A CROSS-CULTURAL APPROACH TO SERIAL ARGUING IN DATING RELATIONSHIPS: THE CASE OF MALAGASY ROMANTIC PARTNERS

by

MARIE LOUISE RADANIELINA-HITA

(Under the direction of Jerold L. Hale)

ABSTRACT

This thesis represents the first cross-cultural replication of research in serial arguing. Some 224 participants recruited from Madagascar, and among members of the Malagasy Diasporas in France, Québec and the US completed a survey concentrating on several aspects of their cultural orientations, the perceived frequency of conflictual episodes, and their communication behaviors during serial arguments. Results suggest that serial arguing is generalizable to another, divergent culture. Interestingly enough, the dysfunctional pattern of communication 'demand/withdraw' which proved to be more damaging to relationships than the number of disagreements in previous research was similarly associated with relational outcomes in the Malagasy sample. The findings also highlight the importance of within-cultural variations in terms of conflict behaviors. An emphasis on the vertical aspect of individualism was a significant predictor of (more) dominating, aggressive styles while an emphasis on the horizontal aspect of individualism and collectivism of a compromising style.

INDEX WORDS conflict, conflict style, Facework, cross cultural communication, Madagascar, serial arguing, interpersonal relationships

ERRATA

Please read the following notations prior to reading this thesis. It was discovered after archiving this document that quotations were accidentally deleted .

INSTEAD OF	PLEASE READ
p.2 Smith, Dugan, Peterson, and Leung (1998), for instance, reported that IC was not predictive of how often disagreements occur between in-group members in their work settings.	 Smith, Dugan, Peterson, and Leung (1998), for instance, reported that "individualism-collectivism was not predictive of how often disagreements occur between in-group members in their work settings." (p. 362).
p.3 For instance, Turks reported using persuasion, refraining, and postponing to a larger extent than Canadian participants, who in turn were more likely to use third-party help, giving priority to partner, and compromising.	 For instance, Turks reported using «refraining, postponing, and persuasion to a larger extent than Canadian participants, who in turn were more likely to use giving priority to partner, compromising, and third-party help» (p. 454).
p.18 Trapp and Hoff (1985) discovered the presence of recurring arguments in a broad spectrum of close relationships including romantic relationship.	 Trapp and Hoff (1985) discovered the presence of «recurring arguments in a broad spectrum of close relationships including romantic relationship.»
p. 19 Johnson and Roloff (1998), found that the perceived resolvability of the conflict was a better predictor of relational impact than the mere frequency of disagreement. Only when a serial argument is perceived to be irresolvable or 'stuck in a rut' does it seems to aversely impact a relationship. As Cupach (2000) noted, studying the serial management of a particular topic may provide a unique window for determining how and why a concrete issue can fractionate over time.	 Johnson and Roloff (1998), found that «the perceived resolvability of the conflict was a better predictor of relational impact than the mere frequency of disagreement. Only when a serial argument is perceived to be irresolvable or 'stuck in a rut' does it seems to aversely impact a relationship» (p.2) As Cupach (2000) noted, «studying the serial management of a particular topic may provide a unique window for determining how and why a concrete issue can fractionate over time.»
p.20 Johnson and Roloff (2000) reported that perceived resolvability was higher and relational harm lower when individuals used relationally confirming behaviors during serial arguing. More specifically, making optimistic comparisons between argumentative episodes was negatively correlated with relational harm Christensen et al. (1995) reported four inverse	 Johnson and Roloff (2000) reported that «perceived resolvability was higher and relational harm lower when individuals used relationally confirming behaviors during serial arguing.» (p.683). «More specifically, making optimistic comparisons between argumentative episodes was negatively correlated with relational harm». Christensen et al. (1995) reported «four inverse

correlations with relational satisfaction which the demand/withdraw patterns provided independent contributions for.	correlations with relational satisfaction which the demand/withdraw patterns provided independent contributions for.»
p. 21 Looking at dating partners, Malis and Roloff (2006), demonstrated that individuals enacting the self demand/partner withdraw pattern more likely to experience aversive outcomes such as intrusive thoughts and feelings about the episodes, and hyperaroused state.	p.21 Looking at dating partners, Malis and Roloff (2006), demonstrated that individuals enacting the self demand/partner withdraw pattern more likely to experience aversive outcomes such as «intrusive thoughts and feelings about the episode, and a hyperaroused state ” (p.212).
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p. 26 Smith et al. (1998) also argued that the endorsement of the Hispanic concept of *sympatia* does not necessarily preclude overt expression of disagreements which might explain potential differences between Asian collectivism and forms of collectivism in Spanish-speaking cultures.	Smith et al. (1998) also argued that the «endorsement of the Hispanic concept of *sympatia* does not necessarily preclude overt expression of disagreements which might explain potential differences between Asian collectivism and forms of collectivism in Spanish-speaking cultures».
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p.36 It is possible that even within a group-oriented culture (Kaushal & Kwantes, 2006),	It is possible that «even within a group-oriented culture» (Kaushal & Kwantes, 2006),
p.82 Does the influence of culture on conflict behaviors really diminishes when those behaviors are contextualized within close relationships rather than when they are not contextualized at all (Cingoz-Ulu & Lalonde, 2007).	Does the "influence of culture on conflict management strategies really diminishes when those behaviors are contextualized within close relationships rather than when they are not contextualized at all?" (Cingoz-Ulu & Lalonde, 2007, p.456).
p.89 Triandis argued (as quoted by Fiske, 2002), the less valid are measurements requiring reflective self-report.	p.89 Triandis argued (as quoted by Fiske, 2002), the "less valid are measurements requiring reflective self-report." (p. 81).

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Bachelor of Arts, University of Antananarivo, Madagascar, 2001

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DEDICATION

To my parents Marie Louise Ravaosolo and Marie Julien Radanielina Ignace

Niafy mafy teo amin'ny fiainany mba ahatongavako amin'izao tanjona izao.

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I would like to express my warmest thanks to the Faculty of the Speech Communication Department for all their help throughout my past two years in Georgia. I am extremely grateful to my committee members: Dr. Hale, Dr. Monahan, and Dr. Rubin who I always felt comfortable approaching with any matter pertaining to my academic and social adaptation. Dr. Hale, thank you for your unfailing support during the two years that it took me to complete my program of study. My heartfelt thanks to Dr. Monahan whose directness was at times hard to understand by the high-context person that I am. Last but certainly *not* the least; I would like to express my deep and humble gratitude to Dr. Rubin for all his guidance and help.

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My heartfelt thanks to all my friends in the US, Québec, France and Norway, for their support, particularly Jackson W. Crawford.

Mankasitraka ny ray aman-dreniko, ny mpiray tampo amiko, ny havako, ny namako ary ireo olona rehetra nahafoy tamin'ny fotoanany ka nandray anjara tamin'ny asam-pikarohana tany Madagasikara, Frantsa, Québec ary Etazonia. Raha tsy teo ianareo dia tsy nahavita ny fianarako aho satria ny fanekenareo nameno ireny vondrom-panontaniana ireny no nahafako nanana données hohadihadiana. Farany dia misaotra betsaka ny Tompo nohon'ny Fitiavany sy ny Fitahiany.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Investigations of communication patterns enacted during serial arguing in close relationships have exclusively used samples of American college students (e.g., Bevan & Hale, & Williams, 2004; Johnson & Roloff, 1998, 2000; Malis & Roloff, 2006; Trapp & Hoff, 1985). The purpose of this thesis is to extend the Western research on serial arguing by replicating research on serial arguing with a non-American sample – the Malagasy people. The present research specifically focuses on three main areas of serial arguing. First, it investigates whether serial arguing behaviors exist in the Malagasy culture in a recognizable way. If serial arguing does occur, how frequently is it observed, what forms does it take, and how is it enacted?

Cross-cultural studies in interpersonal conflict suggest that there are differences both in the way individuals frame and manage conflicts. Ting-Toomey (1999), to name but one, argues that the way people perceive conflict, how they choose to engage or disengage from it, and how they attribute meanings to the different conflict goals varies across cultural lines. Ting-Toomey's facework theory of conflict (1985, 2001, 2005) conceptually links intercultural dimensions such as individualism-collectivism (IC), and high/low-context with face concerns, facework behaviors, and conflict styles. In the absence of any empirical cross cultural research in serial arguing to guide specific predictions, Ting-Toomey's facework theory of conflict is used here to clarify expectations concerning serial arguing among Malagasy romantic partners.

With a view to explore cultural differences in the estimated effects of disagreements, cross-cultural/intercultural researchers, such as Ting-Toomey, have drawn on Hofstede's

individualism-collectivism (1980, 1991, 2001), and Hall's high/low context (1976) constructs. Collectivists' preference for harmony leads them to perceive disagreements in a more negative light than individualists. It is preferable not to criticize others and to avoid conflict by having a third party mediate situations when one has diverging views with others (Ting-Toomey, 2005). In addition, individualists are less conflict-avoidant as compared to collectivists. Besides, they are more likely to use confrontational and direct ways in handling conflict situations. The vast majority of research in the cross-cultural area has repeatedly replicated those findings. In their meta-analysis of cross-cultural conflict literature, Holt and DeVore (2005), for instance, noted that in the 36 cross-cultural studies that they examined, individuals within a collectivistic orientation prefer withdrawing and compromising more than those with an individualistic cultural orientation who choose forcing more.

Nonetheless, some of that past research, which treats individualism and collectivism as polar opposites of the same single construct (Kagitcibasi & Berry, 1989), didn't replicate the findings reported earlier. Smith, Dugan, Peterson, and Leung (1998), for instance, reported that IC was not predictive of how often disagreements occur between in-group members in their work settings. In a similar vein, Barnlund (1989) reported that Americans and Japanese resolved conflict in the same way even though cultures differ on IC. More critical for this thesis are studies suggesting that collectivistic orientation is associated with avoidance and/or submissive strategies in parent-child or instructor-student interactions but not in situations involving same-sex or cross-sex friends, and romantic partners.

The limited research on cross-national differences comparing conflict in romantic relationships with other types of interpersonal conflicts tends to show that members of collectivistic and individualistic cultures enact different behaviors when they are in conflict with

adult interactants and peers. Cingöz-Ulu and Lalonde (2007), for example, compared the behaviors that Turks and Canadians enact when they are in conflict with a close same-sex friend a cross-sex friend, and a romantic partner. Contrary to what was expected from members of a 'collectivistic' culture, Turks displayed both dominating and avoiding styles of communication. For instance, Turks reported using persuasion, refraining, and postponing to a larger extent than Canadian participants, who in turn were more likely to use third-party help, giving priority to partner, and compromising. More specifically, Canadians gave in or used the third-party help more often when the conflict occurred in their romantic relationships rather than in same-sex and/or opposite-sex friendships. Turks tended to use direct behaviors such as opening up for an agreeable solution more often with their romantic partners and same-sex friends than they did when they were in conflict with opposite-sex friends.

Haar and Krahé (1999) found the same differences between German and Indonesian adolescents. The cultural variability of IC alone could not fully account for respondents' behaviors. German and Indonesian adolescents were presented with 12 scenarios, 4 of which depicted disagreements with a same-sex friend, 4 concerning a parent and 4 involving an instructor. Respondents were asked to choose one of the three types in dealing with conflict: confrontational, submissive and compromise-oriented. Overall, Germans used more confrontational strategies than Indonesians. However just like the young Turks in the Cingöz-Ulu and Lalonde's survey (2007), the collectivistic Indonesians showed a great variation in dealing with interpersonal conflict. Among Indonesians, conflicts with peers were handled with a somewhat more direct and/or confrontational strategies than were conflicts involving their fathers or teachers for which they chose a submissive response or compromise-solution. As far as the German sample is concerned, the highest frequency of submissive responses was elicited in

the scenario involving a same-sex friend and least frequently chosen in scenarios depicting disagreements with adult interactants with whom Germans were more confrontational.

All those findings echo researchers' call to treat individualism and collectivism as multidimensional constructs (Kagitcibasi & Berry, 1989; Triandis, 1995). Scholars noted that when measured empirically, Individualism and collectivism appear to be uncorrelated; that is, some people turn out to be high on both, low on both or high on one and low on the other (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). Cultural traits pertaining to individualism and collectivism are present in each society (Ho & Chiu, 1994; Triandis, 1995). On the personal level, individuals seem to choose conflict patterns related to either one of those depending on the relational context and possibly on whether they score higher or lower on either individualism or collectivism. To better capture within cultural-variation, the present study tries to link face concerns and conflict behaviors with the different dimensions of IC which I will turn to in the following section.

A Multidimensional model of Individualism and Collectivism

Previous findings in cross-cultural communication tend to show that using dichotomous notions of IC is limited in explaining people's conflict behaviors. To better conceptualize collectivism and individualism, Triandis (1995) suggested that both constructs should be examined along two dimensions – verticalism where hierarchy is emphasized, and horizontalism where equality is strongly encouraged. Those two dimensions combine and result in four categories: Horizontal collectivism (HC), vertical collectivism (VC), horizontal individualism (HI), and vertical individualism (VI). Both forms of collectivism emphasize members' 'consciousness of community', to borrow Jones's terms (as quoted in Sindima, 1990). However, members of VC and HC differ in the way they relate to their in-group members. Members of a horizontal collectivistic culture view themselves as interdependent but they do not easily submit

to authority (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). As they believe that everyone should be treated equally, horizontal collectivists, when compared to vertical collectivists, are less willing to sacrifice their goals. On the other hand, vertical collectivists emphasize the integrity of the group and are less likely to call the inequality between group members into question (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). Vertical collectivists, Triandis (1995) argues, are willing to self-sacrifice for their in-group members. Thus, it stands to reason to assume that individual weakness in such a culture is related to one's failure to put one's duty before one's self-interests. As far as horizontal individualism is concerned, the focus is on self-reliance, independence but not competition. As Triandis and Gelfand (1998) argue, horizontal individualists want to be unique but they are not interested in acquiring a high status. On the other hand, vertical individualists, scholars state (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998) often want to become distinguished and acquire status even if they have to engage in individual competitions with their fellows.

Triandis (1995) argue that those four cognitive structures are present, at varying degrees, in all cultures and individuals. He also recommended that scholars incorporate the different dimensions of IC in their theories (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998) in order to better capture within sample variations. However, very few studies (Kaushal and Kwantes's, 2006) have ever linked the different dimensions of IC to conflict behaviors.

In order to account for within sample variations, many self-orientations like self-monitoring (Kaushal & Kwantes, 2006; Trubisky, Ting-Toomey & Lin, 1991) self-construal (Ting-Toomey, 2005; Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2000), and Emotional Intelligence (Kaushal & Kwantes, 2006) have been suggested instead. Research on self-monitoring was not very conclusive. In their study of conflict behaviors among US and Taiwanese individuals, Trubisky et al. (1991) couldn't link self-monitoring to any conflict style in their Taiwanese sample, and to

only one style - dominating - in the US sample. Likewise, in their study of Canadians' conflict styles, Kaushal and Kwantes (2006) reported that self-monitoring did not provide for an independent contribution over and above that of culture and couldn't be linked to any conflict style. Insights gained from the literature looking at self-construal are much more conclusive. However, I argue that differences at the collective level are as important as individual factors in determining whether persons will display conflict patterns related to collectivism or individualism. Considering that individuals are embedded in a particular cultural context, it stands to reason to expect that variations at the collective level in regard to collectivism and individualism will affect predispositions towards either individualism or collectivism at the individual level and, consequently persons' conflict behaviors. It is not unreasonable to expect that using the multidimensional model of IC instead of the traditional conception of individualism and collectivism will offer more nuanced findings in conflict behaviors.

The main purpose of this thesis is to examine the utility of the multidimensional model of individualism and collectivism as it pertains to serial arguing. Unlike the majority of research in cross-cultural research, I will take a different but related tack. I will look at individualism and collectivism within one culture - the Malagasy culture - in the hope to find out if 'serial arguing', a concept which originated in the North American culture is generalizable to another, divergent culture. Towards that goal, chapter two presents an overview of the research on arguments in close relationships, conflict styles seen in these arguments, and the influence of culture on conflict styles. Second, in chapter two, a thorough review of the serial argument literature is presented. Chapter three outlines the theoretical framework for a cross-cultural approach of serial arguing. The first section of chapter three describes facework and discusses the different dimensions of IC. Second, based on the theoretical overview of important intercultural

dimensions that provide a rationale for the differences predicted in American and Malagasy argument style (e.g., high/low context and individualism/collectivism) is presented. Third, an overview of the context serial arguments will be examined within (the Malagasy people) is described. Chapter 3 concludes with specific cross-cultural predictions. In chapter four, a method to study the hypotheses is proposed. Chapter 5 presents the results. The limitations and recommendations for future research are addressed in the last chapter. The thesis begins with a brief overview of arguments in close relationships.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW ON CONFLICT

This chapter provides an overview of past research in serial arguing conducted in the U.S in the hope to scope out key issues for a cross-cultural approach to serial arguing. To clarify expectations concerning serial arguing among Malagasy romantic partners, chapter two starts by a brief reflection upon the concepts of conflict, and conflict styles. Following the section on arguments in close relationships, I discuss the role of culture in conflict. Chapter two concludes with a review of studies on serial arguing conducted in the U.S.

Arguments in Close Relationships

Though most people have no interest in creating conflict in their relationship, empirical evidence with American and European samples shows that romantic partners often act poorly towards one another at some point in their relationship (e.g., Afifi, & Burgoon, 2000; Malis & Roloff, 2006; Solomon & Knobloch, 2004). In marital and dating interactions, individuals often form high expectations on how they should be treated by each other. Romantic partners may occasionally let each other down prompting the one who is being wronged to communicate their concern. Conflict occurs when persons do not obtain what they desire in a relationship and actively work at achieving their goal. This is consistent with Ting-Toomey and her colleagues (2000) who defined conflict as an intense disagreement process between a minimum of two interdependent parties when they perceive incompatible interest, viewpoints, processes, and/or goals in an interaction episode.

As conflict is a normal part of relational life, key questions in the conflict literature focus on how can individuals manage conflict more often to examining how people avoid confrontations. Thus far, research on marital and dating relationships has fleshed out the numerous choices available to people in order to cope with conflict better and eventually settle their dispute (e.g., Canary & Cupach, 1988; Canary, Cupach, & Messman, 1995; Gottman, 1994). However, past research (Trapp & Hoff, 1985; Vuchinich, 1987) also shows that some couples often fail to reach an agreement in a single encounter. Thus, conflict over an issue can and does occur over and over again. Though the term 'recurring patterns' might convey perceptions of dysfunction, research in serial arguing has actually shown that having a serial arguing with a significant other is not always detrimental to one's relational health (e.g., Johnson & Roloff, 1998, 2000, Malis & Roloff, 2006). The communication behaviors enacted by relational partners during the initial confrontation and between the argumentative episodes, which I will turn to in the following sections, are instrumental in determining whether the serial arguing will damage the relationship or not. It is also worth being noted that the ways couples handle conflict and serial arguing depend on a variety of factors including cultural patterns, individual expectations and conflict style preferences. I begin by reviewing the different conflict management typologies.

Conflict Strategies

Canary and his colleagues (1995) define conflict strategies as the general approaches used to achieve an interaction goal. Individuals all have their own ways of handling disagreements. To conceptualize different ways of coping with conflict, various typologies have been proposed. Deutsch's dichotomy (1973) of cooperation and competition has been refined by later researchers. Putnam and Wilson (1982) introduced a threefold classification: non-confrontational, solution oriented, and control. Pruitt's scale (1983) consists of yielding,

problem-solving, inaction, and contending. Drawing on Blake and Mouton (1964), Rahim (1983) based his classification on the conceptual dimensions of one's concern for self and others. While individuals' concern for self refers to the degree (which may be high or low) to which somebody seeks to satisfy her/his own interest, one's concern for others (high or low) refers to the extent to which a person is willing to yield to a partner's desires. They combine and result in five different conflict strategies: integrating, compromising, dominating, obliging, and avoiding. For the purpose of this thesis, Rahim's typology (1983) is preferred as it has been widely used in the cross-cultural and intercultural scholarship. More specifically, Ting-Toomey's facework theory of conflict (1985, 2001, 2005), which can be applied to non-American conflict situations, draws on the conceptual dimensions of 'face concerns'. The strategies employed in Rahim's typology are explicated below.

Integrating. The integrating strategy reflects a desire to reach an agreement that would be satisfying for both parties. It logically follows that integrating involves a high concern for both self's interests and others'. Finding a solution that would satisfy both parties requires that individuals work things out together through direct forms of communication. Though it is perceived as the most effective strategy, and is associated with high levels of relational functioning (Canary & Spitzberg, 1989), integrating is not used often because it is rather difficult to achieve (Canary et al. 1995).

Compromising. Compromising, Holt and DeVore (2005), argue, reflects a medium concern for production and people. It is viewed as a moderately cooperative and assertive form of communication. Though they seek to not upset the other person, individuals adopting a compromising style are willing to address the conflict issue in order to solve the problem. Compromising requires each individual to make some sacrifice in order to satisfy some of their

partner's needs. While integrating requires contending parties to come up with a new approach partners will agree upon, compromising often requires that individual partners accept to modify any preexisting plans that they might have had. Compromising emphasizes tactics such as splitting the differences, appealing to fairness, and suggesting trade-off (Hocker & Wilmot, 1998). Hocker and Wilmot (1998) also note that most people view the compromising style as rational, fair, and efficient.

Dominating. As it reflects a high concern for one's self and a low concern for others, dominating refers to a strategy in which one's goals are advocated over the needs of others and the relationship. The dominating strategy involves engaging in a head-to-head competition with the goal of defeating a partner (Papa & Canary, 1995). It logically follows that this style reflects a low concern for future relationships. Dominating is often manifested through a number of tactics like accusations, personal criticism, threats, name-calling, and antagonistic jokes (Hocker & Wilmot, 1998). Canary and Spitzberg (1987) note dominating strategies are rather ineffective and inappropriate way of managing conflict situations. By disregarding the other person's view and getting their own way, initiators mistakenly believe that winning over the issue will resolve the conflict. However, as Leary, Springer, Negel, Ansell, and Evans, (1998) stated, criticisms convey devaluation about the relationship. A destructive communication pattern such as disrespect or unfair judgment will increase the threat to the other person's face and decrease the motivation of the person whose face has been threatened to interact more with the abuser. For example, Vangelisti and Young (2000) concluded that in such a case, the person whose face is threatened may distance him/herself against further hurt and face threat, increasing the likelihood of avoidance. In a long term, such pattern of behavior might damage the relationship.

Obliging. Obliging, which reflects a low concern for self and a high concern for others, is the opposite of dominating. Individuals using the obliging strategy willingly yield to their partners' demand to not harm the relationship further. Typical obliging behaviors include trying to please the partner, and ignoring one's needs by making sacrifices. Though it will make one's partner happy and closes the conflict, obliging can have either positive or negative effects on relationships depending on the context (Fitzpatrick & Winke, 1979). This strategy, Fitzpatrick and Winke (1979) reported, is effective when one person does not care about an issue as much as another. On the other hand, it is not unreasonable to argue that the more one accommodates to their partner's wishes, the more they will make it appear as acceptable that their partners disregard them in the relationships.

Avoiding. Avoiding reflects a low concern for one's self and others. Avoiding is commonly viewed as a response to the negative perception of conflict. Individuals deny that a conflict exists and are unwilling to address the issue. Persons might elude the conflict topic, the conflict party, or the conflict situation altogether (Ting-Toomey, 2005). Individuals adopting this orientation often display nonassertive and uncooperative behaviors (Thomas, 1978). The relevant literature on interpersonal conflict (dating and or marital interactions) makes a strong case against avoiding as a conflict style. Avoiders believe that if they keep quiet, everything will be fine. However, suppressed feelings may pent up while the conflict festers, and becomes too problematic to be ignored.

Research, conducted primarily on US samples, has identified collaborating and compromising strategies as forms of cooperative behaviors. Past findings suggest that both types of behavior, cooperative and uncooperative behaviors, can co-exist. Research on marital interactions (Gottman, 1994), for instance, shows that both destructive and cooperative behaviors

can occur in stable and unstable relationships. However, individuals having a stable marriage seem to exhibit more positive behaviors than negative patterns of communication during conflicts. Individuals adopting cooperative strategies tend to enact behaviors that actually help to build relationships, and resolve conflicts. For instance, instead of openly blaming their partners or engaging in counter complaining, persons emphasize exchange of ideas, and problem solving. On the other hand, dominating and avoiding strategies are uncooperative. As such they tend to be perceived as less competent ways of handling conflict within relationship. Finally, the obliging strategy seems to work only under some circumstances. Other contextual factors such as cultural norms are expected to influence the notions of 'competent' and 'appropriate' ways of handling conflict. The next section discusses the role of culture in conflict, and presents an overview of the state of the art in the cross-cultural conflict literature.

The State of the art in the Cross-cultural Conflict Literature

This section presents an overview on the dynamics of culture and conflict in the hope to elaborate on the current state of theory building in the field of cross-cultural communication.

Conflict Strategy and Culture

Culture, Cingöz-Ulu and Lalonde (2007) note, is an influential factor in how relationships are conceptualized and in how people choose to manage conflict in their relationships. Not only does culture affect the way individuals name, and manage disagreements but cultural norms also provide them with the scripts from which to choose when dealing with conflicts. In a similar vein, Ting-Toomey et al. (2000) argue that coping strategies are learned during an individual's primary socialization in a cultural or ethnic group. The perspective taken on culture in the proposed study is consistent with D'Andrade who defined culture as a complex frame of reference that consists of patterns of traditions, beliefs, values, norms, symbols, and meanings

that are shared to varying degrees by interacting members of a community (D'Andrade, 1986 as quoted by Ting Toomey, 1999), and that can influence their thought processes and communication behaviors. Over decades, cross-cultural researchers have looked at cross-national differences depending on where a particular national culture is arrayed along the cultural dimensions of collectivism and individualism (e.g., Obuchi & Takahashi, 1994; Ting-Toomey et al., 2000) and high/low-context (e.g.: Ting-Toomey, 2005) continua.

Intercultural Dimensions

In1980, Hofstede published the first edition of *Culture's Consequences* in which he reported findings on research conducted among IBM workers in about 40 nations. He computed respondents' scores on some work values where higher scores indicated individualism and lower scores indicated collectivism. The United States sample, which scored 91 on individualism, was classified as an individualistic culture. Madagascar was not included in any of the Hofstede's surveys (1980, 1991, 2001), however, some scholars (e.g.: Dahl, 1999) argue that Madagascar would be situated towards the high-context and collectivistic end of the continuum. This is consistent with Triandis (2006) who noted that collectivism tends to be high in cultures that happen to be insular. Because of its geographical position, Madagascar does not share a land frontier with other countries. Such a situation limits the population's mobility, as well as face-to-face interactions with members of other cultures. The intercultural dimensions, examined in the thesis, namely individualism and collectivism, are discussed below.

Individualism-collectivism. Individualism-collectivism, which refers to the relationship between individuals and the collectivity in a culture, is one of the major sets of variables that influence people's communicative patterns. Individualism and collectivism refer to two different types of worldviews that predispose those who value either one of them to emphasize traits

pertaining to their uniqueness as an individual or aspects of their group identity (Triandis, 1987). Research shows that both constructs can be operationalized on both the personal and the collective level (Kim, Hunter, & Yoon, 1996). Though individuals may move along a continuum of individualism and collectivism, cultures were generally labeled as individualistic or collectivistic according to the value orientations that predominate among their individuals (Hui & Triandis, 1986). However, it is important to mention that there is great variation within one single country. Though collectivism may prevail over individualism in Madagascar, the Malagasy population is by no means uniformly 'collectivistic'. I argue that Malagasy romantic partners will handle conflict in contrasting ways based on how they determine their identity and how they view their relationship with others.

The concept of *face* is the core component that differentiates both cultural orientations - collectivism and individualism. Goffman (1967) defined face as the positive social image that individuals seek to maintain in their interactions. The basic goal of members of individualistic cultures like the United States is to feel good about themselves as unique distinctive persons, and to define these unique features in terms of abstract traits (Oyserman & Wing-Sing Lee, 2007). This concept is positively related to a high self-face concern. For instance, in conflict situations, individualists might wish to let their competitive impulses emerge at the expense of their conversation partner. This is consistent with Ting-Toomey (1999) who argues that individualism is expressed through the strong assertion of personal opinions, the display of personal emotions, and the importance of personal accountability for any conflict problem or mistake. Unlike collectivistic people who focus on social harmony, members of individualistic cultures are more concerned about autonomy and relational power (Trubisky et al, 1991). In conflict situation, Collectivism is manifested through the representation of collective opinions or ideas, the restraint

of personal emotional expressions, and the protection of in-group members, if possible, from being held accountable for the conflict problem (Ting-Toomey, 1999).

Low/High-Context Culture. Both high-context (HC) and low-context (LC) refer to different types of interaction styles. In simpler words, HC and LC are mainly concerned with information exchange between individuals. In HC cultures, most of the messages are conveyed by the context surrounding the communicators, rather than being explicitly stated in verbal communication. Therefore, members of HC cultures rely on the physical setting, and other nonverbal cues to assign meanings to somebody else's message. On the other hand, low-context cultures emphasize directness rather than relying on the context to communicate. Verbal communication is specific and literal, and less is conveyed in implied, indirect signals. Research (Trubisky et al., 1991) shows that communicatively speaking, individualistic cultures tend to stress the value of straight talk and tend to verbalize overtly their individual wants and needs, while members of collectivistic cultures tend to stress the value of contemplative talk and discretion in voicing one's opinions and feelings. The next section discusses some of the findings undertaken under the IC and L/H context culture on the expression of conflict.

Implications of Intercultural Dimensions on Conflict Management Strategies

Ting-Toomey (2005) argued that collectivistic, high-context individuals are likely to see the person, the content goal, and the relationship conflict goal as an intertwined package, while individualistic, low-context negotiators are better able to separate the content goal issues from the conflict relationship. In looking at the communication behaviors of Malagasy people, Dahl (1999) made the same generalization about collectivistic cultures. He contended that all conflicts in the Malagasy contexts are likely to end up as conflicts of relations. In one of his field observations, Dahl's respondents reported that even if they disagreed with others, they would

pretend to agree. Not voicing one's disagreement helps save the other person's face. Assertive behaviors and even speaking up for oneself when convinced one is correct, might erroneously be interpreted as arrogance or a temptation to appear smarter than others. Individual maturity in the Malagasy culture is assessed with the extent to which one is willing to abide by the settlement (agreed upon or imposed). As one of Dahl's respondents (1999) reported, the one who makes the issue come up again in an overt manner is a bad person because he will urge people to fight.

All those social norms lead to more conflict avoidance and indirect strategies when coping with interpersonal conflict. The same pattern was observed among other cultures like Chinese and Japanese, where one would not venture an opinion contrary to the other person's in public, for fear of making a lifelong opponent (Becker, 1991). Therefore, in line with Ting-Toomey's (2005) framework, conflict resolution in Madagascar, when the relational context is not specified, follows a 'process-oriented' instead of an 'outcome-oriented' model. When engaging oneself in an argument with others, one would be careful about how to not upset relational network rather than what arguments may bring a solution closure to the conflict. On the other hand, members of individualistic and LC cultures like the United States are more concerned about their self face, which results in dominating and competing conflict styles. They also tend to prefer direct conflict communication styles and solution-oriented styles. Those two strategies tend to emphasize the values of autonomy, competitiveness, and the need for control (Turbisky et al., 1991).

After reviewing the literature on conflict in the American and collectivistic cultures, it is clear that behaviors enacted during conflict encounters are linked to relational quality and stability. However, what constitutes 'effectiveness' and 'appropriateness' in a conflict situation varies across cultural lines. Within a collectivistic orientation, being effective implies

accommodating to others' wishes or avoiding talking the conflict out, patterns that reflect weakness within an individualistic perspective. While research has been conducted on conflict within 'collectivistic' cultures, no work has yet examined serial arguments. It would be interesting to find out if the same patterns occur with serial arguing. As a reminder, a serial arguing refers to conflict issues that may re-occur over and over again.

Overview of Serial Arguing Research done in the US

Though conflict has received much interest from interpersonal scholars for several decades, research on serial arguing spawned only after Trapp and Hoff (1985) discovered the presence of recurring arguments in a broad spectrum of close relationships including romantic relationship. Trapp and Hoff (1985) labeled a pattern of repetitive arguments over the same issue(s) as 'serial arguing'. For a series of conflict episodes to be considered a serial arguing, both partners should engage in two or more arguments about the same issues or topics (Malis & Roloff, 2006).

The discovery of those recurrent conflict patterns was important for two reasons: first, research in serial arguing helped advancing scholars' knowledge on how people handle disagreements in interpersonal context. Second, research provided more insights on why some people who are often engaged in conflict do not feel less happy than those who do not disagree as often. As Cupach (2000) noted, studying the serial management of a particular topic may provide a unique window for determining how and why a concrete issue can fractionate over time. A serial argument arises when one person confronts their partner over an issue, and is met with resistance. Johnson and Roloff (2000) refer to the initiator as the 'agent change' and their partner as the 'resistor'.

As they are caught up in a series of conflict interactions, either the couple or at least one of them might enact inappropriate ways of handling conflicts, which prevented them from settling the issue during their first encounter. The situation may lead the initiator to bring it up over and over again. In trying to get their way out of it, initiators might be tempted to resort to 'uncooperative strategies' like dominating, which causes the resistor to withdraw or engage in other forms of uncooperative behaviors.

Research on serial arguing conducted in the United States (e.g., Johnson & Roloff, 1998; 2000, Malis & Roloff, 2006) demonstrated that the role played by each partner during serial arguing as well as the behaviors that they enact before, during and after the argumentative episodes are linked with relational quality. Findings in serial arguing provided invaluable insights about the link between conflict frequency and relational harm. Some past findings showed that the more repeated a disagreement is, the greater the impact on the person's psychological and physical health (Bolger, Kessler, & Schilling, 1989, as cited by Malis & Roloff, 2006). Cramer (2000) also reported that unsatisfactorily resolved problems were negatively correlated with satisfaction. In other studies, frequent arguing about relational power was linked to declining satisfaction (Kurdek, 1994). Also, in Bolger and colleagues' 1989 survey, spouses reported that their mood became significantly worse as an argument extended over several days.

However, in one of their surveys, Johnson and Roloff (1998), found that the perceived resolvability of the conflict was a better predictor of relational impact than the mere frequency of disagreement. Only when a serial argument is perceived to be irresolvable or 'stuck in a rut' does it seems to aversely impact a relationship (Johnson & Roloff, 1998). In a later study, Malis and Roloff (2006) found additional support for that. Conflicts that were perceived to be resolvable

were associated with less stress than were those that were perceived to be less resolvable. As a closing note, it is important to stress that they made strong case about coping strategies which could erode the perceived resolvability of a conflict issue. Johnson and Roloff (2000) reported that perceived resolvability was higher and relational harm lower when individuals used relationally confirming behaviors during serial arguing. More specifically, making optimistic comparisons between argumentative episodes was negatively correlated with relational harm (Johnson & Roloff, 2000). On the other hand, 'uncooperative behaviors' like the enactment of dysfunctional patterns such as 'self-demand/partner-withdraw' is likely to increase relational harm. The next section discusses the asymmetrical pattern of self-demand/partner-withdraw.

Demand/withdraw Pattern

When partners terminate a conflict without a satisfying solution, they might continually seek to rekindle some kind of argument by trying to force their position on each other. The demand/withdraw pattern refers to a situation wherein one partner (initiator) presses for discussion about the topic; the other person (resistor) withdraws (Christensen & Heavey, 1990). Empirical evidence (Christensen et al., 1995) suggests that the asymmetrical pattern of demand/withdraw is as critical as dominating behaviors in determining the impact of conflict on relational outcomes. For instance, Christensen et al. (1995) reported four inverse correlations with relational satisfaction which the demand/withdraw patterns provided independent contributions for. The dominating style, by itself, could not account for those inverse relationships. Since then, the combination of demanding and withdrawing behaviors has been used to understand marital and dating interactions.

More specifically, research conducted in the US has linked the demand/withdraw pattern to marital difficulties (Christensen & Shenk, 1991). Among married couples, the wife-

demand/husband-withdraw pattern was more likely to be found in distressed marriages (Notarius & Markman, 1993) and proved to be detrimental to long-term relationship satisfaction (Heavey, Christensen, & Malamuth, 1995). Looking at dating partners, Malis and Roloff (2006), demonstrated that individuals enacting the self demand/partner withdraw pattern more likely to experience aversive outcomes such as intrusive thoughts and feelings about the episodes, and hyperaroused state. In the next section, I discuss the relationship between gender and demand/withdraw.

Gender and demand/withdraw

The relevant literature (Christensen & Heavey, 1990; Gottman & Levenson, 1988; Heavey, Layne, & Christensen, 1993) also points at a link between the demand/withdraw pattern and gender. Christensen and Heavey (1990), for example, found that women tended to withdraw more than men. In another study, three years later, they reported that in approximately 60% of couples, wives tended to demand and their husbands tended to withdraw; the reverse was true in 30 % of couples and in 10%, husbands and wives demanded and withdrew equally. Thus, women's demands tended to be more likely met with men's withdrawal. This is consistent with Malis and Roloff's (2006) findings who noted that individuals, especially men, reported that their partners demanded that they change and they responded by withdrawing.

After reviewing the US literature, currently available data tends to show that the demand-withdraw pattern is related to relational harm. Women are highly likely to be in the demanding role and men in the withdrawing role. Those findings seem to show that women are more assertive and confrontational than men in romantic relationships. Several explanations have been suggested. Scholars like Magolin (1983) and his colleagues, argued that women are socialized to be more expressive and relationship focused. Therefore, they are more likely to be demanding

when the tendency to be expressive is thwarted (Markman, Silvern, Clements, & Kraft-Hanak, 1993). On the other hand, male socialization prompts them to be more instrumental and problem-solving focused. Thus, men are more likely to adopt withdrawal behaviors when they are unable to directly solve a problem (Markman et al., 1993).

However, cultural factors are expected to influence the impact of those socialization differences. Kagitcibasi and Berry (1989), for instance, argue that gender differences in expressivity and instrumentality might not be as pronounced in collectivistic cultures as they are in individualistic cultures. Moreover, empirical analyses looking at within sample variations in African cultures tend to show that women tend to not be less autonomous than men. For example, Pirttilä-Backman et al. (2004) noticed that Cameroonian women were significantly more individualist than Cameroonian men. Therefore, despite traditional assumptions that women do not enjoy an equal status to their husbands in collectivist cultures, women might be as assertive as their counterparts in individualistic cultures in regard to marital and/or dating interactions.

Recent findings in the cross-cultural scholarship corroborate the observation that women in predominantly 'collectivistic' cultures might be as assertive as their individualist counterparts. For instance, Christensen, Eldridge, Catta-Preta, Lim & Santagata (2006) tested the consistency of the demand-withdraw patterns in four cultures: Brazil, Taiwan, Italy and the US. They found that the woman demand/man withdraw was greater than the man demand/woman withdraw in each country. In a similar vein, Miyahara, Kim, Shin, and Yoon (1998) noted that Japanese and Korean men scored higher on the concern for minimizing imposition on others than Japanese and Korean women. The current thesis might provide further evidence for the influence of gender culture in conflict.

The purpose of the current thesis is to analyze the effect of culture and gender on serial arguing and the communication behaviors enacted during argumentative episodes. The main focus is to see whether general findings among American samples linking relationship quality to argumentative features can be validated cross-culturally. It would be interesting to see if similarly to the US, conflict between spouses or partners in the Malagasy context is influenced by gender culture or not. The next chapter describes Ting-Toomey's facework theory of conflict, and discusses its relevance to the study of serial arguing.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL REVIEW AND STUDY HYPOTHESES

This chapter examines theoretical foundations and practical proposals for the analysis of serial arguing in the Malagasy culture. It proposes an enhanced role for within-cultural differences in the attempt to understand the way persons handle serial argumentative encounters in romantic relationships. First, I present a rationale for a cross-cultural study of serial arguing. Second, I describe Facework and review some of the research undertaken under the face-negotiation theory of conflict. Third, I discuss the implications of a reconceptualization of IC on Facework.

A Theoretical Framework for a Cross-cultural approach to Serial Arguing

Studying relational conflict in multiple cultures is a significant endeavor. As Sue (1999 as cited by Christensen et al., 2006) argued, findings should be considered local until they are cross-validated. A cross-cultural validation, Sue (1999) stated, will help scholars to not make simple assumptions of universality. Gudykunst (2005) noted that there are several ways of integrating culture into communication theories. First, culture can be incorporated within the communication process in theories of communication. Second, some theories like Facework could be specifically designed to explain how communication behaviors vary across cultures. Third, some other communication theories seek to explain and predict how people coming from different cultural backgrounds would interact with one another. The second of the three ways of integrating culture into research is most important to this thesis. As stated previously, the Facework theory of conflict is used to understand serial arguing in the Malagasy culture. The

following section gives an overview of what face-negotiation theory is, and why it is relevant to serial arguing.

Facework: An Overview

Facework posits that face is the explanatory mechanism for culture's influence on conflict behaviors (Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003; Ting-Toomey, 2005). Drawing on Rahim's (1983) dichotomy 'self-face' versus 'other-face', Ting Toomey (2000, 2005) contended that persons' cultural orientations lead them to be concerned about their self-face, the other's face or their mutual face which in turn has an effect on their facewok behaviors and conflict styles. When individuals are confronted by their partner over an issue, they feel threatened. However, the degree to which the face-threatening act (FTA) is appraised and met with varies across cultural lines. More specifically, individualists who are more concerned about their self-face are more likely to adopt confrontational behaviors. On the other hand, collectivistic communicators are more likely to opt for high-context, avoidance strategies as they don't wish to threaten their partner's face or their mutual face. In addition, they might also ask somebody to mediate the conflict. The face-negotiation theory, thus, provides the conceptual linkage among cultural variables such as IC, high/low-context communication styles, face concerns, facework behaviors, and conflict styles (Ting-Toomey, 2005).

For all those reasons, face-negotiation theory seems to be a logical starting point for understanding the way Malagasy people will handle serial arguing. Past research (e.g., Dahl, 1999) has shown that conflict usually arises in the Malagasy context when person A provokes the loss of face of another person, who becomes *afa-baraka* (dishonored). The whole conflict process is a face-negotiation process whereby interactants engage in face-saving.

Overall, research undertaken under Facework has identified the conceptual dimensions of protecting either 'self-image', 'other-image' or both as its core dimensions. More specifically, members of individualistic cultures like the US tend to use more direct, self-face concern conflict behaviors (e.g. dominating, competing style), collectivistic people (such as Malagasy romantic partners) tend to use more indirect, other-face concern conflict behaviors (obliging, avoiding). In addition, other/mutual-face concern has been found to relate positively with integrating facework strategies and conflict styles (Ting-Toomey, 2005). Ting-Toomey's theory has been validated cross-culturally (e.g., Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003; Ting-Toomey et al, 2000; Lindsley & Braithwaite, 1996) but not in the Malagasy culture yet. The next section provides a rationale for why Madagascar could be a good natural laboratory to test Facework.

Testing Facework: Madagascar as a Context of Study

Gudykunst (2000) noted that much insight about the cross-cultural conflict research was gained by comparing Asian and Western samples. However, as Bond (1998) rightly pointed at, to make generalizations about the dimensions of cultural variability, cultures from different world regions must be studied. And all the more so as, generalizations made regarding Asian collectivists may not apply to non-Asian collectivist cultures (Gudykunst, 2000). For example, Asian collectivism results in an obliging conflict style, whereas Middle Eastern collectivism does not. Smith et al. (1998) also argued that the endorsement of the Hispanic concept of *sympatia* does not necessarily preclude overt expression of disagreements which might explain potential differences between Asian collectivism and forms of collectivism in Spanish-speaking cultures. In regard to African cultures, Miller (2005) noted, for instance, that while privileging the needs of the group over those of the individual is a distinctive feature of Kenyans' everyday lives; many Kenyans are as comfortable as are Americans with self-aggrandizing behaviors. Gire and

Garment (1993) made the same observation about Nigerians whom they noticed preferred direct forms of negotiation just as much as Canadians did.

Research just reflects common sense which suggests that though 'relational harmony' and 'face-saving' might be the 'core' values in highly collectivistic cultures, the way those core concepts are manifested can and do differ across cultures. As a matter of fact, back in 1998, Smith et al. argued that the conclusion about collectivist cultures varying in their attitudes toward conflict has considerable merit. It stands to reason to assume that accommodating to the partner's wishes which is meant to save the other's face in one collectivistic culture, like Madagascar, may be taken as a form of cowardice in another collectivistic culture, and does not help maintain harmony at all. It is even possible, Smith et al. (1998), argued, that not all collectivistic cultures favor harmony. Besides, the lack of attention to Africa in cross-cultural study often resulted in untested generalizations (Miller, 2005) that might prove to not be accurate.

As African countries go through modernization process, their populations become more and more exposed to Western influences through education and media. The Western and local values often clash which might undermine the collectivistic foundations of 'African' cultures. It follows that individuals might handle conflicts in a less traditional way. Moreover, the term 'African cultures' might be sometimes used vaguely as a general term to refer to any country located on the African continent, including the islands of the Indian Ocean. African countries, however, all have different ancestral backgrounds, different religions, and speak different languages. Socio-cultural dynamics specific to each national culture will shape the way its population perceives and attempts to manage conflict situations. Thus, it is not unreasonable to expect that an empirical analysis looking at Malagasy romantic partners might yield results that

slightly differ from what traditional assumptions about collectivistic and HC cultures in the conflict literature predicts.

To make things more complex, no empirical evidence on how much collectivist/less individualist Malagasy people are, is available. Therefore, the degree to which different sections of the Malagasy population actually utilize 'collectivist' conflict communication behaviors, and the nature of the differences, if any, is yet to be subject to in-depth investigation. It is also worth being noticed that most of the insights on Facework are based on non-intimate contexts. Therefore, it is legitimate to ask whether romantic partners will actually manage conflict in the way Facework predicts. The next section discusses the potential use of Facework to explain interaction between romantic partners.

Facework as Applied to Relational Conflicts

As stated in the literature review, when relational contexts are not specified, appropriate ways of handling interpersonal conflicts in collectivistic cultures include obliging and even avoiding rather than low-context, confrontational styles. Though it might increase potential for miscommunication, using high-context and indirect forms of communication actually helps save the partner's face. Direct and confrontational behaviors threaten the other and/or mutual-face and are not seen as effective. However, recent research on close relationships showed that collectivistic samples rather use those patterns of behavior when they are in conflict with a friend or a romantic partner. On the other hand, they resort more often to avoiding and obliging with an authority figure such as their fathers or instructors.

Why do collectivistic and individualistic people handle relational conflicts so differently? Past research (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985) conducted in both individualistic and collectivistic cultures suggests that members of individualistic cultures

typically place a high premium on the value of romantic love in the context where emotional bonds with family and other ingroups are weaker. On the other hand, love is valued less in the context where family and group bonds are quite strong. It could be that collectivistic people consider their family bonds as more important so that they are willing to yield to their family member's wishes in order to end the dispute and preserve the relationship. Assuming that one doesn't have to give priority to their peers' interests in the same way, it makes sense that collectivistic people handle conflicts with peers in more direct and even dominating styles of communication. Though their friends might stop seeing them, members of highly collectivistic cultures can rely on their emotional bonds with their family members and other in-group members. However, the use of dominating and confrontational behaviors alone is in contradiction with the concept of other and mutual face concern, as defined by facework, making the connection between dominating responses and conflicts in close relationships less clear. Proposition # 21 of the face-negotiation theory (Ting-Toomey, 2005), for instance, links biconstrual type (high on both types of self-construal) to compromising or integrating conflict styles but not dominating.

Does the limited research on close relationships imply that dominating responses, which are not considered constructive behaviors in predominantly collectivistic cultures, more appropriate when handling a conflict with a romantic partner? Or are relational conflicts, in a highly collectivistic culture, more 'outcome-oriented' rather than 'process-oriented'? Also, it could be that university students (from which the Indonesian and Turkish samples were taken, for example) are more individualistic than the rest of the populations. In their 2004 focus group conducted in Cameroon, Pirttilä-Backman et al. reported that until they enter university, children from the northern part of Cameroon, for instance, are dependent on their parents and have to

abide by the rules. However, once those students attend university, they want everybody to know that they are free of any constraints, and, thus display different patterns of behaviors that they didn't enact while living with their parents. It could be that once members of collectivistic cultures display forms of individualism more, they change the way they relate to family members and friends. Addressing those questions is beyond the scope of the thesis. However, those findings do demonstrate that one cannot just generalize conflict behaviors observed in organizational or less intimate contexts to romantic relationships, and that it is better to measure respondents' degree of collectivism and individualism when trying to account for people's conflict behaviors.

To capture the influence of culture and gender on serial arguing, the current study focuses on romantic relationships instead of friendships. For a variety of reasons, conflict is a normal part of romantic life and the successful resolution of conflict, Means-Christensen, Snyder and Negy (2003), argued, and is one of the central tasks of any close relationship. In a similar vein, Furnham (1982) stated that arguing is one of the most distinctive activities of spouses. In one of their studies, Argyle and Furnham (1983) noticed that the more satisfying the relationship was the more likely conflicts were to happen. As married couples and dating partners are together in a relationship for up to 7 days a week and all year long, it is in their interest to find closure solution to conflicts making them even more vulnerable to serial arguing as compared to friends. Moreover, the 'stigma' associated with relational break-up, and especially divorce in the Malagasy culture makes it even crucial that dating partners and/or married couples enact constructive behaviors so as to decrease the negative effects of serial arguing on their relationship. It would be interesting to find which ones of the facework strategies are considered constructive and linked to relational quality. Will the current study reinforce recent research on

close relationships and challenge other findings in the cross-cultural literature where relational context was not specified? Prior to formulating specific hypotheses, a brief socio-cultural context of Madagascar is presented.

Madagascar: A Brief Socio-cultural Context

Madagascar is located in the Indian Ocean, at about 250 miles from Africa and 4,000 miles from the island of Borneo, Indonesia. Madagascar is the world's fourth largest island with an area of 587.040 square kilometers (approximately, 226,498 square miles) including its offshore islands. For several centuries, it used to be a trading post for different waves of migration – from the Indonesian peninsula, Arabophones and East Africans (Dahl, 1999). No recent statistics about the members of each Malagasy group are available. However, there is a commonly-agreed upon view among modern scholars that the Malagasy population is made up of 18 groups (e.g.: Raison-Jourde, 2002). Linguistic and anthropological evidence (Adelaar, 1985; Otto Dahl, 1951) suggests that the proto-Malagasy speakers made their way across the Indian Ocean from Kalimantan, Borneo, some 1,000 years ago. Having settled on the island of Madagascar, they mixed with Bantu-speaking peoples from the East African coast (Hurles, Sykes, Jobling & Forster, 2005). Linguistic and cultural evidence points to a 'panislandic' identity. The cultivation of rice is a common pervasive element among all the different groups living in the island. Also, the Malagasy language, the westernmost member of the Austronesian family group, is spoken and understood by all the eighteen or so Malagasy groups.

However, having been made the sole official language in business and administration, French, the working language of the elite, functions as the High Language. Recently, English has been made the third 'official' language along with French and Malagasy. Since learning a second and/or a third language makes language learners aware of the way native speakers conceptualize

things, those sociolinguistic factors might lead to some changes in the way bilingual and/or trilingual Malagasy people view their self-concept. Indeed, cognitive linguistic theorists (e.g. Gumperz & Levinson, 1991; Trafimov, Silverman, Fan, and Fun Law, 1997) argue that the language used by individuals increases accessibility to either the private or the collective self. The collective self, scholars claim, is acquired in the native tongue while the individual self, in the second language. Thus, it stands to reason that the self-concept of a bilingual or trilingual Malagasy person, for example, will include different traits that have a social content (e.g., I am a descendant of *Randrainizafikoto* and *Raketaka* from village X, or I like to co-operate with others, etc.) as well as other traits that have less social content (I am a soccer player, I am an ambitious person, etc.). On the other hand, the self-concept of a monolingual Malagasy speaking person might include only those traits that have social content. This is critical to the argument since the concept of *face* or the individual's social identity plays a major role in how they appraise FTAs like conflict.

I argue that the present-day Malagasy society includes two kinds of individuals: first, people who use traditional forms of in-group memberships to define themselves, and relate with others in a more traditional way. Second, due to the contact with the French, and largely Western cultures, part of the Malagasy population came to widen their 'self-concept', and consequently view family and peer bonds quite differently from the more traditionalist people.

Like other members of predominantly 'collectivistic' cultures whose identity is determined by group membership (Triandis, 2006), Malagasy people traditionally identified themselves by their family lineage and ancestry. Though Madagascar was divided into small kingdoms, by the late 19th century the Highland group *Merina* established their control on over two-third of the island (Cole & Middleton, 2001) and disseminated their culture among the other

Malagasy groups. Traditional society used to be divided into caste groups: *andriana* (nobles), *hova* (commoners), and *mainty/andevo* (slave groups). French colonization affected social structures. Hereditary leaders, for instance, used to hold both social and political power until the French colonized Madagascar in 1895 and 'officially' abolished the caste system. In recent years, new elite groups that overlap with the pre-independence elite emerged. More importantly, the economic crises that have especially hit the rural parts of the country led many people to leave their native villages and try their fortune in bigger cities. In contexts where resources are relatively scarce, there is an increased emphasis on access to self-enrichment, self-reliance and individual competition. Besides, individuals are more likely to look primarily after their closest relatives rather than their extended family, most of whom are living far from them, either in their native villages or in other parts of the city. Dahl (1999) rightly observed that some forms of communalism such as material dependence on one's kinsmen are not always possible in big cities like Antananarivo, the capital city. The solidarity *fihavanana*, which states that one can expect one's relatives to look after them, has come to embrace a symbolic meaning. One would seek financial support from family members in difficult times but one cannot realistically expect their kinsmen to support them everyday, and all year long. It follows that collective goals cannot always prevail over personal goals in all situations.

All that has been said is consistent with what happened in some other African countries where urbanization and recent socioeconomic crises are bringing out individualism (Marie et al., 1997). Therefore, I expect that similarly to what was found in Cameroon (Pirttilä-Backman et al., 2004), in spite of the dominance of collectivism in the Malagasy culture, respondents will display forms of individualism as well. Since past research (Dahl, 1999) suggests that the Malagasy society values both vertical and horizontal structures, It stands to reason to expect

respondents in the current study to display all forms of individualism and collectivism which are detailed in the next section.

Face Concerns and the Multidimensional Model of IC

As a reminder, Triandis and his colleagues (1998) proposed that IC should be examined along two dimensions – verticalism and horizontalism. The vertical and horizontal aspects of IC combine and result into four possible categories: horizontal collectivism (HC), vertical collectivism (VC), horizontal individualism (HI), and vertical individualism (VI).

Based on theoretical considerations, I argue that horizontal collectivism may lead to two things: first, avoiding, and second, mutual negotiation. Assuming that horizontal collectivists strongly focus on interdependence with their ingroup members (high concern for others over one's self face), they are more likely to avoid talking about a conflict issue if it might cause dissentions among group members. However, as they don't easily submit to authority, they may, in some circumstances, emphasize mutual face concern instead of a low concern on their self face. Such a concern might increase their wish to prefer a compromising style instead of always accommodating to others' wishes or avoiding conflict. This is not counter-intuitive to Ting-Toomey's facework (2005) who has linked the traditional concept of collectivism to compromising as well as avoiding styles.

On the other hand, vertical collectivists, who don't consider everyone as equal, might focus less on the other's face, especially if they happen to be a member of the more desirable groups. Those who are at the bottom of the hierarchy might emphasize the others' face rather than their self face or mutual face. Horizontal individualists are self-reliant and independent but they believe in equality. Therefore, as compared to vertical individualists, they are more likely to emphasize mutual face rather than self face. On the other hand, vertical individualists are more

likely to focus on their self face than the other's or mutual face. Next, I discuss specific cross-cultural predictions.

Cross-cultural predictions

As a reminder, the face-negotiation theory states that persons would engage or flee a conflict situation depending on the degree to which they show concern about their self face, others' face or mutual face. Due to their Indonesian and East African roots, Malagasy people are expected to be significantly more collectivistic than individualistic. However, other socio-cultural dynamics like economic and linguistic factors might increase the likelihood that some respondents will value individualism as well. Since horizontal collectivism is positively associated with both other's face and cooperativeness, I predict that HC will be positively correlated with avoiding and compromising behaviors. Thus, when a problem arises in the relationship, horizontal collectivists might report either 'mutual avoidance' or 'mutual discussion'.

Consistent with Kwantes and Kaushal (2006), I predict that vertical individualism will be positively correlated to dominating while horizontal individualism to compromising styles. As reported in the literature review, VI is associated with a very strong focus on self-interests over the other or mutual interests. Thus, when a problem arises in the relationship, vertical individualism is expected to be positively correlated with the asymmetrical pattern of demand/withdraw when they confront their partners who withdraw from their attempt to discuss. A research question is preferred for vertical collectivism. Since only one research has ever linked the different aspects of IC to conflict styles. In their study of Canadians' conflict styles, Kaushal and Kwantes (2006) linked VC to 'dominating', 'integrating' and 'obliging' styles. Given that

inequality is favored in vertical collectivist cultures, a strong connection between VC and obliging is somewhat plausible.

The reasons why VC could predict 'dominating' and 'integrating' are less clear. It is possible that even within a group-oriented culture (Kaushal & Kwantes, 2006), those who think that they are entitled to more relational power (because of their family lineage, or socio-economic status, etc.) might have a stronger focus on their self-face. As such, they might assume that it is all right to disregard their partners' wishes. The less powerful person might also understand that those who have more power should be treated differently. But, as no information about family lineage, and other socio-economic status such as income, is collected in the current study, and in the absence of enough replication of findings related to VC in collectivistic cultures, it is preferable to ask a research question instead of formulating a specific hypothesis. What follows is a summary on the hypotheses about argumentative roles during the first conflict encounter.

H1a: Vertical individualism will be positively related to self-demand/partner withdraw.

H1b: Horizontal individualism will be positively related to mutual discussion.

H1c: Horizontal collectivism will be positively related to mutual avoidance.

H1d: Horizontal collectivism will be positively related to mutual discussion.

RQ1: How will vertical collectivism be related to initiating role?

It follows that individuals having a high proclivity towards the different forms of individualism will view conflict as 'outcome-oriented' rather than 'process-oriented'. In line with Kwantes and Kaushal (2006), vertical individualism is expected to be positively correlated with aggressive and dominating behaviors. On the other hand, horizontal individualists will favor

compromising tactics. Horizontal collectivism is expected to predict avoiding, and compromising behaviors. The next set of hypotheses is formulated below:

H2a: Vertical individualism will be positively related to dominating, and aggressive behaviors.

H2b: Horizontal individualism will be positively related to direct forms of communication like compromising behaviors.

H2c: Horizontal collectivism will be positively related with compromising/solution-oriented behaviors.

H2d: Horizontal collectivism will be positively related to avoiding styles.

RQ2: How will vertical collectivism be related to coping strategies?

As individualism is manifested through the strong assertion of personal opinion (Ting-Toomey, 2000), it stands to reason to expect that both forms of individualism (HI, and VI) will be more strongly related with serial arguing than horizontal collectivism.

H3: Vertical individualism and horizontal individualism will be more strongly correlated with the frequency of serial arguing than horizontal collectivism.

RQ3: How will VC be related to serial arguing?

In terms of gender culture, consistent with Christensen and his colleagues (2006), I predict that Malagasy women are more likely to demand while men will withdraw. The occurrence of demand-withdraw pattern, an example of 'uncooperative' behavior in relational conflict will be a better predictor of relational harm than the frequency of serial arguing.

H4: The woman-demand/man-withdraw pattern will recur more than the man-demand/woman-withdraw pattern.

H5: Demand-withdraw pattern will be a better predictor of relational harm than the frequency of serial arguing.

The method section describes the way the hypotheses were tested.

CHAPTER 4

METHODS

Participants

Questionnaire data were collected from Madagascar and among members of the Malagasy Diasporas in France, Québec, and the US. Participants were recruited from personal and social networks. Since the study focuses on within-cultural variations in terms of differences in serial arguing, it was deemed important to include different groups of the Malagasy population instead of focusing on only one group. Diasporas are often assumed to exhibit a hybrid, even 'less pure' form of the mother culture. Though plausible, this assumption has not been tested. It could be that members of the Diaspora view the world just like the educated portion of the Malagasy society. After all, educated people in Madagascar have been exposed to the French, and largely Western culture through their education though they haven't stepped outside Madagascar yet.

In comparing the linguistic habits of members of the Diaspora in France and some sections of the Malagasy population in the capital city, Rasoloniaina (2003), for example, found that both populations seem to be as comfortable using code-switched discourses. In her 1995 dissertation on the sociolinguistic habits of the Malagasy Diaspora in Paris, Rasoloniaina reported that the majority was still very much attached to the homeland *tanindrazana* in terms of burial practices, one of the most distinctive features of all those who have been socialized according to the Malagasy culture. Moreover, the hardships that some members of the Diaspora

might go through are more likely to promote 'solidarity' *fihavanana*, a form of communalism rather than individualism.

It could also be argued that in a situation of context change, like immigration, persons' experiences could be quite diverse. Intercultural communication scholars like Kim (1998) argue that everyone has to go through their adaptation process. However, the extent to which individuals are willing to adapt to the host culture depends on a variety of factors. At some point of their life, some immigrants might adopt norms and values of those with whom they interact most at school or in their working place. Once they are well-settled in their new home, the desire to make a better life might also enhance some forms of individualism among members of the Diaspora. All that we said is consistent with research in cross-cultural psychology which shows that both context and change in context (e.g. through immigration) may (Kitayama, Ishii, Imade, Takemura, & Ramaswamy, 2006) or may not (Atran, et al., 2005) carry with it cultural change depending in part on features of the social networks in which one is embedded before and after contextual change.

Members of the Diaspora in France (which is the home to the largest number of overseas community) might not differ drastically from the Malagasy elite in Madagascar. On the other hand, because of their smaller size, those in North America might display forms of individualism more. Recent statistics about the Malagasy Diaspora in the US (Malagasy Embassy, personal communication) showed that there are about 418 Malagasy households. The Malagasy Diaspora in Canada (Malagasy Embassy, personal communication) consists of 2,220 individuals. Analyzing data from both the mother culture and its Diasporas might increase our understanding of the different forms of collectivism and individualism in the Malagasy culture and test what factors really predict changes. Moreover, to the best of my knowledge, this thesis is the first

research looking at both a parent culture and several of its overseas communities in the cross-cultural conflict literature.

Like the vast majority of research in serial arguing conducted primarily in the U.S, I had to rely on convenience samples but not that of college samples. I could not rely on college samples for two reasons: first, some college students' reluctance to participate in the current study. Second, as Cohen (in Kitayama & Cohen, 2007) argued, college students in other parts of the world are a more rarified section of the population than they are in the United States. Because of economic hardships, the majority of individuals aged between the ages of 21 to 30 might find themselves in the workforce. The current study would then replicate research done on U.S. elite on a sample composed of both non-U.S. super elites (Cohen, 2007) and the average Malagasy people.

I originally collected data from 248 individuals from Madagascar and the Diasporas in France and North America (US, Québec). Because of missing data, 24 participants had to be eliminated leaving a total of 224, with 86.6 % from Madagascar, and 13.4 % recruited among members of the Diasporas. Of the total sample, 52.2 % were women and 47.8 % men. The sample was rather young. Participants ranged across different age categories with the greatest number of respondents (50.9 %) between the ages of 21-30. About 36.6 % of those who participated in the project were between the age of 31-40, 0.9% between the ages of 41-50, 9.4 % between the age of 51-60, and 2.2 % were 60 years of age or over. Out of the total sample, less than 1% indicated that they were not born in Madagascar. The sample consisted mainly of people from the Malagasy Highland areas (the provinces of Antananarivo and Fianarantsoa). About 57.1 % were born in Antananarivo while 20.5 % in Fianarantsoa, 12.1 % in the province of Toamasina, 3.1 % in Mahajanga, 2.7 % in Toliara, and 2.2 % in Antsiranana. Three persons did

not indicate their place of birth. Information about respondents' lineage or caste was not collected because the question might upset some of them. The issues of caste and lineage are sensitive in Madagascar. The respondents differed in their degree of exposure to foreign cultures. About 75.9% of the participants reported that they have never been to a different country, 4 % have been overseas for less than 3 months, 4 % for 3–6 months, 1.8 % for 7–11 months, 3.1 % for 1–2 years, 2.7 % lived in another country for 3–5 years, 2.7 % for 6–10 years, and 4.9 % for more than 10 years. The sample was also far more diverse than what was expected in terms of education. About 8 % did not finish primary school, 24.6 % did not graduate from secondary school, 25.9 % attended college for two years or less, 16.5 % had a 'Licence' (the first degree awarded by a Malagasy university) or equivalent degrees, 16.5 % had a 'Maitrîse' (the second degree awarded by a Malagasy university) or equivalent degrees, and 3.1 % had a doctorate. Twelve people skipped the item. A summary of the demographics is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

The Number of Respondents according to area of origin, gender, language and education

Demographic variables	Frequency	Percent
Participant gender		
Female	117	52.2
Male	107	47.8
Participant year of age		
21-30	114	50.9
31-40	82	36.6
41-50	2	.9
51-60	21	9.4
60 and over	5	2.2

Table 1, continued

Demographic variables	Frequency	Percent
Participants' place of birth		
Antananarivo	128	57.1
Fianarantsoa	46	20.5
Toamasina	27	12.1
Mahajanga	7	3.1
Antsiranana	5	2.2
Toliara	6	2.7
Other	2	.9
Exposition to another culture		
never lived in another culture	170	75.9
3 months and less	9	4.0
3-6 months	9	4.0
7-11 months	4	1.8
1-2 years	7	3.1
3-5 yrs	6	2.7
6-10 yrs	6	2.7
10 yrs and more	11	4.9
Participants' education		
didn't finish CEG	18	8.0
didn't pass Bacc	55	24.6
have been to college for two years or less	58	25.9
have a Licence or equivalent	37	16.5
have a Maîtrise or equivalent	37	16.5
have a doctorate or equivalent	7	3.1

N: 224

In regard to their romantic relationships, 2.2% of respondents reported that they were involved in an intercultural relationship while 97.3 % had a Malagasy romantic partner. One person did not indicate the nationality of their relational partner. About 46.4 % of respondents reported on a past relationship while 53.6% % on a current relationship. About 10.3 % of the respondents reported being in their relationship for a month or less, 19.2 % for 1 to 6 months, 15.6 % for 7 to 11 months, 21.0 % for 1 to 2 years, 13.8 % for 3 to 5 years, and 20.1 % for more

than 5 years. On average, respondents seemed to be content with their relationship. Only 27.2 % of respondents gave a negative rating of their relationship: about 18.3 % reported that their relationship was not quite as good as their friends' while 8.9 % rated their relationship as much worse. On the other hand, 11.6 % of the participants reported that their relationship was much better than their friends' while 29.5% reported that it was somewhat better. About the same reported that their relationship was as good as their friends'. Five persons skipped that item. Details about relational variables are given in Table 2. Analyses are based on 224 people.

Table 2

Summary Statistics about Relational Variables

Relational variables	Frequency	Percent
Romantic partner		
Malagasy	218	97.3
Other	5	2.2
Relationship status		
Current	120	53.6
Past	104	46.4
Relational length		
less than a month	23	10.3
1 - 6 months	43	19.2
7 - 11 months	35	15.6
1 - 2 yrs	47	21.0
3 - 5yrs	31	13.8
more than 5 yrs	45	20.1
Rating of relationship		
much better than most	26	11.6
somewhat better than most	66	29.5
About the same as most	66	29.5
not quite as good as most	41	18.3
much worse than most	20	8.9

Procedure

Respondents were instructed that they will take part in a large project on serial argument and were asked to complete a survey concentrating on several aspects of their cultural orientations, their relationship, the perceived frequency of conflictual episodes, as well as their communication behaviors during serial arguing. More specifically, they were asked to recall one particular serial arguing that they experienced in a past or current relationship. They were then asked to report their communication behaviors during the initial encounter (who initiated the conflict), and during and after the discussions of the conflict issue as well. A definition of serial argument, as arguing about the same topic over time in which their partners and them participated in at least two arguments (Johnson & Roloff, 2000), was provided to help participants recall better.

The last section of the serial arguing questionnaire asked them to assess the negative impact of the serial arguing on their relational life. All the questionnaires were constructed in English and then translated into French, and Malagasy. As no other trilingual person was available, the questionnaires were not back-translated. However, both the serial arguing questionnaire and IC scales were pilot-tested among 6 members of the Diasporas. They suggested changes whenever they thought that meanings were confusing. Moreover, it was possible to get access to the French versions of the IC scales that were used by Pirttilä-Backman and her colleagues in Cameroon in 2004. In order to avoid language bias and reduce any form of *a-priori* influence, respondents chose to complete the questionnaire in the language they felt most comfortable with. When collecting data in Lebanon, Huda (2001) found that those who completed the Arabic version of the IC questionnaires, were more likely to give responses related to collectivism than respondents who chose to use the French and English versions of the

scales. Out of the total sample, 74.1 % completed the survey in Malagasy, 23.7 % in French, and 2.2 % in English. The questionnaires were sent to Madagascar, France, Québec, and other parts of the US where some members of the Diaspora are living. Those who collected the data were instructed to allow the respondents take the questionnaires home and then collect them at a convenient time. No compensation was offered to the respondents. It took about an hour and half to complete the survey.

Measures

The following section describes the instruments used to measure both the dependent and independent variables. As a reminder, the independent variables include the respondents' scores on the different forms of IC and their gender. The dependent measures examined in the study are argumentative roles during serial arguing, the frequency of serial arguing, behaviors enacted during and after the discussion of a relationship problem, and relational outcomes.

Demographics.

A short biography questionnaire was developed in order to gather information about the respondents' gender, educational level, birthplace, spouse, and age. Gender was operationnalized by the participants' self-reported sex as female (1) or male (2).

Collectivism/Individualism

Twenty years after Hofstede first published the *Culture's Consequences,* about 27 distinct scales are used by scholars to measure IC (Oyserman, Coon et al. 2002). Since none of those is satisfactory by itself (Triandis, Chan & Chen, 1998) or dominant (Oyserman, Coon et al. 2002), I chose to use two methods: the attitude and scenario scales. Those two scales measure each dimension of Collectivism (HC, VC) and Individualism (HI, VI). Both the attitude and scenario scales are explicated below.

Attitude scale. The attitude scale developed by Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, and Gelfand (1995), consists of 32 items measuring each dimension of IC with 8 items each. In this task, the participants were required to indicate, on a 9-point scale, if they agreed or disagreed with the 32 attitude items, where 1 indicated total disagreement and 9 indicated agreement. Items such as "I often do 'my own thing' ", for example, reflect horizontal individualism. Horizontal collectivism was measured by items like 'I feel good when I cooperate with others'. As for vertical individualism, it was reflected through items like "It is important that I do my job better than others". Vertical collectivism was measured with items like 'It is important to me that I respect decisions made by my groups'. See Appendix C for a copy of the questionnaire.

The attitude scale was first administered to Illinois and Hong Kong students in 1995. Its validity has been tested in African contexts like Cameroon ($\alpha = .67$ for HC, $\alpha = .47$ for VC, $\alpha = .45$ for HI, $\alpha = .52$ for VI). In the current study, after the elimination of five items which had poor item-total correlations with the overall scale, the attitude scale was found to have a strong internal consistency ($\alpha = .81$). However, when the four subscales were examined separately, only the HI scale displayed a Cronbach alpha's over .70. After the elimination of the three items: (1) 'It annoys me when other people perform better than I do', (2) 'When another person does better than I do, I get tense and aroused', and (3) 'Some people emphasize winning, I am not one of them', Cronbach alpha was .67 for vertical individualism. As for vertical collectivism, scale reliability was .60 after the elimination of 'Parents and children must stay together, as much as possible'. The Cronbach alpha for horizontal collectivism was .61 after the elimination of 'My happiness depends very much on the happiness of those around me'. Horizontal individualism was found to have an adequate reliability, $\alpha = .71$. A summary of the descriptive statistics and reliabilities for the attitude scale is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics and Reliabilities for the Attitude Scale

Measures	*M*	*SD*	α
Individualism			
VI	6.76	1.28	.67
HI	6.33	1.59	.71
Collectivism			
VC	6.79	1.33	.60
HC	6.69	1.75	.61

Note: responses were measured on a 9-point scale (1: never/definitely not; 9: always/definitely yes)
N = 215 for VI; 193 for HI; 210 for HC; and 210 for VC

Scenario scale. In addition to the attitude scale, participants also completed a scenario scale developed by Triandis and Gelfand (1998) to measure individualism and collectivism. The scenario measurement presents respondents with 16 scenarios: two scenarios are related to the social context; two other scenarios are related to the political, three to the economic, four to the philosophical, and three to the aesthetic. See Appendix D for all scenarios and options. The scenario scale was found to have a stronger validity than any other cultural measurement tools. Indeed, Peng, Nisbett, and Wong (1997) tested the use of ranking, rating, attitude item methods as well as scenarios against the criterion of judgments of "experts". It turned out that only the scenario method correlated with the judgments of the experts. Moreover, the scenario measurement is believed to be more resistant to any other scales (Triandis et al., 1998).

To complete the scenario scale, respondents were asked to read each one of the 16 scenarios, and indicate which one of the four choices, representing the four dimensions of IC, is most appropriate for them. They were instructed to select two options: first, the best option, and second the next best. They were asked to not rank the other remaining choices. Based on the instructions from the authors of the scale, the first choice was given the weighting of two.

Scenarios include items like ‘You and your friends decided spontaneously to go out to dinner at a restaurant. What do you think is the best way to handle the bill?’ Respondents were given four options. The HC option reads as: ‘Split it equally, without regard to who ordered what’; the VI option is as follows: ‘Split it according to how much each one makes’, the VC option was: ‘The group leader pays the bill or decides how to split it’. Finally, the HI option was: ‘Compute each person's charge according to what that person ordered”.

Though they were originally developed in American and Asian cultures, the attitude and scenario scales have been validated in African contexts. Pirttilä-Backman et al. (2004) tested their validity in Cameroon. They found that the two collectivism scales correlated clearly with each other, as did the two individualism scales. The correlations between the attitude and scenario measurements for the current study are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Intercorrelation between the Attitude Scale and Scenario Measurement

Method	Attitude				Scenario			
	VI	HI	VC	HC	VI	HI	VC	HC
Attitude								
VI	-----	.26**	.21**	.20**	.23**	.03	-.01	-.21**
HI	-------	-------	.37**	.23**	.03	.19**	-.01	-.20**
VC	--------	---------	-------	.59**	-.21**	.01	.25**	-.02
HC	--------	------	-------	--------	-.18**	-.01	.19**	.007
Scenario								
VI	---------	---------	---------	---------	---------	-.10	-.24**	-.27**
HI	----------	--------	------	--------	--------	----------	-.29**	-.28**
VC	---------	---------	-------	---------	------	----------	---------	.-10
HC	---------	---------	---------	---------	--------	----------	---------	---------

Note: N = 217

** *p<.01.* All correlations are 2-tailed.

As reported in Table 4, the study did differentiate between the horizontal and vertical aspects of IC within both scales. On the attitude scale, the correlation coefficient was .59 for collectivism, and .26 for individualism. As for the scenario scale, r=-10 for collectivism, and r=-10 for individualism. The two individualism and collectivism scales were also significantly associated with one another (.25 for VC, .23 for VI, .19 for HI, and .007 for HC). Though the lowest correlations are lower than those reported in previous studies comparing Asian collectivistic cultures with US samples (e.g.: Triandis, et al.,1998), the highest correlations reported in the current study are higher than those reported on African cultures (e.g. Prittila-Brackman, 2004). Though the current study did not achieve a strong reliability as was the case in previous research, it does differentiate between the different dimensions of IC. The hypotheses on individuals' behaviors in serial arguing will be tested using the attitude scale and the scenario measurement in the hope to find out which type of cultural measurement is more appropriate for the population under study.

Serial Arguments. Johnson and Roloff (2000) developed several measures to assess serial arguments. The original questionnaire consists of different subscales examining the features of the initial and subsequent argumentative episodes; the frequency of serial arguing, the impact of serial arguing on relational quality; and beliefs about the resolvability of the serial argument. As the current study exclusively focuses on the link between relational outcomes and frequency of serial arguing instead of perceived resolvability, and relational satisfaction, items (in the original scale) related to perceived resolvability were dropped. The subscales used in the current study are discussed below.

Relational Outcomes. On the serial arguing questionnaire developed by Johnson and Roloff (2000), participants were asked to assess the negative effects of serial arguing on three

aspects of their relationship. They were specifically asked to assess on a 7 point scale, the extent to which their relationship became closer or more distant, stronger or weaker; and happier or more sad after each argumentative episode. In research conducted primarily in the US (Johnson & Roloff, 1998; Johnson & Roloff, 2000), the scale proved to be reliable (α = .94). Likewise, the scale demonstrated an excellent internal consistency in the current study, α = .94 (*M* = 4.08, *SD* = 1.10).

Frequency of Serial Arguing. At two stages in the serial argument questionnaire, respondents were asked to indicate first the number of times the serial arguing occurred and second the length of time that they and their partners were in conflict. The items included: (1) 'Approximately how many times have (did) you argued with your partner about this issue', and (2) 'How long (days, months, years) have (were) you and your partners been in conflict over this issue?

Christensen's Communication Patterns Questionnaire (CPQ). The Christensen's Communication Pattern Questionnaire (CPQ) assesses individuals' perceptions of the way conflictual episodes with their partners are handled. The questionnaire is completed on a 9-point scale ranging from 1 (very unlikely) to 9 (very likely). The CPQ measures communication behaviors during three phases of conflict: (1) "when some problem in the relationship arises"; (2) "during the discussion of a relationship problem"; and (3) "after the discussion of a relationship problem".

The CPQ has been validated both nationally (Christensen & Heavey, 1990; Heavey, Layne & Christensen, 1993), and cross-culturally (Bodenmann, Kaiser, Hahlweg & Fehm-Wolfsdorf, 1998; Christensen et al., 2006). It has been translated into other languages such as German (Bodenmann, et al., 1998). In past research, the different scales demonstrated

satisfactory internal consistency. For instance, in studies conducted primarily in the US, the different scales yielded satisfactory validity and reliability with Cronbach's alphas varying between .50 to **.**87 (e.g.: Christensen & Heavey, 1990; Heavey et al., 1993). More recently, a cross-cultural study using CPQ (Christensen et al., 2006) suggested that the questionnaire was a valid instrument for non-US populations as well. The different subscales are discussed below.

The first subscale informs researchers about the argumentative roles during the initial encounter. Respondents reported whether they and their partners mutually discuss the problem, 'mutual discussion', mutually avoid the conflict or 'mutual avoidance', or tried to confront their partners who resisted the attempt 'demand/withdraw'.

The second subscale assesses dyadic communication patterns during the discussion of a problem. Items measure first, the extent to which the man nagged, threatened, blamed, withdrew, or accommodate to their partners' needs (e.g., man pressures, nags, or demands, while woman withdraws, becomes silent, or refuses to discuss the matter further); and second, the extent to which the woman nagged, threatened, blamed, withdrew, or accommodate to their partners' needs (e.g., woman pressures, nags, or demands, while man withdraws, becomes silent, or refuses to discuss the matter further). The third subscale assesses individuals' behaviors after the conflictual episode. The subscale includes items such as 'woman seeks support from others'; 'man seeks support from others', 'man threatens negative consequences while woman resist', and 'woman threatens negative consequences while man resists'. To explore whether those items actually refer to multiple factors related to conflict behaviors, an exploratory factor analysis with principle component axis and varimax rotation was conducted.

Prior to factor analysis, the internal consistency of the subscales was assessed. Four items: (1) mutual understanding, (2) mutual reconciliation, (3) mutual resolution, and (4) mutual

threat which didn't have a good inter-item correlation with the overall scale were eliminated. The analysis of the remaining 16 items yielded 4 factors. The first factor related to aggressive behaviors, included 6 items: (1) physical aggression, (2) name-calling, (3) one threatens negative consequences while partner gives in, (4) one pressures partner to apologize while they resist, (5) one pressures partner to take some action while they resist, and (6) logical/emotional. The second factor related to avoiding behaviors consisted of 3 items: (1) mutual withdrawal, (2) mutual withholding, (3) and seeking support from others. The third factor was consistent with a high concern of one's self over the other party's. This factor termed 'dominating' included three items: (1) blaming, (2) criticizing one's partner while they defend themselves and (3) nagging one's partner while they withdraw. The last factor was consistent with a moderate concern for production and other's face, and was called compromising. It included four items: (1) mutual negotiation, (2) mutual expression, (3) feeling guilty for what one did or said and (4) one acts especially nice while one's partner acts distant.

The four factors accounted for 54.51% of the variance explained. The first factor contributed for 29.19% of the variance explained, the second factor, 11.81%, the third factor, 7.20%, and the last factor 6.28 %. The four factors were then examined separately. Reliability for aggressive behaviors was adequate, $\alpha = .76$ ($M = 7.88$, $SD = 1.99$). Both the dominating and avoiding scales demonstrated sufficient reliabilities, $\alpha = .64$ ($M = 6.96$, $SD = 2.34$) for dominating, $\alpha = .61$ ($M = 5.80$, $SD = 2.10$) for avoiding. As for the last subscale, it only displayed a weak internal consistency, $\alpha = .47$ ($M = 8.50$, $SD = 1.63$). The factor loading for each scale item is presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Factor Analysis on Communication Behaviors

Measures	FACTORS			
	1	2	3	4
Threaten negative consequences/give in	.75			
Physical aggression	.75			
Name-calling	.71			
Logical/emotional	.53			
Pressure to apologize/resist	.43			
Pressure for change/resist	.41			
Mutual withdrawal		.81		
Mutual withholding		.71		
Seeking support from others		.58		
Blaming			.72	
Criticizing/defending			.59	
Nagging/withdrawing			.59	
Acting nice				.74
Guilty/hurt				.67
Mutual expression				.50
Mutual negotiation				.42

Demand/withdraw pattern. Based on the instructions from the authors of the scale, information about the woman demand/man withdraw was obtained by adding up three items: (1) woman tries to start a discussion while man tries to avoid discussion, (2) woman nags, and demands, while man withdraws, becomes silent, or refuses to discuss the matter further, and (3) woman criticizes while man defends himself. The man demand/woman withdraw was obtained by adding up three items: (1) man tries to start a discussion while woman tries to avoid discussion, (2) man nags, and demands, while woman withdraws, becomes silent, or refuses to discuss the matter further, and (3) man criticizes while woman defends himself. As for the total amount of the dysfunctional pattern of demand/withdraw, it was obtained by adding up the woman demand/man withdraw and the man demand/woman withdraw patterns. When examined separately, the scales displayed sufficient reliabilities ($\alpha = .65$ for the total demand/withdraw scale, $\alpha = .54$ for woman demand/man-withdraw, $\alpha = .53$ for man demand/woman-withdraw). The results are presented in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses

Before testing the hypotheses, the scores for collectivism and individualism were computed. Second, a set of preliminary analyses were conducted to determine if gender and relationship status had an effect on the respondents' scores on IC, demand/withdraw patterns, conflict behaviors during the discussions of conflict issues, and self-assessment of relational outcomes. To determine potential differences in dominant cultural orientations, demand/withdraw patterns, behaviors during serial arguing, and relational outcomes, gender differences on those variables were examined.

Gender Differences on IC scores, demand/withdraw, and relational outcomes

Previous research (Pirttilä-Backman et al., 2004) suggests that women are significantly more individualistic than men. Therefore, a *t*-test was performed to investigate potential gender differences. For the attitude scale, there was no statistically difference between the sexes. However, there was a significant gender effect for the scenario scale, $t(219) = -3.56$, $p<.001$. Males (*M = 10.13, SD = 3.04*) differ significantly from women (*M= 8.67, SD= 3.01*). A *t*-test of mean differences also showed that both sexes differ in horizontal collectivism, $t(219) = 2.90$, *p<.01*. Women (*M= 15.43, SD= 3.34*) were indeed significantly more horizontal collectivists than men (*M= 14.09, SD = 3.54*). Thus, on the scenario scale, gender was controlled in the main regression analyses.

A series of *t*-test of mean differences showed that the reporter's gender had no significant effect on either the relational outcomes, the amount of demand/withdraw communication, or the behaviors enacted during serial arguing. Thus, it was not necessary to control for the reporter's gender in the main regression analyses predicting the impact of serial arguing on relational outcomes.

Relational status and the negative effects of serial arguing

Out of the total sample, 53.6% of respondents reported on a current relationship while 46.4 % on a past relationship. Significant differences were found between those two groups in regard to relational outcomes, t (204) = -6.99, $p<.01$. Those who reported on a past relationship were more likely to rate the impact of serial arguing negatively (*M= 3.14, SD= 1.59*) than those who reported on a current relationship (*M= 4.90, SD= 2.01*). Therefore, relationship status was controlled in the main regression analyses. The next set of analyses sought to compute each respondent's dominant cultural orientation.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypotheses 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, and RQ1

To test the predictive power of cultural orientation on initiating roles, a set of regression analyses with respondents' scores on VI, HI, VC, and HC as predictor variables and initiating roles as dependent measures was run. Initiating roles refer to whether respondents mutually discuss the problem 'mutual discussion', mutually avoid the conflict 'mutual avoidance' or tried to confront their partner who withdrew from the discussion 'demand/withdraw'. H1a predicted that there will be a positive relationship between VI and demand/withdraw. H1b suggested that HI will be positively correlated with mutual discussion. Hypothesis H1c advanced that there will be a positive relationship between HC and mutual avoidance. The next hypothesis H1d predicted

that HC will be positively associated with mutual discussion. A research question related to vertical collectivism was formulated. Only H1a and H1d were supported using the attitude scale. The scenario measurement didn't yield significant results. Vertical collectivism was not a significant predictor of initiating roles. A summary of the significant variables is presented in table 6. See Appendix G for complete regression tables.

Table 6

Regression Analyses on Initiating Roles

Measures	*B*	*SE*	*β*	*R*	$R^2\ \Delta$
Demand/withdraw				.22*	.03*
Vertical Individualism	.60	.20	.21**		
Vertical collectivism	.06	.32	.01		
Horizontal collectivism	-.48	.30	-.13		
Horizontal individualism	.10	.22	.03		
Mutual discussion				.34*	.10***
Vertical Individualism	-.65	.12	-.34***		
Vertical collectivism	-.19	.20	-.07		
Horizontal collectivism	.40	.19	.16*		
Horizontal individualism	.10	.14	.05		

** p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001*
Note: For demand/withdraw, *df* = (4, 212), for mutual discussion, *df* = (4, 214).

As can be seen in Table 6, Vertical individualism did predict demand-withdraw, $\beta = .21, p<.01$. None of the other three predictors (HI, VC, and HC) was correlated with the dependent variable. The scenario measurement didn't yield significant results. Results on the attitude scale also revealed clear support for H1d suggesting that horizontal collectivism could predict mutual discussion, $\beta = .16, p<.05$. Neither vertical collectivism nor horizontal

individualism was a significant predictor in the model. However, mutual discussion was negatively correlated with vertical individualism, $\beta = -.34, p<.001$. The scenario measurement didn't yield significant results.

As far as the next set of hypotheses is concerned, neither H1b nor H1c was supported. Horizontal individualism was not positively correlated with mutual discussion on either the attitude scale or the scenario measurement. Likewise, neither the attitude scale nor the scenario measurement provided any support for H1d predicting a positive relationship between horizontal collectivism and mutual avoidance. In summary, the scenario measure didn't support any of the four hypotheses on initiating roles. However, H1a and H1d were supported using the attitude scale. Results also indicated that vertical collectivism was not a significant predictor of persons' initiating roles.

Hypotheses 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d and RQ2

To test the predictive power of cultural orientations on conflict behaviors during and after the discussion of conflict issues, a set of regression analyses was run. Respondents' scores on the four dimensions of IC (vertical individualism, horizontal individualism, vertical collectivism, and horizontal collectivism) were entered as predictor variables while aggressive, dominating, compromising and avoiding behaviors as dependent measures. As seen through the results, hypotheses 2b and 2c were not supported for the scenario measure. However, they were supported using the attitude scale. As far as H2d is concerned, it was found to be a significant predictor for the attitude scale. However, the correlation did not go in the predicted direction. A summary of the significant variables are presented in the Table 7. See Appendix G for complete regression tables.

Table 7

Regression Predicting Aggressive, Dominating, Avoiding, and Compromising styles

Measures	*B*	*SE*	*β*	*R*	$R^2\Delta$
Aggressive styles (attitude)					
				.21*	.02*
Vertical Individualism	.32	.14	.16*		
Vertical collectivism	.19	.22	.07		
Horizontal collectivism	-.52	.21	-.20*		
Horizontal individualism	-.02	.15	-.01		
Aggressive styles (scenario)					
				.28**	.05**
Gender	-.13	.45	-.02		
Vertical Individualism	.15	.08	.14		
Vertical collectivism	.06	.06	.06		
Horizontal collectivism	-.18	.07	-.19*		
Horizontal individualism	-.09	.08	-.09		
Dominating (attitude scale)					
				.18	.02
Vertical Individualism	.36	.14	.18*		
Vertical collectivism	-.16	.19	-.06		
Horizontal individualism	.05	.15	.02		
Dominating (scenario scale)					
				.22*	.03*
Gender	-.29	.46	-.04		
Vertical Individualism	.24	.07	.22**		
Vertical collectivism	.13	.06	.14		
Horizontal individualism	.13	.07	.12		
Compromising (attitude)					
				.27**	.06**
Vertical collectivism	.07	.16	.03		
Horizontal collectivism	.32	.15	.16*		
Horizontal individualism	.24	.11	.15*		

** p<.05. ** p<.01. *** p<.001*

Note = For aggressive behaviors, *df* = (4, 214), for dominating, *df* = (4, 215), for compromising, *df*= (3, 216), and for avoiding, *df*= (4, 214).

(*Table continues*)

Table 7, cont.

Regression Predicting Aggressive, Dominating, Avoiding, and Compromising styles

	B	*SE*	β	*R*	R^2 Δ
Avoiding (attitude)					
				.24*	.04*
Vertical Individualism	.33	.12	.18**		
Vertical collectivism	.38	.20	.16		
Horizontal collectivism	-.41	.19	-.18*		
Horizontal individualism	-.29	.13	-.15*		
Avoiding (scenario)				.31***	.08***
Gender	-.67	.40	-.11		
Vertical Individualism	.31	.07	.33***		
Vertical collectivism	.09	.06	.12		
Horizontal individualism	.001	.07	-.001		
Horizontal collectivism	-.006	.06	-.008		

** p<.05. ** p<.01. *** p<.001*

H2a predicted that VI will be positively correlated with both aggressive and dominating behaviors. First, the effects of cultural orientations on aggressive behaviors were assessed. As can be seen in Table 7, aggressive behaviors were positively correlated with VI, $\beta = .16, p<.05$, and negatively correlated with horizontal collectivism, $\beta = -.20, p<.05$. Therefore, H2a, predicting a positive relationship between VI and aggressive behaviors was supported using the attitude scale. Based on preliminary analyses, the gender of the reporter was controlled in the scenario measurement. When respondents' scores on VI, HI, VC, and HC were entered as predictors, only the effect of HC on aggressive behaviors was statistically significant, $\beta = -.19, p<.05$. As reported in Table 7, VI had no significant effect on aggressive behaviors. Therefore, H2a, predicting a positive relationship between VI and aggressive behaviors, was not supported for the scenario measurement.

Before testing the effect of the four cognitive structures, VI, VC, HI, HC on dominating behaviors, multicollinearity was reduced by removing HC from the model due to its high VIF. Theoretical considerations also suggest that HC may not be essential to the model. The hypothesis was supported on both the scenario and attitude scale. For the scenario measurement (see Table 7), only VI had a significant effect, $\beta =. 22, p< .01,$ on dominating. For the attitude scale, though the model was a poor fit $R^2 \Delta = .02$, VI was positively correlated with dominating, $\beta = .18, p<.05$. Therefore, both the attitude scale and the scenario measurement provided support for the hypothesis predicting a positive relationship between VI and dominating.

Prior to testing the effect of cultural dimensions on compromising, one of the predictors, vertical individualism was removed in order to reduce multicollinearity. Not only did VI have a high VIF but theoretical considerations suggest that it might not be essential to the model. Hypothesis 2b and 2c predicted that HI and HC will be positively correlated with compromising behaviors. The two hypotheses were supported for the attitude scale. As reported in table 7, compromising was positively associated with HI, $\beta = .15, p<.05$, and HC, $\beta = .16, p<.05$.

Hypothesis H2d predicted that horizontal collectivism will be positively correlated with avoiding tactics. The hypothesis was not supported. Contrary to the expected positive relationship, results suggest that HC decreases the likelihood of avoiding talking the conflict out. On the attitude scale, avoiding tactics were negatively correlated with horizontal collectivism, $\beta = -.18, p<.05$, and HI, $\beta = -.15, p<.05$. Avoiding behaviors, however, were positively correlated with VI, $\beta = .18, p<.01$. Vertical collectivism had no effect on avoiding tactics. Findings for the scenario measurement reinforced the trend that VI increases the likelihood of adopting an avoiding behavior, $\beta = .33, p<.001$.Therefore, the hypothesis predicting a positive relationship between horizontal collectivism and avoiding tactics was not supported.

In summary, H2a, H2b and H2c were not supported for the scenario measure. However, they were supported using the attitude scale. As far as H2d is concerned, it was not supported on either scale. Vertical collectivism was not a significant predictor.

Hypothesis 3a and Research question RQ3

H3a posits that VI and HI will be more strongly related with the frequency of serial arguing than is horizontal collectivism. A research question was formulated for VC. Information on the frequency of serial arguing was gathered with two items. The first item requires about the number of times respondents argued with their partners. Only 107 respondents answered this item by giving exact numbers (e.g.: twice, four times, etc.). The rest of the sample gave approximation such as 'many times', 'unlimited', or 'ever since I dated her/him'. The quantitative responses ranged from once to 240 times. Data from 11 people responding "once" could not be considered. Therefore, the regression analyses were based on a total of 96 respondents, 45.1 % of the overall sample (M: 11.07, SD: 30.00). As for the second item, 'How long were you in conflict', responses ranged from some hours to 7 years. Data were expressed in terms of months (M: 6.57, SD: 14.84). Analyses were based on 31.9% of the overall sample. The rest of the sample skipped this item.

To test the predictive power of cultural orientations on the frequency of serial arguing, a set of regression analyses was run. Respondents' scores on VI, HI, VC, and HC were entered as predictor variables and persons' responses to the number of times arguing and length of time in conflict as the dependent measures. Analyses of the first item didn't yield significant findings. Using the second item, the frequency of serial arguing was positively correlated with vertical individualism, $\beta = .36, p<.01$, and vertical collectivism, $\beta = .55, p<.001$ for the scenario measurement. Neither horizontal collectivism nor horizontal individualism had an effect on the

frequency of serial arguing. Results on the attitude scale suggest that though the model was a poor fit, horizontal individualism had a significant effect on the frequency of serial arguing. However, contrary to the predicted positive relationship, findings suggest that horizontal individualism decreases the likelihood that romantic partners will engage in serial arguing, $\beta = -.28, p<.05$. No other significant results were found. Therefore the attitude scale did not provide any support for the hypothesis. Significant variables are reported in Table 8. See appendix G for complete regression tables.

Table 8: Regression on the Frequency of Serial Arguing Using the Four Dimensions of IC

Measures	*B*	*SE*	*β*	*R*	$R^2\Delta$
Frequency (Scenario)				.47**	.16**
Gender	-1.27	3.6	-.04		
Vertical Individualism	1.80	.65	.36**		
Vertical collectivism	2.01	.53	.55***		
Horizontal individualism	.99	.75	.20		
Horizontal collectivism	.80	.67	.18		
Frequency (Attitude)				.32	.04
Vertical Individualism	-.79	1.15	-.08		
Vertical collectivism	.68	2.06	.05		
Horizontal individualism	-.2.45	1.10	.-28*		
Horizontal collectivism	.1.35	1.81	.11		

** p<.05. ** p<.01.*** p<.001*

For the scenario measurement, *df* = (4, 60), for the attitude scale, *df* = (4, 62)

I tried to deal with the issues of multicollinearity by combining scales that might be theoretically related to one another. Therefore respondents' scores on all the collectivist items as

well as their scores on the individualist items were averaged. The new variables referring to persons' emphasis towards individualism or collectivism were found to have adequate internal consistency ($\alpha = .76$ for collectivism, and $\alpha = .74$ for individualism). Likewise, scores on the vertical aspects and horizontal aspects were computed. Those four newly computed variables were used to test the effect of cultural orientations on the number of times arguing and length of conflict. Two models were created. The first model tested whether persons' emphasis on individualism or collectivism had a significant effect on the frequency of serial arguing. As for the second model, it assesses whether an emphasis on either the horizontal or the vertical aspect of IC could predict the frequency of serial arguing.

No significant results were found for the number of times arguing. Results for conflict length were more conclusive. When persons' scores on individualism and collectivism were entered as predictors, conflict length was negatively correlated with individualism, $\beta = -.31$, $p<.05$. Results from the attitude scale suggest that individualism decreases the likelihood that individuals will engage in serial arguing. Collectivism was not a significant predictor. However, significant results were obtained when persons' emphasis on individualism and collectivism were entered as predictors on the scenario scale. Length of conflict was more strongly correlated with collectivism, $\beta = .55$, $p<.01$, than it was with individualism $\beta = .42$, $p<.01$.

When persons' emphasis on the vertical or horizontal aspects of IC were entered as predictors, the frequency of serial arguing was positively correlated with the vertical scenarios, $\beta = .59$, $p<.001$. Horizontal scenarios didn't have a significant effect on the frequency of serial arguing. Considering the results obtained on the scenario scale, I was interested in finding which factor – an emphasis on either individualism/collectivism, or on the vertical and horizontal aspects of IC - might be a stronger predictor of the frequency of serial arguing. The four new

computed variables – persons' scores on all collectivist items, individualist items as well as those on the horizontal and vertical items were entered as predictors. When all four variables were entered in one model, only the vertical scenarios had a significant effect on the frequency of serial arguing, $\beta = .59, p<.001$. A summary of significant variables is presented in Table 9.

Table 9

The Effects of Individualism/Collectivism and the different Aspects of IC on conflict length

Measures	*B*	SE	β	*R*	$R^2\ \Delta$
Emphasis on individualism or collectivism (attitude)				.31*	.07*
Individualist items	-3.46	1.35	-.31*		
Collectivist items	2.20	1.67	.16		
Emphasis on individualism or collectivism (scenario)				.41**	.14**
Individualist items	3.22	1.17	.42**		
Collectivist items	3.51	.99	.55**		
Emphasis on the different aspects of IC (scenario)				.47***	.20***
Vertical scenario	3.89	.95	.59**		
Horizontal scenario	1.89	1.17	.23		
Scenario				.47**	.18**
Vertical scenario	3.89	.98	.59***		
Horizontal scenario	1.90	1.22	.23		
Individualism scenario	-.032	.87	-.004		

** p<.05. ** p<.01.*** p<.001*

Note: For the emphasis on IC (attitude), *df*= (2, 64), for the emphasis on IC (scenario), *df* = (2, 63), for the he emphasis on the different aspects of IC, *df* = (2, 63), and for the last model, *df*= (3, 62).

Hypothesis 4

H4 advances that the woman-demand/man-withdraw pattern will recur more than the man-demand/woman-withdraw pattern. Contrary to the prediction, a *t* test of mean differences failed to find significant differences in respondents' scores, t (222) = 1.54. Therefore, hypothesis H4 was not supported.

Hypothesis 5

H5 posits that the dysfunctional pattern 'demand/withdraw' will be a stronger predictor of the negative effects on relational outcomes than the frequency of serial arguing. The hypothesis was tested using hierarchical regression where the dependent variable was relational outcomes and the independent variables were the amount of demand/withdraw communication as well as the frequency of serial arguing. Preliminary analyses showed that relationship status (terminated, current) had some effect on the relational outcomes, $t_{204} = -7.0$, $p<.001$ in such a way that those who reported on a past relationship were more likely to negatively assess the impact of serial arguing on their relationship than were people reporting on a current relationship. Therefore, relationship status was entered as covariate on the first step.

In the first model, the number of times arguing and demand/withdraw were entered as predictors while relational outcomes as dependent measure. Relationship status alone accounted for 23% of the variance in relational outcomes. After controlling for this variable, the amount of demand/withdraw accounted for about 12% of the variance explained. When added to the model, the frequency of serial arguing did not contribute to the success of the model. As can be seen in Table 10, relational outcomes were positively correlated with the demand/withdraw pattern, $\beta = .33, p<.001$, and relationship status $\beta = .48, p<.001$, but not the frequency of serial arguing.

The second model seeks to examine the effect of the length of time in conflict and demand/withdraw on relational outcomes. Results indicated that relationship status alone accounted for about 15% of the variance in relational outcomes. After controlling for relationship status, the demand/withdraw pattern accounted for about 7.5% of the variance explained. The frequency of serial arguing made the model a poor fit. As reported in Table 10, relational outcomes were positively correlated with demand/withdraw $\beta = .28, p<.05$, and relationship status $\beta = .42, p<.001$. The frequency of serial arguing did not have a significant effect on relational outcomes. Therefore, the last hypothesis predicting that the demand/withdraw pattern will be a better predictor of relational outcomes than the frequency of serial arguing was supported. A summary of the regression analyses is presented in Table 10.

Table 10: Regression Analyses on Relational Outcomes

	B	SE	*β*	*R*	$R^2\ \Delta$
				.60***	33***
Past	2.1	.38	.48***		
Demand/withdraw	.07	.01	.33***		
number of times arguing	.003	.006	.04		
				.47	.18
Past	1.65	.44	.42***		
Demand/withdraw	.05	.02	.28*		
length of time in conflict	-.01	.01	-.05		

** p<.05. ** p<.01.*** p<.001*

N= For the number of times arguing, *df*= (2, 87), For the length of time in conflict, *df*= (1, 62)

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

The study reported in this thesis sought to explore the effects of culture on conflicts in close relationships. More specifically, the research focuses on serial arguing which refers to conflicts that can occur over and over again. While the cross-cultural scholarship does not devote enough room to conflicts occurring in romantic contexts, let alone serial arguing, the Western research on conflict spends little time theorizing on cross-cultural validation. The main purpose of the thesis was to find out whether serial arguing, a concept that originated in the North American culture could be validated cross-culturally. The face-negotiation theory of conflict, which links intercultural dimensions such as individualism and collectivism, high/low-context with face concerns and conflict behaviors, was used to formulate specific hypotheses. To the extent that national cultures are usually heterogeneous with great potential for within-cultural variations, it was deemed more appropriate to work with the multidimensional model of IC rather than the dichotomous notions of individualism and collectivism.

One of the major findings of this thesis is that serial arguing is generalizable to another, divergent culture. The vast majority of respondents experienced conflicts that occurred over and over again. It was also interesting to find out how the same communication patterns that were found to increase the negative effects of arguments on relational quality in American samples turned out to be similarly associated with relational outcomes in the Malagasy sample. Consistent with previous research conducted primarily in the US, the study reported in this thesis suggests that the communication behaviors enacted during and after the discussion of the conflict

issue like the asymmetrical pattern of 'demand/ withdraw', was a better predictor of relational outcomes than the frequency of serial arguing. The results reported in the thesis also highlight the importance of within-cultural variations. Significant differences were found based on the horizontal and the vertical aspects of IC as well as on persons' emphasis on the different dimensions of individualism and collectivism. Table 11 reviews all the predictions and highlight the important findings associated with the current research.

Table 11

Summary of the Significant Findings in the current Study

Effects of culture on serial arguing	Attitude scale	Scenario scale
H1a: Vertical individualism will be positively related to self-demand/partner withdraw	Supported	NS
H1b: Horizontal individualism will be positively related to mutual discussion.	NS	NS
H1c: Horizontal collectivism will be positively related to mutual avoidance.	NS	NS
H1d: Horizontal collectivism will be positively related to mutual discussion.	Supported	NS
RQ1: How will vertical collectivism be related to initiating roles?	NP	NP
H2a: Vertical individualism will be positively related to aggressive and dominating behaviors	Supported for aggressive behaviors	NS
	Supported for dominating	Supported for dominating

* NS: not supported
*NP: not a significant predictor

(*table continues*)

Table 11, continued

Effects of culture on serial arguing	Attitude scale	Scenario scale
H2b: Horizontal individualism will be positively related to compromising behaviors.	Supported	NS
H2c: Horizontal collectivism will be positively related with compromising/solution-oriented behaviors.	Supported	NS
H2d: Horizontal collectivism will be positively related to avoiding styles.	Significant (but wrong direction)	NS
RQ2: How will vertical collectivism be related to coping strategies?	NP	NP
H3: Vertical individualism and horizontal individualism will be more strongly correlated with the frequency of serial arguing than horizontal collectivism	Significant for HI (but wrong direction) NS for VI	NS for HI Supported for VI
RQ3: How will VC be related to serial arguing?	NP	Significant (+)
Gender-related hypothesis		
H4: The woman-demand/man-withdraw pattern will recur more than the man-demand/woman-withdraw pattern.		NS
Effects of communication behaviors on relational outcomes		
H5: Demand-withdraw pattern will be a better predictor of romantic relationships than the frequency of serial arguing		Supported

* NS: not supported
*NP: not a significant predictor

Before commenting on the findings related to individuals' behaviors during serial arguing, I discuss the changes that are taking place in the present-day Malagasy society. The strengths and the limitations of the study are addressed in the following sections. The recommendations for future research are addressed in the last section of the chapter. The thesis wraps up with some conclusions.

Is the Present-day Malagasy Society Uniformly Collectivistic?

The first step of the research was to compute respondents' scores on IC. I checked whether the two scales used to assess IC were valid measurements for the population under study. As reported in Table 4, each scale differentiated between the horizontal and vertical aspects of IC. In line with the predictions, Malagasy people value both individualism and collectivism. A *t* test of mean differences revealed that respondents' scores on all the collectivist items and the individualist items were statistically significant, t (219) = -2.75, $p<.01$. On the attitude scale, the sample seems to be less individualistic (*M = 6.48, SD = 1.28*) than collectivistic (*M = 6.74, SD = 1.12*). Similarly, significant differences were found using the scenario measure, t (220) = -6.82, $p<.001$. The sample seems to display individualism less (*M = 10.75, SD = 2.08*) than collectivism (*M = 12.59, SD = 2.39*).

Why did the sample favor individualism as well as collectivism? This finding is especially puzzling given that past research tends to suggest that Madagascar is a highly collectivistic culture. For instance, Rakotoson and Tanner (2006) noticed that the communal is still more important than the individual in the present-day Malagasy society. They argued that though individuality is not ignored, the group of individuals is the most visible unit. Since, the current thesis is the first empirical study on IC within the Malagasy context, it is not possible to make a meta-analysis and possibly track down when and why changes started to emerge statistically. However, several plausible explanations can be suggested to account for the rise of individualism in the Malagasy culture.

First of all, as it has been suggested by other scholars (e.g. Prittila-Brackman et al., 2004; Sindima, 1990) working on African cultures, changes in persons' values can be associated with the social changes that are currently taking place in Africa. Just like other countries in Africa,

Madagascar had to modernize itself. Many of the traditional values associated with collectivism are in contradiction with Western standards. For example, dependence on one's kinsmen is incompatible with the Western idea of competition, and self-reliance which have been introduced to Malagasy people through education. Second, the elder's authority which used to be largely unquestioned seems to have trouble finding its *raison d'être* in a non clan-based, modern society where the political structures have replaced the elders' councils. Moreover, the solidarity *fihavanana* which traditional society was known for is limited. As Dahl (1999) noted for example, the *havana* relationships which entitled one's blood relatives to use one's personal possessions as their own, can be a hindrance to development.

It could also be argued that once young people leave their native villages, they cannot see their extended families as often as they used to do. Left on their own, they might be tempted to focus on their immediate family. Although urban dwellers might still be attached to their *tanindrazana* native villages, people who are living in the cities, have to gradually adopt their lifestyles to the urban life, and become more self-reliant and even more competitive if they want to survive. Groups (for example, the extended kinship) became less cohesive and have taken a more symbolic meaning. Many urban-dwellers in big cities like Antananarivo attempt to revive the past solidarity by creating associations consisting of people who share the same ancestors, or come from the same village.

All that we said tends to show that the population mobility and economic changes might have led to certain changes in people's socio-cultural values. The question now is whether the rise of values associated with individualism could have led to differences in persons' conflict behaviors.

The Effects of Culture on Behaviors Enacted during Serial Arguing

The different dimensions of IC (VI, HI, VC, and HC) were expected to influence the roles that individuals played during the first encounter as well as the behaviors that they enacted in-between the argumentative episodes.

Initiating Roles

The first set of hypotheses tested the predictive power of the four dimensions of IC (VC, HC, VI, and HI) on argumentative roles during the initial encounter. Contrary to what was hypothesized, there was no positive correlation between horizontal collectivism and mutual avoidance. As can be seen in table 11, neither the attitude scale nor the scenario measurement provided any support for H1b. In addition, results for the attitude scale indicated that the significant variables (HC and VI) increase the likelihood that persons will report engaging in 'mutual discussion' or 'demand/withdraw'. Those findings suggest that when a problem arose in the relationship, respondents were more likely to engage in direct forms of communication rather than mutual avoidance. In line with H1d, horizontal collectivism was positively correlated with mutual discussion. Horizontal collectivism increases the likelihood that individuals will emphasize mutual interests and won't easily submit to authority. Therefore, it makes sense that HC increases the likelihood that persons will confront their romantic partners if they feel that they and their partners need to work out on something to improve the relationship.

As reported in table 11, H1a predicting a positive correlation between vertical individualism and demand/withdraw was supported. In line with the predictions, VI was positively associated with the pattern in which one person attempts to confront their partner who withdraws from the discussion. Vertical individualism was also negatively correlated with mutual discussion. Those findings suggest that though both VI and HC increase the likelihood

that one will bring the conflict issue up, vertical individualism increases the likelihood that one will seek to not only settle the dispute but also win over the disagreement. Such an inference is deeply rooted in vertical individualism's strong focus on self-face over mutual or the other's interests.

Overall, the results reported in this section highlight the importance of within-cultural differences. A particularly intriguing finding is that none of the four predictors examined in the current thesis (HI, VI, HC, and VC) was positively correlated with mutual avoidance. Given that research undertaken under facework tends to show that collectivism increases the likelihood of being in the avoiding role, it is quite puzzling that neither HC nor VC had a significant effect on mutual avoidance. Nonetheless, the study reported in this thesis is consistent with the cross-cultural literature on conflict in close relationships suggesting that when they are in conflict with a romantic partner, individuals from a collectivistic culture might open up for an agreeable solution (Cingöz-Ulu & Lalonde, 2007) instead of just avoiding them. The findings seem to suggest that conflict with a romantic partner, even within a collectivistic orientation might be more 'outcome-oriented' rather than 'process-oriented'. It is quite possible that culture's emphasis on face-saving has more of an impact upon relationships with co-workers than upon romantic partners. For practical reasons, individuals might think that it is much more important to find solution to their problems rather than sparing their romantic partners another embarrassing situation. It is also quite possible that unlike what is advanced in the cross-cultural conflict literature (e.g.: Trubisky, et al. 1991), romantic partners are more concerned about relational power instead of relational compliance when it pertains to their romantic life.

A positive correlation between horizontal collectivism and *mutual discussion* is also compatible with the Malagasy principle of *marimaritra iraisina* or consensus (Randriamasitiana,

2000). For the good of the greatest number of persons, contented parties are expected to always look for the middle ground. Individual weakness in such a culture is associated with the failure to be content with what one can get. Why will somebody strive to get more if getting 'more' requires taking 'some' from their neighbors'? The next set of hypotheses tested the predictive power of cultural orientation during the second phase of conflict. More particularly, the thesis focused on what will predict avoiding, dominating, aggressive and compromising during and after the discussions of conflicts.

Behaviors Enacted During and After the Discussion of a Problem

In line with H2a, vertical individualism had a positive relationship with both dominating and aggressive behaviors. As reported in table 11, VI was positively correlated with dominating behaviors for both the attitude scale and the scenario measurement. In addition, VI increases the likelihood that respondents will resort to aggressive behaviors. Those findings are consistent with theoretical predictions about the vertical aspect of individualism. They highlight a key difference between VI and HI. Though both forms of individualism are compatible with the idea of asserting one's opinions, people scoring high on either vertical individualism or horizontal individualism do differ in the way they express their opinions. Unlike horizontal individualism which increases the likelihood of favoring dialogue and exchange of ideas, vertical individualism seems to increase the likelihood that individuals will be primarily concerned about having their needs attended to. In trying to get their points straight, people scoring high on VI are more likely to resort to persuasive means other than simple verbal interactions. As predicted HI, which emphasizes equality, was positively associated with compromising behaviors (see Table 11) rather than dominating styles. And so did horizontal collectivism which was positively correlated

with compromising on the two scales and negatively correlated with dominating and aggressive behaviors.

Contrary to the predicted positive relationship between horizontal collectivism and avoiding behaviors, results reported in Table 11 suggest that horizontal collectivism decreases the likelihood that persons will engage in avoiding behaviors. Likewise, horizontal individualism was negatively correlated with avoiding. Those two cultural orientations were the only variables that could predict compromising. Therefore, hypothesis H2d predicting a positive relationship between HC and avoiding was not supported. Interestingly enough, avoiding was positively correlated with vertical individualism on both scales. As a reminder, VI focuses strongly on self-interests over the other's needs while avoiding is associated with a low concern for self and a low concern for others. Though consistent with Kwantes and Kaushal's research (2006), this finding is particularly intriguing. Why would somebody who is very much concerned about their own goals withdraw from the conflict or turn to a third-party instead of resolving the conflict issue? As a reminder, one of the three items composing the avoiding subscale states that persons will seek support from a friend or a family member. The 'third-party' item might partly explain the positive correlation between avoiding and VI. In the Cingöz-Ulu and Lalonde's study (2007), Canadians resorted to 'third-party' more often in their romantic relationships than their friendships while no significant differences were found among the Turkish sample. Moreover, Canadians gave in significantly more to their romantic partners than to their same-sex friends, while the Turks did not differ in how much they gave in to their romantic partners and same-sex friends. Assuming that 'third-party' and 'giving in' are key features of conflicts occurring in romantic relationships within an individualistic orientation, further research needs to be done in

order to understand why only vertical individualism was positively linked with avoiding. Why didn't HI predict avoiding as well?

The results reported in the second section tend to show while some people might handle the initial encounter and typical argumentative episodes differently, others are pretty consistent in their conflict behaviors. For example, horizontal individualism didn't either increase or decrease the likelihood that one will initiate a serial arguing. However, once they are confronted by their partners, people scoring high on HI might not repeat the same pattern of behaviors. As reported in Table 11, HI was positively correlated with mutual discussion. Unlike vertical individualism which increases the likelihood that persons will not hesitate to resort to aggressive and dominating behaviors, horizontal individualism increases the likelihood that one will work out for a solution with their partners.

Horizontal collectivism which increased the likelihood of being in the initiating role also predicted the likelihood of using compromising style during and after the discussion of a conflict issue (see Table 11). This trend only reinforces the idea that conflict with a romantic partner within a collectivistic orientation (HC) may be more 'outcome-oriented' than 'process-oriented'. When a problem arises in the relationship, one prefers to handle the conflict in the most effective way, by working together to find a solution to the problem, instead of avoiding talking about the issue. The findings reported in this thesis, suggest that in romantic relationships, effective and appropriate ways of handling conflicts definitely include compromising tactics.

Another significant finding is related to the greater role played by the emphasis on the aspect of IC (the horizontal or vertical aspect) instead of the focus on either individualism or collectivism. Contrary to what happened in the first phase of conflict where culture's emphasis on either dimension (individualism, or collectivism) seemed to be the best predictor of

argumentative roles, an emphasis on the horizontal versus vertical aspects of IC seemed to be a stronger predictor of conflict patterns during and after the discussions of the problem. For example, both horizontal forms of individualism and collectivism (HI, and HC) predicted compromising and were negatively correlated with avoiding, dominating, and aggressive behaviors while VI, to dominating and avoiding behaviors (see Table 11).

Frequency of Serial Arguing

Information about the frequency of serial arguing was gathered with two different items: (1) 'How many times did you argue?' and (2) 'How long were you in conflict'. Both forms of individualism (HI and VI) were expected to be a stronger predictor of serial arguing than horizontal collectivism. A research question was formulated for vertical collectivism. No significant result was found with the number of times arguing. For length of conflict, results suggested mixed support. On the scenario scale, vertical individualism and vertical collectivism were both positively correlated with the frequency of serial arguing. Vertical collectivism was a stronger predictor of the frequency of serial arguing. For the attitude scale, horizontal individualism was negatively correlated with the frequency of serial arguing. The vertical aspect of cultural dimension which values hierarchy seems to be the most relevant component of culture here. Interestingly enough, when the four scores computed from all the collectivist and the individualist items as well as the vertical and horizontal aspects of IC are entered in one model, only the vertical aspect of IC predicted the frequency of serial arguing.

Gender-linked Hypothesis

In line with past literature, the woman demand/man withdraw pattern was expected to recur more than the man demand/woman withdraw. The current study didn't provide further support for that hypothesis. Malagasy women were not significantly more demanding than men.

It may be that the level of patriarchy is the most relevant component of culture in terms of explaining differences in demand-withdraw pattern within romantic relationships in Madagascar. Despite the rise of individualism and the Westernization of part of the Malagasy society, changes seem to come slower on gender equality. Many women might be still subject to the goodwill of the men in their families. Women are still confined to the traditional roles such as bringing up children. Working mothers still do the bulk of household chores. Actually, some of the topics raised by women in the current study are related to unequal labor divisions. Though women have a lot to complain about, their overall lack of relational power in romantic relationships as well as the undisputed leading roles of men as head of the family decreases the likelihood that they will pressure or demand that their partners change their behaviors. The next section discusses the results on the negative effects of serial arguing on relational outcomes.

Relational Outcomes

In line with past research conducted primarily in the US, the dysfunctional pattern of demand/withdraw was expected to have a more significant effect on relational outcomes than the frequency of serial arguing. Results suggested that the total amount of demand-withdraw pattern was indeed a better predictor of relational outcomes than the frequency of serial arguing. When added to the model, the frequency of serial arguing did not contribute to the success of the model and even made it non-significant. The findings reported in the current study are consistent with past research suggesting that demand/withdraw behaviors might erode one's perceptions of resolvability, which could increase the likelihood that serial arguing will affect relational life (Johnson & Roloff, 2000, Malis & Roloff, 2006). Such a destructive communication pattern, scholars argue, is a better predictor of relational outcomes than the mere frequency of disagreements. The findings reported in this thesis are also consistent with other cross-cultural

research (e.g. Christensen et al, 2006) suggesting that destructive behaviors like demand/withdraw negatively impact relationships. The next section provides a general discussion of the findings.

General Discussion

Overall, results reported in the current thesis were consistent with research on serial arguing conducted primarily in the US as well as conflict in close relationships in the cross-cultural field. Consistent with previous findings on serial arguing, the study reported in this thesis suggests that the behaviors enacted during and after the conflictual episodes are better predictors of relational outcomes than the mere frequency of serial arguing. Moreover, it seems as though serial arguing is generalizable cross-culturally, at least in the Malagasy culture.

The current thesis also has some theoretical implications in regards to cross-cultural conflict. The study can offer more insights on how relational conflicts are handled cross-culturally. As stated in the literature review, the limited research on dating and marital interactions is in contradiction with past literature on conflict that is mainly based on conflicts occurring in non-romantic contexts. Collectivism used to be more strongly associated with obliging and avoiding while individualism with confrontational and other direct forms of behaviors. However, the Turkish and Indonesian participants in the Cingoz-Ulu and Lalonde (2007) and Haar and Krahé's studies (1999), for example, reported using a wide range of conflict behaviors that include persuasion, and opening up for an agreeable solution when handling conflict with a peer or a romantic partner. The study reported in this thesis is consistent with their research. For example, horizontal collectivism (one form of collectivism) was positively correlated with *mutual discussion* which involves direct forms of communication. Another form of collectivism, vertical collectivism increases the likelihood that somebody will engage in serial

arguing. Moreover, horizontal collectivism was never positively correlated with *mutual avoidance*.

What can we make of those findings? Does the influence of culture on conflict behaviors really diminishes when those behaviors are contextualized within close relationships rather than when they are not contextualized at all (Cingoz-Ulu & Lalonde, 2007). Nothing is sure. Though some of the correlations did not go in the directions predicted by facework, some significant differences were found based on the horizontal and the vertical aspects of IC as well as on persons' emphasis on the different dimensions of individualism and collectivism. Vertical individualism, in particular, proved to be a powerful predictor of behaviors enacted during serial arguing. Based on theoretical predictions, VI was expected to be positively correlated with dominating, aggressive and demand/withdraw communication patterns. Results for the attitude scale provided support for all those hypotheses (see Table 11). Dominating was positively correlated with VI for both the attitude scale and the scenario measurement. Vertical individualism was also found to be negatively correlated with mutual discussion while horizontal collectivism increases the likelihood that partners will engage in mutual discussion. Undoubtedly, culture has some predictive power on behaviors enacted during serial arguing. Nevertheless, it is still unclear why no positive relationship was found between HC and mutual avoidance.

It is also worth being noted that the research undertaken under facework is based mostly on non-romantic or no relational contexts specified (Cingoz-Ulu & Lalonde, 2007). That situation can partly explain the failure to find a positive relationship between horizontal collectivism and mutual avoidance in the current study. However, if relational context is indeed the primary factor in conflict resolution, further studies might want to identify the conditions and

the reasons why people handle relational conflicts and work conflicts similarly or differently. Comparing the way different national cultures handle conflicts within organizational settings and close relationships might be a good starting point.

A second plausible explanation for the findings reported in this thesis is related to the way interpersonal relationships are viewed within the collectivistic and individualistic perspectives. It could be argued that when people from traditionally 'highly collectivistic' cultures espouse ideas and values associated with individualism; they come to view social relationships in a different light. For example, HI was positively correlated with mutual discussion and negatively correlated with avoiding. Thus, when a problem arises in the relationship, HI increases the likelihood that both partners will engage in direct forms of communication and address the conflict issue. This behavior is deeply rooted in individualism's focus on a strong assertion of personal opinion. A desire to work out for a solution, however, does not necessarily imply that one will engage in repeated conflicts. As reported in Table 11, HI was negatively correlated with the frequency of serial arguing. The more the extended group system becomes less cohesive, the more likely individuals will value romantic bonds. It could be that as people are living far from their native villages, their romantic relationship becomes the primary provider of emotional support. And all the more so as romantic relationships like marriage are generally formed on a voluntary basis in Madagascar (Rakotoson & Tanner, 2006). Therefore, individuals might be more committed to maintaining those even if they have to yield to the partner's wishes and terminate the conflict.

Another interesting trend that is worth being explored is the emphasis on the vertical or horizontal aspect of IC. It is noticeable how much VI influenced respondents' conflict patterns. As reported in Table 11, not only did VI predict persons' initiating roles and the behaviors that

they enacted during serial arguing but it also influenced the frequency of serial arguing. Only VI could positively predict the behaviors individuals enact during the first, the second and third phase of the conflict as well as the likelihood that persons will engage in repeated conflicts. Moreover, VI was the only variable that could predict the same behaviors for both the attitude scale and scenario measurement (see Table 11).

The values associated with VI such as individual competition or ambition are so counter-intuitive of Malagasy traditional values that it is not clear how could vertical individualism become such a powerful predictor of Malagasy people's conflict behaviors? The English word 'ambition' doesn't even have a Malagasy equivalent. Therefore, such a value is not among those that young people grow up with. Or it could be that Malagasy people who highly valued VC picked vertical individualism without being aware of it? As a reminder VI views the self as independent while VC as interdependent. However, both VI and VC value hierarchy and view people as different. In a vertical collectivistic culture, some are born into a higher caste, or a better socio-economic class while others aren't. As traditional classifications are rigid, it is impossible for the average man to change his status. One can only hope for a social mobility if one espouses the Western values of competition, and try to be the best in school, or in their work. It is possible that the present-day Malagasy society has thoroughly integrated the notion of merit based on personal achievements. Within that perspective, it makes sense that vertical individualism has more influence on people's behaviors than the other three predictors (HI, HC, and VC). This is consistent with Prittila-Brackman (2004) who noticed that in her focus group, students in Cameroon clearly referred more to vertical individualism than horizontal individualism. Perhaps, it will be effective to focus more on the emphasis on the vertical or horizontal aspects of IC when looking at individual differences in conflict behaviors.

It is hard to reconcile past inconsistencies in the conflict literature with just one study. However, the current thesis questions the commonly held assumption about the positive relationship between 'collectivistic' orientation and avoiding behaviors. In romantic relationships, collectivism just doesn't predict mutual avoidance. While the study reported in this thesis raised more issues than it answered questions, the findings highlighted the role that individuals' cultural orientations play in serial arguing and conflict behaviors in general. The thesis provided some interesting observation to this regard. It is possible that the members of the 'collectivistic' samples who displayed dominating styles in past research were actually vertical individualists or vertical collectivists and those who chose solution-oriented, horizontal individualists or horizontal collectivists. Continuing efforts are needed to better clarify the role of each dimension of IC on individuals' behaviors during serial arguing. Replicating research on serial arguing will enhance scholars' understanding of the *real* effects of cultural backgrounds as well as gender culture on conflict behaviors. In the following sections, I will address the limitations of the current study and what else can be done in the future.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Limitations of the study include the composition of the sample, the translation procedure as well as the measurements used to assess people's cultural orientations. Members of the Diaspora made up a little less than one fifth of the sample. It is possible that they are not representative of the Diasporas in France, Canada and the US. Besides, no comparison was made between members of the Diasporas and the sample from Madagascar because of unequal sample size. Therefore, it is not certain whether the change such as migration had a real effect on conflict behaviors. Moreover, as I had to rely on convenience sample, it is possible that the respondents were not representative of the Malagasy elite, let alone the Malagasy population in

Madagascar. Randriamasitiana (2000) noticed that though some parts of the Malagasy population are becoming more receptive towards the Western culture, and had adopted some of their lifestyles, and values, the majority of the Malagasy people haven't given up their traditional practices. The sample doesn't include any of those, most of whom are agricultural farmers living in remote areas of the country.

Secondly, since translations are never perfect, it is possible that some of the respondents who completed the questionnaires in Malagasy or French did not understand the concept of serial arguing well. As I did not collect the data myself, respondents had no way to ask for further information. For instance, when asked to give the number of times that they engaged in conflict interactions, 11 people reported that they engaged in conflict only once while they also acknowledged that the conflict issue went on for some months. Obviously, they didn't really understand the definition of serial arguing. Even more importantly, persons' failure to recall a conflict that occurred more than once can be related to their discomfort with the idea of having experienced unresolved conflict encounters. For instance, one participant stressed that although she argued with her partner quite often, she eventually found a solution to the conflict issue. Such a pattern might suggest that though the great majority of respondents understood what a serial arguing is, other Malagasy people might have a negative view of conflict, and especially repeated conflicts. Fighting with somebody once is bad enough. Nobody wants to be known as a 'chronic' fighter. Moreover, as translations usually fail to capture the richer cultural sense of idioms and phrases, it is quite possible that the differences observed in the thesis resulted more from linguistic misunderstanding than real cultural differences in conflict behaviors.

Third, I deliberately chose to not collect information on people's caste and religion because those issues are very sensitive. Yet, there is enough evidence showing how important

religiosity is in persons' life. It is not unreasonable to expect respondents and Malagasy women in particular, to accommodate to their partners' wishes because their religion is telling them that it is not respectful to openly disagree with their husband or their romantic partner. It is also possible that some women let their husband adopt aggressive or dominating styles because the latter make more money than they do or are from a higher family lineage or caste.

The extent to which family lineage and caste still influence romantic relationships is very interesting but largely unexplored territory. The caste system was abolished a century ago when France colonized Madagascar. It is illegal to discriminate people on the grounds of their caste. However, to the extent that marriage is still considered as an alliance between families rather than union between two persons (Rakotoson & Tanner, 2006), it is legitimate to ask whether caste doesn't have some effect on romantic life and conflict styles. Some of those who took part in the current study actually reported that the serial arguing was due to the differences in caste and family lineage between them and their partners. Those individuals reported that their partners refused to give up their own practices which caused them to argue very often. Any further studies that attempt to examine the effects of culture on serial arguing in the Malagasy context might make extra efforts to design carefully-written questions intended to require about people's caste and origin.

Also, it will be very interesting to look in-depth into the topics and goals that people have in mind when they initiate a serial arguing. Research conducted primarily in the US (e.g.: Bevan, Hale, and Williams, 2004) showed that persons' goals when engaging in a serial argument are as important as the communication patterns enacted during argumentative episodes. Bevan, Hale and Williams (2004) reported that initiators' goals can be either positive or negative. Enacting constructive or destructive communication patterns depends on whether the initiator is pursuing

either type of goals. Partners pursuing negative goals are more likely to use negative communication strategies, such as avoidance, when they pursue negative goals. Also, a greater understanding of a partner's goals could help reduce the frequency of argumentative episodes and possibly could resolve the argument completely. Linking individuals' goals with the different dimensions of IC might help intercultural scholars better capture the nuances between horizontal collectivism and horizontal individualism. Though HI and HC could both predict mutual discussion, it is not unreasonable to expect, based on theoretical considerations, that the goals pursued by horizontal collectivists and horizontal individualists when they engage in serial arguing are quite different.

Another limitation of the study concerns the measurement tools used to assess people's dominant cultural orientations. Though I believe that the multidimensional model of IC offers a more efficient way to capture within-cultural variations, recent research has recognized the limitations of those tools. Significant findings did result but the current study did not achieve high reliabilities as was the case in previous research (e.g.: Lee & Choi, 2005; Prittil-Brickman, 2004, Triandis et al., 1995, 1998). In an effort to maximize the validity of their tools, researchers might use more than one scale. The current study used two methods – the attitude scale and the scenario measurement. It seems as though the attitude scale was more productive.

As reported in Table 11, the scenario measurement yielded significant results for only H2a, H3 and RQ3. The attitude scale, however, provided support for 5 hypotheses. In addition, the attitude scale yielded significant results (though the correlations did not go in the expected directions) for H2d and H3. This is quite surprising since past research (e.g.: Peng et. al, 1997) tends to show that scenario measurements have a stronger validity than any other scales like the attitude scales. It is possible that the majority of the sample did not relate well with the different

situations used in the scenario measurement such as the second scenario. The second scenario asks respondent what will motivate their choice when buying a piece of art for their office.

About 50.5% of the sample didn't either finish elementary school, or graduate from secondary school. In addition, about 8% of the respondents have been to college for two or less years. Therefore, the chance that half of the sample could be white collar workers is quite small. It is not unreasonable to assume that the vast majority of respondents have never bought a piece of art for *their own* office. In addition, white collar workers might rather spend money on food than a piece of art. Therefore, when completing the second scenario, respondents might just not relate to that situation.

As reported in the method section, the attitude scale and the scenario measurement didn't have a great convergent validity either. As reported in Table 11, both scales provided support for only H2a. Dominating behaviors were positively correlated with VI for both the attitude scale and the scenario measurement. Failure to achieve a good validity, however, is not specific to this research work and is even a recognized problem in the cross-cultural scholarship. When cross-cultural researchers try to validate a scale cross-culturally, they ask the populations under study to complete measurement tools that have been constructed in a different culture. The more different the cultures, Triandis argued (as quoted by Fiske, 2002), the less valid are measurements requiring reflective self-report. What a Chinese or an American person considers collectivistic or individualistic might be quite different from what a Malagasy person views as collectivistic or individualistic. Moreover, as Fiske rightly pointed at (2002), individuals don't answer questions in an absolute framework. Rather, different samples will refer to framework relative to their culturally organized experience when completing the questionnaires. Such a situation could result in extreme or atypical responses (Fiske, 2002).

Except for the relational outcomes subscale which was found to have an excellent reliability, $\alpha = .94$, none of the subscale used (CPQ, IC scales) in the current study displayed a strong internal consistency. The demand/withdraw communication scales, for example didn't achieve a high reliability similar to those reported in Christensen et al (2006). However, the lowest alpha .53 for woman demand/man withdraw is higher than the lowest reported in the above-cited study. Another plausible explanation for the low reliabilities of the scales used in the study might be related to the fact the population under study is not used to making self-assessment of their relationships. While completing a serial arguing questionnaire might be a routine for an American college student, it is can be quite a challenging task for a Malagasy person.

Continuing efforts should be carried out to replicate this type of research in order to eventually invent a method that is quite appropriate for the Malagasy population. Until a satisfactory measurement is available, another alternative is to differentiate between the self at the personal, cultural idealistic and cultural behavior levels (Mpofu, 1994). In a survey conducted in Zimbabwe, Mpofu (1994) noticed that people were more individualist than collectivist or moralist in their free self-descriptions while the collectivist and moral aspects were given more emphasis on the cultural-idealistic and cultural-behavioral levels. It could be that respondents in the current study referred more to their free self-description when they were asked to complete the cultural and conflict measurement tools. If respondents did refer to their personal self instead of the cultural-behavioral level, it makes sense that mutual avoidance wouldn't be linked to HC. In the same study, Mpofu (1994) noticed that women were more collectivist and moralist than men in their orientations at the cultural idealistic level. If Malagasy women were referring to their cultural idealistic self instead of their free self description, then it makes sense

that the current study failed to replicate findings suggesting that women were more demanding than men during conflict encounters. Indeed, it stands to reason to assume that some women could have thought that nagging their romantic partner is not quite appropriate. Also, when translated into Malagasy, terms like 'demand', or 'pressure' take on a very strong connotation, decreasing the likelihood that a woman could possibly engage in such a behavior (due to their lack of relational power). Likewise, it is quite possible that translation procedures made the items (1) 'man expresses his feeling while woman offers reasons and solutions', and (2) 'woman expresses feeling while man offers reasons and solutions' load on the first factor.

However, those limitations do not decrease the significance of the research. The current study represents the first cross-cultural replication of research on serial arguing. Results indicate that serial arguing, a concept that originated in the American culture, is generalizable to another, divergent culture. Malagasy romantic partners did experienced conflicts that occurred over and over again. Within the cross-cultural conflict literature, most studies have examined persons' conflict behaviors in non-romantic contexts. The study reported in this thesis is among the few cross-cultural studies that focus exclusively on romantic couples. More specifically, the thesis represents the first empirical study looking at Malagasy couples' communication behaviors during conflicts. Though Dahl's (1999) research offered invaluable insights on Malagasy communication behaviors, the extent to which Malagasy couples actually use different patterns of behaviors in romantic conflicts haven't been explored in past research.

Unlike most convenience samples used in research on serial arguing, the sample was more diverse in regard to socio-demographic variables (see Table 1). The respondents were recruited in church choirs, hairdressers' salons and even grocery stores. It goes without saying that collecting data from that kind of sample, which is quite unique in its own right, was quite

difficult. Getting highly educated people to complete a questionnaire focusing on their relationships is hard enough. As Dahl (1999) rightly reported, one doesn't show his molars to strangers. Some Malagasy people are usually reluctant to give away information pertaining to their *own* relationships even though it is made clear to them that information will be treated confidentially. With all those in mind, extra-efforts were made to establish a kind of trust between the respondents and those who collected the data. It was very important to have somebody who knew the respondents talk to them directly about the significance of the project for the Malagasy culture. On the whole, the project received a warm welcoming from people who was kind enough to participate in the project though no compensation was offered.

Based on the findings, though only correlational, I can say that the first cross-cultural replication of serial arguing was successful, thus offering a cross-cultural validation of this cultural phenomenon, and providing further support for the cross-cultural applications of such instruments like the CPQ, and the IC scales.

Because of time limitations, I did not exploit the data in-depth. I had to focus exclusively on three main areas. However, I believe that those three areas had to be addressed in a 'pioneer' work. Later, I plan on collecting data across cultures and addressing the other issues that were not covered in the current study. I might look at intercultural couples as well. I also believe that examining couples' conflict issues and how those issues expand will add to the body of knowledge about serial arguments. The thesis wraps up with the conclusion.

Conclusions

This thesis sought to fill a lacuna in serial arguing by replicating research done in the US culture on a non-Western culture, the Malagasy culture. More specifically, the thesis argues that serial arguing is generalizable across cultures. The Malagasy culture is slightly more

collectivistic than individualistic but regardless of their cultural orientation, Malagasy romantic partners did experienced conflicts that occurred over and over again. Cultures' emphasis on collectivism or individualism does not have as a great impact as generally assumed in regards to the frequency of relational conflicts. Instead, the findings reported in the study tend to suggest that looking at the vertical and horizontal aspect would be much more useful when it comes to serial arguing, and the different behaviors enacted during and after the discussion of a conflict issue like aggressive and dominating behaviors. Although not all predictions were supported, I believe that key questions became more focused as a result of this thesis. The ideas that were generated, and the issues that were raised will hopefully help and guide future research in this area.

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APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORM

I, _____, agree to participate in a research study titled "a cross-cultural approach of serial arguing in dating relationship: case of Malagasy romantic partners" conducted by Marie Louise RADANIELINA HITA at the University of Georgia (706-542-4893*)* under the direction of Dr. Jerold HALE, Advisor, Department of Speech Communication, University of Georgia (706-542-4893*)*. I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can refuse to participate or stop taking part without giving any reason, and without penalty. I can ask to have all of the information about me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The study is a replication of research on serial or repetitive arguments in personal relationships. The replication is a cross cultural one to determine whether research findings from American samples are robust across cultures.

If I volunteer to take part in this study, I will be asked to do the following things:
Answer questions about my status, my couple, and give information about a serial argument that has occurred with my current/former partner. IT WILL TAKE ME AN HOUR OR LESS TO COMPLETE THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

The benefits for me are that the study may help me understand and improve my communication patterns. The researcher also hopes to learn more about the cultural differences that may influence the structure and content of serial arguments.

No risk is expected during the study.

No individually-identifiable information about me, or provided by me during the research, will be shared with others without my written permission unless required by law. All responses will remain confidential.

The investigator will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project.

I understand that I am agreeing by my signature on this form to take part in this research project and understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

_____ _____ _____

Name of Researcher Signature Date

Telephone: _____
Email: _____

_____ _____

Name of Participant Signature Date

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu

APPENDIX B

DEBRIEFING FORM

Thank you very much for participating in our study of ongoing conflict in personal relationships. Your responses will be evry valuable in examining the impact ongoing conflict has on personal relationships. Specifically, you have helped us to examine the goals relational partners have when engaging in conflict that is unresolved, the ways in which relational partners actually engage in conflict with one another, and how both of these are related to one's level of relational satisfaction.

Specifically, this study is designed to examine the relationship between an individual's goal when engaging in an ongoing conflict with a relational partner, his or her level of relational satisfaction, and the communication strategies used when in that conflict episode. A more formal term for ongoing conflict is 'serial argument', which is defined as an unresolved conflict about one topic that takes place across multiple instances. Recent research has identified the following ten goals for relational partners taking part in serial arguments: (1) mutual understanding/resolution, (2) fighting to fight, (3) relational progression/continuation, (4) dominance/control, (5) expressiveness positive, (6) expressiveness negative, (7) win at all costs, (8) self/personal benefit, (9) derogate partner, and (10) change target. The goal of the present study is to develop and test items that measure these ten goals and identify possible relationships between these ten goals and level of relational, and exactly how one communicates during a serial argument. To do this, we asked one group of participants to consider their own goals in a serial argument, and another group to consider the goals they perceive that their relational partners have during serial arguments. We anticipate that the goals that more positive and beneficial to the relationship will be associated with higher levels of relational satisfaction and positive conflict strategies.

This study had another important aim. To date all studies of serial arguments have been conducted on respondents from the United States. We want to see how robust a phenomenon is serial arguing. We know there are differences between African, European, and North American cultures with regard to conflict and conflict resolution. This study has important implications for learning more about those cultural differences because we can compare the results of other serial arguing studies.

Overall, it is important to look at the above two groups so that research on conflict in romantic relationships can be applied to as many people as possible. We thank you again for your help in completing the research. We welcome your comments and suggestions, so please feel free to contact us anytime. In addition, please let us know if you would like a copy of the results when they are available.

Marie Louise Radanielina-Hita (hita@uga.edu)
Jerold Hale

APPENDIX C

ATTITUDE SCALE

Attitude scales

Next we ask you to rate the following statements with a scale of one to nine, where **1=never/definitely not** and **9=always/definetely yes**.
You can use all numbers between 1 (total disagreement) and 9 (total agreement) according to your opinion or level of agreement.

If you totally disagree with the statement, circle 1; if you totally agree with the statement, circle 9

My happiness depends very much on the happiness of those around me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Winning is everything	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I usually sacrifice my self-interest to the benefit of my group	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
It annoys me when other people perform better than I do	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
It is important to maintain harmony within my group	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
It is important that I do my job better than others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I like sharing little things with my neighbors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I enjoy working in situations involving competition with others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
The well-being of my coworkers is important to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I often do “my own thing”	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
If a relative were in financial difficulty, I would help within my means	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Competition is the law of nature	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
If a coworker/student gets a price, I would feel proud	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Being a unique individual is important to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
To me, pleasure is spending time with others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
When another person does better than I do, I get tense and aroused	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Children should be taught to place duty before pleasure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Without competition, it is not possible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

to have a good society									
I feel good when I co-operate with others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Some people emphasize winning: I'm not one of them	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
It is important to me that I respect decisions made by my groups	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I rather depend on myself than on others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Family members should stick together, no matter what sacrifices are required	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I rely on myself most of the time; I rarely rely on others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Parents and children must stay together, as much as possible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
My personal identity independent from others is very important to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
It is my duty to take care of my family, even when I have to sacrifice what I want	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
My personal identity is very important to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I am a unique person, separate from others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I respect the majority's wishes in groups of which I am a member	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I enjoy being unique and different from others in many ways	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
It is important to consult close friends and get their ideas before making a decision	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

APPENDIX D

SCENARIO SCALE

In the following we present several situations. Each situation is followed by four options. Please imagine yourself in those situations and rank the options, by placing **1** next to the option that you personally consider the **best** or **"most right"** or **"appropriate for you",** and write **2** next to the option that would be the **"second best**".
Do not bother to rank the remaining two options. Remember there are no "correct" answers, just your opinion of what is best. Always select two (02) options

1. You and your friends decided spontaneously to go out to dinner at restaurant. What do you think is the best way to handle the bill? And what would be the second best way to handle the bill?

[_] Split it equally, without regard to who ordered what
[_] Split it according to how much each person makes
[_] The group leader pays the bill or decides how to split it
[_] Compute each person's charge according to what the person ordered

2. You are buying a piece of art for your office. Which one factor is most important in deciding whether to buy it? And what would be the second most important factor?

[_] It is a good investment
[_] Your co-workers will like it
[_] You just like it
[_] Your supervisor will approve of it

3. Suppose you had to use a word to describe yourself. Which one would you use? And which would be the second best word to describe you?

[_] Unique
[_] Competitive
[_] Co-operative
[_] Dutiful

4. How does one attain happiness? And what is a second way to attain happiness?

[_] gaining a lot of status in the community
[_] linking with a lot of friendly people
[_] keeping one's privacy
[_] winning in competitions

5. You are planning to take a major trip that is likely to inconvenience a lot of people at your place of work during your absence. With whom—if anyone-- will you discuss it, before deciding whether or not to take it? And with whom else—if anyone?

[_] no one
[_] my parents
[_] my spouse or close friend
[_] experts about the place I plan to travel to so I can decide whether I want to go

6. Which one of these four books appears to you to be the most interesting? And which is the second-most interesting?
[_] "How to Make Friends"
[_] "How to Succeed in Business"
[_] "How to Enjoy Yourself Inexpensively"
[_] "How to Make Sure You are Meeting Your Obligations"

7. Which should be the most important factor in an employee's promotion, assuming that all other factors such as tenure and performance are equal? And which should be the second most important factor?
[_] Loyalty to the corporation
[_] Obedience to the instructions from management
[_] Ability to think for him- or herself
[_] Contributed to the corporation much in the past

8. When you buy clothing for a major social event, which is the most important factor that you will consider in choosing the style? And which should be the second most important factor?
[_] you like it
[_] your parents like it
[_] your friends like it
[_] it is so elegant that it will dazzle everyone

9. In your opinion, in an ideal society the national budgets will be determined so that
[_] all people have adequate incomes to meet basic needs
[_] some people will be rewarded for making brilliant contributions
[_] there will be a maximal stability, law and order
[_] people can feel unique and self-actualized

10. When people ask me about myself, I
[_] talk about my ancestors and their traditions
[_] talk about my friends and what we like to do
[_] talk about my accomplishments
[_] talk about what makes me unique

11. Suppose your fiancé(e) and your parents do not get along very well. What would you do?
[_] Nothing
[_] Tell my fiancé(e) that I need my parents' financial support and he or she should learn to handle the politics
[_] Tell my fiancé(e) that he or she should make a greater effort to "fit in the family"
[_] Remind my fiancé(e) that my parents and my family are very important to me and he or she should submit to their wishes

12. Teams of five people entered a science project contest. Your team won first place and a price of $100. You and another person did 95% of the work on this project. How should the money be distributed?
[_] Split it equally, without regard to who did what
[_] The other person and I get 95% of the money and the rest goes to the group
[_] The group leader decides how to split the money
[_] Divide the money the way that gives me the most satisfaction

13. Imagine you are selecting a band for a fund-raising event given by your organization. Which are the most important factors in making your decision?

[_] I really like the band
[_] My friends approve of this band
[_] The administration of my organization approves of the band
[_] The band will draw a large crowd

14. You need to choose one more class for next semester. Which one will you select?

[_] The one that will help me get ahead of everyone else
[_] The one my parents said to take
[_] The one my friends plan to take
[_] The one that seems most interesting to me

15. You are at a bakery with a group of friends. How should you decide what kind of pastry to order?

[_] The leader of the group orders for everyone
[_] I order what I like
[_] We select the pastry that most people prefer
[_] We order the most extravagant pastry available

16. Which candidate will you vote for in the election for the President of the student government?

[_] The one your friends are voting for
[_] The one I like best
[_] The one who will reward me personally
[_] The one who is a member of an organization important to me. The status of the organization will improve if that candidate is elected

APPENDIX E

SERIAL ARGUING QUESTIONNAIRE (REVISED)

We are interested in how people communicate when they and a partner are involved in a serial argument. Oftentimes people in romantic relationships will argue about the same subject many times. A serial argument exists when individuals argue or engage in conflict about the same topic over time during which they participate in several (at least two) arguments about that topic.

In this questionnaire, we would like you to recall ONE PARTICULAR SERIAL ARGUMENT which occurred with your current or a prior relational partner. It would be most helpful if you could recall a serial argument that occurred in a dating relationship but if you cannot, you can report on one that occurred in a friendship. If you have any questions about this questionnaire or the definition of a serial argument, please ask.

All responses will remain confidential. Do not put any identifying marks on the questionnaire (name. social security number, etc.). In responding to the questions, do not use your name or any other person's name. All responses will be translated into numbers and the questionnaire will then be destroyed. If at any time you wish to stop participating in the study, let the person who gave you the questionnaire know and your questionnaire will be destroyed.

Please think about a current or previous relationship in which you were involved and in which a serial argument occurred, and then answer the following.

Please check one in each of the following:

1. I will answer the following questions about ... .

____ _ a dating relationship.

_____ a friendship

2. The relationship in which the serial argument occurred …

_____ currently exists.

_____ _ has ended.

Next, we would like some information about you and the relationship about which you will be reporting. To answer the following questions. place a check next to the appropriate response. Fill in the blank or circle the number that best corresponds with your answer.

1. How long have you been (or were you) in this relationship with your partner?

_____ Less than a month
_____ 1 to 6 months
_____ 7 to 11months
_____ 1 to 2 years
_____ 3 to 5 years
_____ More than 5 years

2. How often do you see each other?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Rarely					All the Time

3. Which of the following statements best describes your dating relationship or partner'? (CHECK ONE)

_____ A friend.
_____ Someone you date occasionally, but to whom you are not emotionally attached.
_____ Someone you date often, but to whom you are not emotionally attached.
_____ Someone to whom you are emotionally attached, but with whom you are not in love.
_____ Someone with whom you are in love.
_____ Someone with whom you are in love and would like to marry, but with whom you have never discussed marriage.
_____ Someone with whom you are in love and have discussed marriage, but have made no plans.
_____ Someone with whom you are engaged to marry.

4. How much longer do you want your relationship with your partner to last?

A Month Or less	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Ten or More Years

5. How committed do you feel to maintaining your relationship with your partner?

Not at All Committed	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Completely Committed

6. How likely do you think it is that your relationship with your partner will end in the near future?

Not at All Likely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Extremely Likely

7. How likely do you think it is that you will start a relationship with someone else within the next year?

Not at All Likely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Extremely Likely

8. How satisfied are you with your relationship?

Extremely Dissatisfied	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Extremely Satisfied

9. How happy are you with your relationship?

Extremely Unhappy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Extremely Happy

10. To what extent are you attracted to your partner?

Not at All Attracted	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Very Attracted

11. Please indicate how well the next set of statements describe your feelings. Use the following 9-point scale:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Not at all True Disagree Completely					Neutral					Definitely 'True Agree Completely

12. PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT REST CORRESPONDS WITH YOUR CHOICE.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	I feel that I can confide in my partner about virtually everything.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	I would do almost anything for my partner.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	If I could never be with my partner. I would feel miserable.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	If I were lonely, my first thought would be to seek my partner out.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	One of my primary concerns is my partner's welfare.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	I would forgive my partner for practically anything.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	I feel responsible for my partner's well-being.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	I would greatly enjoy being confided in by my partner.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	It would be hard for me to get along without my Partner

13. All things considered, how would you compare your relationship to that of most other people like yourself?

____ Much better than most.
____ Somewhat better than most.
____ About the same as most.
____ Not quite as good as most
____ Much worse than most.

Next, you will be answering some questions about ONE PARTICULAR SERIAL ARGUMENT which occurred with your current or a prior relational partner. On the following pages. you will find several sections containing questions about the sequence of events that occurred. Please make sure to answer all questions based on ONE serial argument.

1) On the lines below, please describe the event. problem, or topic about which you had argued.

_____

_____

_____

2) Why do you consider the topic or event to be problematic?

_____

_____

_____

3) How long (days, months, years) have (were) you and your partner been in conflict over this topic?

4) Approximately how many times have (did) you argued with your partner about this issue?.

Is the serial argument based on an event that happened one time?

YES NO

Is the serial argument based on a problem that has occurred multiple times?

YES NO

6) If you are reporting about a past relationship, answer 6a and skip to Question 7 on the next page; if you are reporting about a current. existing relationship. answer all sections of 6b and then continue with Question 7.

6a. If the relationship has ended, to what extent did the serial argument cause your relationship to end?

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

To a Great Extent Not at

6b. If you are currently in the relationship. Why do you stay in the relationship even though this serial argument exists? To what extent do you stay in the relationship for each of the following reasons:

The argument isn't my partner's fault.

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

To a Great Extent Not at all

I am too emotionally involved or in love with my partner to break up.

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

To a Great Extent Not at all

I don't have any better relational options.

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

To a Great Extent Not at all

I don't want to be alone.

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

To a Great Extent Not at all

The argument or topic doesn't bother me that much.

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

To a Great Extent Not at all

I have invested too much in the relationship to break-up.

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

To a Great Extent Not at all

7) After episodes of this serial argument, does/did your relationship become:

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Closer More Distant

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Stronger Weaker

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Happier more sad

APPENDIX F

COMMUNICATION PATTERN QUESTIONNAIRE

Demographic data

Please check that all that apply

1) Gender

_____ female
_____ male

2) Age

_____ 21 - 30
_____ 31 – 40
_____ 51 - 60
_____ over 60 years of age

3) Place of birth

_____ Antananarivo
_____ Fianarantsoa
_____ Toamasina
_____ Mahajanga
_____ Antsiranana
_____ Toliara
_____ Other (please specify)

4) Nationality of spouse/dating partner

_____ Malagasy
_____ other (please specify)

5) Amount of previous experience living in another culture

_____ never lived in another culture
_____ less than 3 months

_____ 3–6 months
_____ 7–11 months
_____ 1–2 years
_____ 3–5 years
_____ 6–10 years
_____ over 10 years

6) Educational level

_____ did not complete CEG
_____ Went to Lycée but did not pass my Baccalauréat exam
_____ Attended University for two years or less
_____ Licence or equivalent
_____ Maîtrise or equivalent
_____ Doctorate degree or equivalent

Next, we are interested in how you and your partner typically deal with problems in your relationship. Please rate each item on a scale of 1 (= very unlikely) to 9 (= very likely).

A. WHEN SOME PROBLEM IN THE RELATIONSHIP ARISES,

	Very Unlikely							Very likely	
1. Both members avoid discussing the problem.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2. Both members try to discuss the problem.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3. Man tries to start a discussion while Woman tries to avoid a discussion.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Woman tries to start a discussion while Man tries to avoid a discussion.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

B. DURING A DISCUSSION OF A RELATIONSHIP PROBLEM,

1. Both members blame, accuse, and criticize each other.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2. Both members express their feelings to each other.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3. Both members threaten	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

each other with negative consequences.

4. Both members suggest possible solutions and compromises.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
5. Man nags and demands while Woman withdraws, becomes silent, or refuses to discuss the matter further.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Woman nags and demands while Man withdraws, becomes silent, or refuses to discuss the matter further.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
6. Man criticizes while Woman defends herself.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Woman criticizes while Man defends himself.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
7. Man pressures Woman to take some action or stop some action, while Woman resists.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Woman pressures Man to take some action or stop some action, while Man resists.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
8. Man expresses feelings while Woman offers reasons and solutions.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Woman expresses feelings while Man offers reasons and solutions.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
9 Man threatens negative consequences and Woman gives in or backs down.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Woman threatens negative consequences and Man gives in or backs down.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
10. Man calls Woman names, swears at her, or attacks her character.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Woman calls Man names, swears at him, or attack his character.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
11. Man pushes, shoves, slaps, hits, or kicks Woman.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Woman pushes, shoves, slaps, hits, or kicks Man.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

C. AFTER A DISCUSSION OF A RELATIONSHIP PROBLEM,

		Very Unlikely								Very likely
1.	Both feel each other has understood his/her position.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2.	Both withdraw from each other after the discussion.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3.	Both feel that the problem has been solved.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4.	Neither partner is giving to the other after the discussion.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
5.	After the discussion, both try to be especially nice to each other.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
6.	Man feels guilty for what he said or did while Woman feels hurt.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Woman feels guilty for what she said or did while Man feels hurt.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
7.	Man tries to be especially nice, acts as if things are back to normal, while Woman acts distant.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Woman tries to be especially nice, acts as if things are back to normal, while Man acts distant.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
8.	Man pressures Woman to apologize or promise to do better, while Woman resists.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Woman pressures Man to apologize or promise to do better, while Man resists	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9.	Man seeks support from others (parent, friend, children)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Woman seeks support from others (parent, friend, children)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

APPENDIX G

COMPLETE REGRESSION TABLES

Table 1

Initiating roles

Measures	*B*	*SE*	*β*	*R*	R^2 Δ
Demand/withdraw (attitude)				.22*	.03*
Vertical Individualism	.60	.20	.21**		
Vertical collectivism	.06	.32	.01		
Horizontal collectivism	-.48	.30	-.13		
Horizontal individualism	.10	.22	.03		
Demand/withdraw (attitude)				.13	-.004
Gender	-1.33	.68	-.13		
Vertical Individualism	.05	.12	.03		
Vertical collectivism	-.02	.10	-.04		
Horizontal collectivism	-.03	.11	-.02		
Horizontal individualism	-.06	.12	-.02		
Mutual avoidance (attitude)				.10	-.01
Vertical Individualism	.006	.10	.004		
Vertical collectivism	.11	.17	.06		
Horizontal collectivism	-.22	.16	-.12		
Horizontal individualism	.008	.11	.006		
Mutual avoidance (scenario)				.14	-.007
gender	.35	.34	.07		
Vertical Individualism	-.03	.06	-.06		
Vertical collectivism	-.06	.05	-.10		
Horizontal collectivism	.03	.05	.04		
Horizontal individualism	-.04	.06	-.06		
Mutual discussion (attitude)				.34*	.10***
Vertical Individualism	-.65	.12	-.34***		
Vertical collectivism	-.19	.20	-.07		
Horizontal collectivism	.40	.19	.16*		
Horizontal individualism	.10	.14	.05		
Mutual discussion (scenario)				.13	-.005
gender	.09	.44	.01		
Vertical Individualism	-.07	.07	-.07		
Vertical collectivism	-.01	.06	-.01		
Horizontal collectivism	.07	.07	.08		
Horizontal individualism	.06	.08	.06		

Table 2

Regression predicting aggressive, dominating, avoiding and compromising styles

Measures	*B*	*SE*	*β*	*R*	R^2 Δ
Aggressive styles (attitude)					
				.21*	.02*
Vertical Individualism	.32	.14	.16*		
Vertical collectivism	.19	.22	.07		
Horizontal collectivism	-.52	.21	-.20*		
Horizontal individualism	-.02	.15	-.01		
Aggressive styles (scenario)					
				.28**	.05**
Gender	-.13	.45	-.02		
Vertical Individualism	.15	.08	.14		
Vertical collectivism	.06	.06	.06		
Horizontal collectivism	-.18	.07	-.19*		
Horizontal individualism	-.09	.08	-.09		
Dominating (attitude scale)					
				.18	.02
Vertical Individualism	.36	.14	.18*		
Vertical collectivism	-.16	.19	-.06		
Horizontal individualism	.05	.15	.02		
Dominating (scenario scale)					
				.22*	.03*
Gender	-.29	.46	-.04		
Vertical Individualism	.24	.07	.22**		
Vertical collectivism	.13	.06	.14		
Horizontal individualism	.13	.07	.12		
Compromising (attitude)	*B*	*SE*	β	*R*	R^2 Δ
				.27**	.06**
Vertical collectivism	.07	.16	.03		
Horizontal collectivism	.32	.15	.16*		
Horizontal individualism	.24	.11	.15*		

(*table continues*)

Table 2, continued

Compromising (scenario)	*B*	*SE*	β	*R*	R^2 Δ
				.13	.005
Vertical collectivism	.05	.04	.07		
Horizontal collectivism	-.07	.05	-.10		
Horizontal individualism	-.01	.05	-.01		
Avoiding (scenario)				.31***	.08***
Gender	-.67	.40	-.11		
Vertical Individualism	.31	.07	.33***		
Vertical collectivism	.09	.06	.12		
Horizontal individualism	.001	.07	-.001		
Horizontal collectivism	-.006	.06	-.008		
Avoiding (attitude)				.24*	.04*
Vertical Individualism	.33	.12	.18**		
Vertical collectivism	.38	.20	.16		
Horizontal collectivism	-.41	.19	-.18*		
Horizontal individualism	-.29	.13	-.15*		

Table 3

The Effects of Individualism/Collectivism and the Different aspects of IC on conflict length

Measures	*B*	SE	*β*	*R*	$R^2\ \Delta$
Conflict length (attitude)				.31*	.07*
Individualist items	-3.46	1.35	-.31*		
Collectivist items	2.20	1.67	.16		
Number of times arguing (attitude)				.03	-.02
Individualist items	-.53	2.43	-.02		
Collectivist items	.94	2.85	.03		
Conflict length (scenario)				.41**	.14**
Individualist items	3.22	1.17	.42**		
Collectivist items	3.51	.99	.55**		
Number of times arguing (scenario)				.02	-.02
Individualist items	.32	1.69	.02		
Collectivist items	.35	1.45	.03		
Conflict length (attitude)				.15	-.005
Vertical attitude	.29	1.96	.02		
Horizontal attitude	-2.24	1.92	-.16		
Number of times arguing (attitude)				.01	-.02
Vertical attitude	.51	3.03	.02		
Horizontal attitude	-.12	2.93	-.005		
Conflict length (scenario)				.47***	.20***
Vertical scenario	3.89	.95	.59**		
Horizontal scenario	1.89	1.17	.23		
Conflict length (Scenario)				.47**	.18**
Vertical scenario	3.89	.98	.59***		
Horizontal scenario	1.90	1.22	.23		
Individualism scenario	-.032	.87	-.004		

Table 4: Regression on the frequency of serial arguing

Measures	*B*	*SE*	*β*	*R*	R^2 Δ
Length of conflict (Scenario)				.47**	.16**
Gender	-1.27	3.6	-.04		
Vertical Individualism	1.80	.65	.36**		
Vertical collectivism	2.01	.53	.55***		
Horizontal individualism	.99	.75	.20		
Horizontal collectivism	.80	.67	.18		
Length of conflict (Attitude)				.32	.04
Vertical Individualism	-.79	1.15	-.08		
Vertical collectivism	.68	2.06	.05		
Horizontal individualism	-.2.45	1.10	.-28*		
Horizontal collectivism	.1.35	1.81	.11		
Number of times argued (attitude)				.05	-.04
Vertical Individualism	.29	.01	.01		
Vertical collectivism	-.40	-.01	-.01		
Horizontal individualism	1.21	-.03	.05		
Horizontal collectivism	-.60	.05	-.03		
Number of times argued (Scenario)				.15	-.03
Gender	-8.46	6.65	-.139		
Vertical Individualism	.146	1.07	.016		
Vertical collectivism	.197	.82	.02		
Horizontal individualism	.61	1.07	.07		
Horizontal collectivism	.37	1.05	.04		