 10 or more times in the past six months

1. I was ignored at school or at work because of my race.
2. Someone's body language showed they were scared of me, because of my race.
3. Someone assumed that I spoke a language other than English.
4. I was told that I should not complain about race.
5. Someone assumed that I grew up in a particular neighborhood because of my race.
6. Someone avoided walking near me on the street because of my race.
7. Someone told me that she or he was color-blind.
8. Someone avoided sitting next to me in a public space (e.g., restaurants, movie theaters, subways, buses) because of my race.
9. Someone assumed that I would not be intelligent because of my race.
10. I was told that I complain about race too much.
11. I received substandard service in stores compared to customers of other racial groups.
12. I observed people of my race in prominent positions at my workplace or school.
13. Someone wanted to date me only because of my race.
14. I was told that people of all racial groups experience the same obstacles.
15. My opinion was overlooked in a group discussion because of my race.
16. Someone assumed that my work would be inferior to people of other racial groups.
17. Someone acted surprised at my scholastic or professional success because of my race.
18. I observed that people of my race were the CEOs of major corporations.
19. I observed people of my race portrayed positively on television.
20. Someone did not believe me when I told them I was born in the U.S.
21. Someone assumed that I would not be educated because of my race.
22. Someone told me that I was "articulate" after she/he assumed I wouldn't be.
23. Someone told me that all people in my racial group are all the same.
24. I observed people of my race portrayed positively in magazines.
25. An employer or co-worker was unfriendly or unwelcoming toward me because of my race.
26. I was told that people of color do not experience racism anymore.
27. Someone told me that they "don't see color."
28. I read popular books or magazines in which a majority of contributions featured people from my racial group.
29. Someone asked me to teach them words in my "native language."
30. Someone told me that they do not see race.
31. Someone clenched her/his purse or wallet upon seeing me because of my race.
32. Someone assumed that I would have a lower education because of my race.
33. Someone of a different racial group has stated that there is no difference between the two of us.
34. Someone assumed that I would physically hurt them because of my race.
35. Someone assumed that I ate foods associated with my race/culture every day.
36. Someone assumed that I held a lower paying job because of my race.

- 37. I observed people of my race portrayed positively in movies.
- 38. Someone assumed that I was poor because of my race.
- 39. Someone told me that people should not think about race anymore.
- 40. Someone avoided eye contact with me because of my race.
- 41. I observed that someone of my race is a government official in my state.
- 42. Someone told me that all people in my racial group look alike.
- 43. Someone objectified one of my physical features because of my race.
- 44. An employer or co-worker treated me differently than White co-workers.
- 45. Someone assumed that I speak similar languages to other people in my race.

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Additional Questions

Please indicate the degree to which you and your partner agree about your child's racial/ethnic identity:

1 *Strongly disagree* 2 *Disagree* 3 *Somewhat Disagree* 4 *Neither Agree/Disagree* 5 *Somewhat Agree* 6 *Agree* 7 *Strongly Agree*

Please indicate the degree of support/approval for your partnership that you have received from your family:

1 *Complete lack of support/approval* 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Complete support/approval*

Please indicate the degree of support/approval for your partnership that you have received from your partner's family:

1 *Complete lack of support/approval* 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Complete support/approval*

Please indicate the degree of support/approval for your partnership that you have received from your friend group:

1 *Complete lack of support/approval* 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Complete support/approval*

Please indicate the degree of support/approval for your partnership that you have received from your partner's friend group:

1 *Complete lack of support/approval* 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Complete support/approval*

Please describe any changes (if any) that you have noticed in the past year:

\_\_\_\_\_

Please use the following box to provide any additional comments/information not communicated in previous answers:

\_\_\_\_\_  
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Closing Statement Document

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We are interested in studying families like yours further. Specifically, we are interested in finding out more about your partner and child(ren)'s experiences. Would you be willing to be contacted to participate in similar studies in the future?

Yes

No

If Yes:

Please provide the following contact information so that a researcher can contact you at a later date. You may decide not to participate in future studies at any time.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

If No:

End of survey