



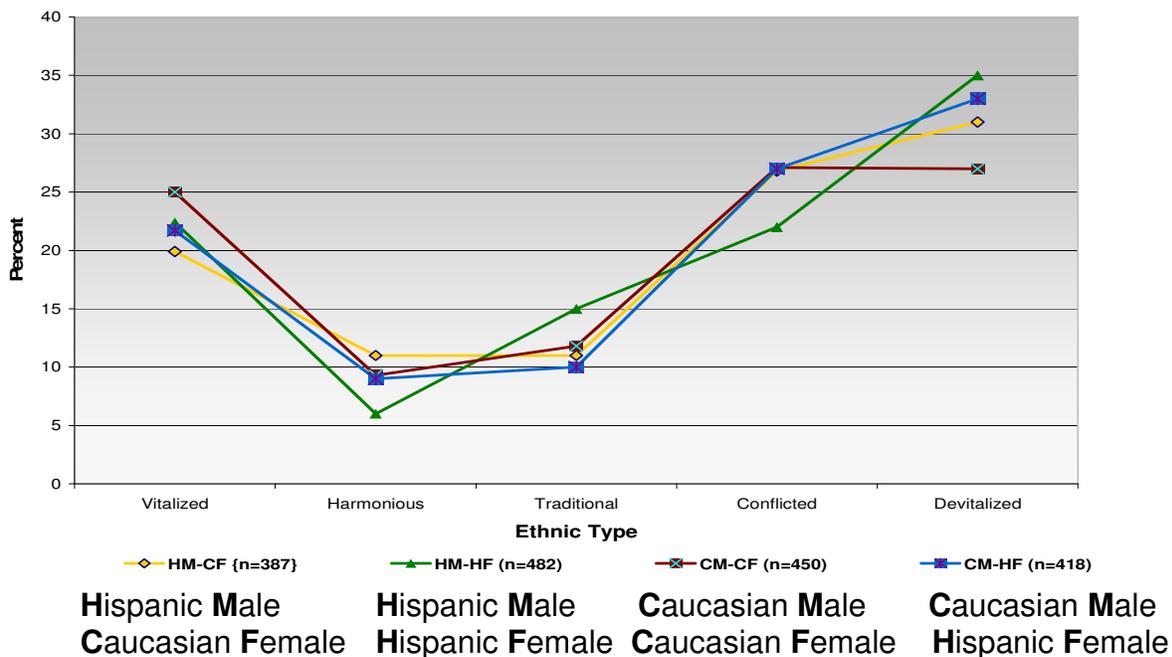
Hispanic and Caucasian Couples have Similar Couple Types

David Olson & Jeffery Garrett (2006)

Although it is often assumed that different ethnic groups will have different patterns of marriage, this study found considerable similarity in couple types across four ethnic combinations of married couples (both Hispanic, both Caucasian, Hispanic Male—Caucasian Female, Hispanic Female—Caucasian Male).

This study is based on ENRICH data used in a dissertation by Jeffery Garrett (2004) who found no significant differences between the four groups of couples on the major ENRICH scales (i.e. marital satisfaction, communication, conflict resolution).

Figure I: Five Couple Types for Hispanic and Caucasian Couples



Using a national sample of 868 married couples who took ENRICH, these four groups of married couples were compared on the ENRICH Couple typology. The average age of the males was about 35 and females was 33 and they were married an average of 9 years. The individuals were second or third generation Hispanics.

As illustrated in Figure I, there are no significant differences in the percentage of the four groups of couples in any of the five couple types. About 20-25% of the couples were Vitalized,

5-10% were Harmonious, 10-15% were Traditional, 20-30% were Conflicted and about 25-35% were Devitalized. The only difference (not significant) was that there were a few more Hispanic couples that were Traditional and Devitalized, and fewer that were Conflicted than the other ethnic groups.

This study clearly demonstrates the ENRICH Couple typology is relevant to Hispanic couples where one or both are Hispanic. It also demonstrates there are no significant differences between the Caucasian and Hispanic ethnic groups using this couple typology.

These findings are similar to a study by Bill Allen and David Olson (2001) that found no significant difference between African American couples and Caucasian couples on the ENRICH couple typology.

In summary, the present and past studies support the value and validity of the five couple types based on ENRICH for use with Hispanic, African American and Caucasian marriages. This is a powerful and important finding since it confirms that marriages across ethnic groups are not that different in terms of their underlying dynamics.

References:

Allen, W.D. & Olson, D.H. (2001) Five types of African American Marriages based on ENRICH. *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy*. 27, 3, 301-314.

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Garrett, J. & Olson, D.H. (2006) *ENRICH Couple Typology and Hispanic and Caucasian Married Couples*. Unpublished manuscript. Minneapolis, MN: Life Innovations.