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**Openness to Interethnic Relationships for Chinese and South Asian Canadians: The Role  
of Canadian Identity**

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Lalonde, R. & Uskul, A. K. (2013). Openness to inter-ethnic relationships for second generation Chinese and South Asian Canadians: The role of Canadian identity. In E. Fong, L-H. N. Ciang, and N. Denton (Eds.). *Immigrant adaptation in multiethnic cities - Canada, Taiwan, and the United States* (pp. 138-158) New York: Routledge.

## **Introduction**

Social scientists have a long standing interest in the study of intimate interpersonal relationships. Historically, intimate relationships have usually been endogamous in nature. Endogamy is the practice of marrying within one's social groups (e.g., ethnicity, race, social class, religion). In fact, there have been social prescriptions, past and present, against exogamy (out-marriage). For example, an anti-miscegenation law was passed in the United States in 1880, which prohibited marriage between Whites and "Mongolians," and was not overturned until 1948 (Fuligno 2000). Whereas endogamy in intimate relationships has been the universal norm, there are a number of situational and psychological factors that can lead individuals to engage in interracial or interethnic relationships. Immigration and the creation of multicultural states clearly provide opportunities for forming interethnic relationships. From an intergroup relations perspective, intimate interethnic relationships can be viewed as exemplars of relationships where the social distance between two members of different ethnic groups has been fully bridged. Moreover, the greater the number of interethnic couples in a multiethnic society, the more the boundaries between groups will be seen as permeable.

In the first part of this paper, we will review the existing literature on immigration and intermarriage, with a particular focus on Asian immigration in a North American context. In the second part of this paper, one factor in particular, national or Canadian identity will be examined in relation to attitudes towards interracial dating among second-generation immigrants, within the multicultural context of Canada. Attitudes towards interethnic and interracial relationships as well as intergroup dating experiences can be seen as important psychological precursors to exogamy (e.g., King and Bratter 2007). Moreover, such intimate intergroup relationships meet

the criteria for facilitating positive intergroup contact; when these relationships are successful, they should foster prejudice reduction within a society because they can impact the extended family and friends of the individuals involved in the relationships (i.e., the extended-contact hypothesis; Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, and Ropp 1997).

### **The Social Norm of Endogamy**

Prior to the industrial revolution of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and large-scale migration to cities, individuals within villages shared similar social features (e.g., ethnicity, language, religion), and thus, their relationships with each other were endogamous. With the advent of the industrial revolution and rural migration to urban centres, the homogeneity of social networks began to dissipate. These changes impacted the structure and nature of families. Thornton and Fricke (1987) offered a comparative analysis of the West, China, and South Asia regarding social change and the family. They argued that many of the changes that took place across these three settings were quite similar (e.g., separation of workplace from the home). Other aspects of change, however, varied across settings. One of these was the importance of maintaining kinships and alliances through marriage (i.e., endogamy). In some South Asian settings for example, arranged marriages or even consanguineous marriages (i.e., between relatives), continued to be relatively common (e.g., Hussain 1999) while Western norms regarding marriage have changed quite rapidly.

Many of the social-psychological factors that are conducive to friendship and relationship formation help to buttress the norm of endogamy. Dwyer (2000) outlined three of these factors in her book, *Interpersonal Relationships*. First among them is the concept of *propinquity or proximity*. We tend to form relationships with the people we are more likely to encounter; these

are the people who are in close physical proximity and who surround us. The second factor she described is *similarity*. A number of studies have shown that we tend to like individuals who are similar to ourselves in terms of ethnicity, personality, attitudes, and values. A third factor influencing relationship formation is *physical attraction*. Given that attractiveness is in part culturally relative, we would expect individuals to find individuals from their ingroups as somewhat more attractive than individuals from outgroups. Let us now examine the nature of endogamy in the North American immigration context and to see how some of the above factors play out in this context.

### **The Immigration Experience and Intermarriage**

Individuals in Western settlement societies typically pair off with someone they have previously met. These potential partners usually come from a pool that is delineated by their neighbourhoods, schools, places of work, and recreational activities. Immigrants arriving in the new host Western country will encounter greater ethnic, racial, and religious diversity in their places of residence and work than they did in their country of origin. This greater exposure to outgroup members should impact the likelihood of individuals engaging in intergroup unions of an intimate nature (particularly for the children of immigrants) and having mixed background children. In Canada, the percentage of individuals indicating more than one ethnic ancestry is ever increasing (36% in 1996, 38% in 2001, 41% in 2006; Statistics Canada, 2008). These rather large percentages can be attributed to Canadians whose European ancestors came in earlier immigration periods (e.g., French, Scots, Germans, Ukrainians) and who subsequently intermarried. With the rapid rise of immigrants coming from the East to North America, recent

studies have focussed on examining Asian intermarriages in North America (e.g., Okamoto 2007; Qian, Blair, and Ruf 2001). We now turn to a summary of this literature.

A study by Lee and Boyd (2008) compared levels of endogamy for Asians in the United States and in Canada on the basis of the 2000 U.S. census and the 2001 Canadian census. Results indicated that overall rates of endogamy were about 80% for Asian American couples and 92% for Asian Canadian couples. Of the couples who engaged in exogamy, the majority involved intermarriage with a White partner (65% in the United States and 73% in Canada), and Asian women were more likely to intermarry than Asian men. Exogamy rates, moreover, were not the same for all Asian ethnic groups. Whereas exogamy was quite high for the Japanese (41% in the United States and 49% in Canada, it was much lower for individuals of Chinese (14% in United States and 6% in Canada) and South Asian (9% in the United States and 5% in Canada) ancestries. In addition to gender, immigrant generational status also played a role. For all Asian ethnic groups (except for the Japanese), the longer the exposure to the Western culture, the more likely they were to intermarry. For example, whereas the percentage of intermarriage was about 48% for native born Chinese Americans, it was only about 10% for foreign-born Chinese Americans (44% vs. 5% in Canada). Lee and Boyd (2008) concluded their comparative analysis by stating that Asians in Canada and those in the United States are more similar than different in their patterns of intermarriages. The one key difference was that rates of Asian exogamy was lower in Canada than in the United States, which may be attributed to the fact that Asian immigrants, dominated by two ethnic groups (Chinese and South Asians), are geographically more concentrated in urban centres in Canada (e.g., the metropolitan areas of Vancouver and Toronto) than in the United States.

Two recent studies, one from Canada (Milan, Maheux, and Chui 2010) and one from the United States (Kalmijin and van Tubergen 2010), help us further understand some of the influences on intermarriage for immigrants. Milan and colleagues (2010) used data from the 2006 Canadian census and reported a number of statistics illustrating that the norm of endogamy is strong, at least along racial lines. Only 4% of Canadian couples involved one partner who was a member of a visible minority and one who was not. Among visible minority groups, the Japanese, particularly second-generation Canadians, were most likely to intermarry. Chinese and South Asians, the two largest visible minority groups in Canada, had the lowest proportions of exogamy, thus providing indirect evidence for a propinquity effect; given the geographic concentration of large numbers of Chinese and South Asian immigrant families in urban centres, they would have ample opportunities to meet a prospective partner from their respective ethnic groups. Finally, three additional factors were associated with a higher probability of a mixed union: age (younger compared to older adults), education (more educated compared to less educated), and area of residence (Vancouver and Toronto had the most mixed unions).

In the United States, Kalmijin and van Tubergen (2010) used pooled population surveys (1994-2006) to examine intermarriage patterns of 94 different ethnic groups. They replicated the pattern of results for Asian immigrants found by Lee and Boyd (2008), such that Japanese Americans were most likely to intermarry whereas South Asians (Indian and Pakistani origin) were most likely to be endogamous. The Chinese-speaking national origin groups (China, Hong Kong, Taiwan) fell between the Japanese and the South Asians in their intermarriage rates. Moreover, the generational status of immigrants had a strong effect; endogamy was stronger for first-generation than for second-generation immigrants. Kalmijin and van Tubergen (2010)

further explored the roles of structural and cultural influences on intermarriage. From a structural perspective, they found a substantial effect for ingroup size; the larger the size of the ingroup, the more likely the children of immigrants would marry endogamously (see also Okamoto 2007). This is further evidence for the role of propinquity in relationship formation. From a cultural perspective, intermarriage with a White partner was more common for immigrant groups that came from nations which share characteristics of the host Western society: (a) a Christian background, (b) English as an official language, and (c) a higher rate of globalization (e.g., greater importing and exporting of books). These three cultural factors are related to the similarity factor that Dwyer (2000) reported as being a key variable in relationship formation.

### **Social Psychological Research on Interracial and Interethnic Dating**

When it comes to interracial and interethnic relationships, sociologists and social demographers have focused much of their research on marriage (see above examples). Some social psychologists, on the other hand, have placed their attention on dating, which is a normative precursor to marriage in a North American context. While much of the research on interracial dating has examined Black-White relationships (e.g., Lalonde, Giguère, Fontaine, & Smith, 2007), increasing attention has been directed towards the dating attitudes and behaviours of Asians in North America. Fujino (1997), for example, compared the dating practices of Chinese, Japanese, and White American students in Los Angeles and found that parallel to the marriage literature, Japanese Americans were more likely to have out-dated than Chinese Americans; Chinese Americans, in turn were more likely to have out-dated than White Americans. Fujino also found that propinquity (perceived proportion of Whites in their home

community) was a significant predictor for interracial dating with Whites among both Asian women and men. Moreover, Asian women were more likely to date Whites when they valued attractiveness in a dating partner.

In line with the marriage data, Levin, Taylor, and Caudle (2007) found in a large sample of California university students that Asians, African Americans, Latinos, and Whites were more likely to intra-date (i.e., with ingroup members) throughout their first three years of college compared to later years. Of the groups, Asian Americans were the least likely to inter-date, and this difference was more pronounced for Asian men than for Asian women. For all groups, intra-dating was related to having more close ingroup friends in high school, thus providing further evidence for a propinquity effect. Finally, it was found that Asian Americans, Latinos, and Whites were more likely to inter-date when they reported less pre-college ingroup bias and less pre-college intergroup anxiety. For Asian American students, this latter effect was moderated by their ingroup identification; low pre-college intergroup anxiety was associated with inter-dating only for those who also had weaker pre-college Asian ingroup identification.

Mok (1999) further explored the role of ingroup identification in her study of interracial dating attitudes of Asian American students. She tapped into the three factors that Dwyer (2000) had identified as being important in relationship formation using a number of variables: ingroup density and percentage of ingroup friends as indicators of propinquity, acculturation which can be construed as an index of similarity to Americans, and perceptions of attractiveness of Asian and White Americans. Mok also assessed cultural variables such as ingroup identity and parental influence. She found that the three best predictors of Asian Americans' openness to dating White

Americans were being more strongly acculturated to American society, perceiving greater heterosexual attractiveness in Whites, and having fewer Asian American friends.

### **Current Studies**

Our research (Uskul, Lalonde, and Cheng 2007; Uskul, Lalonde, and Konanur 2011) has followed the social psychological tradition of examining attitudes towards interethnic or interracial dating relationships. This research was conducted in Canada, where the norm of endogamy is somewhat stronger for Asians Canadians when compared to Asian Americans (Lee and Boyd 2008). We have focused on Canada's two largest visible minority groups, Chinese Canadians and South Asian Canadians; both of these groups have very high rates of endogamy (Milan et al. 2010). Finally, we have a particular interest in the attitudes of second-generation Canadians, who represent an interesting group as they have access to two sets of potentially-contradictory cultural norms (heritage and mainstream Canadian) regarding dating and marriage.

Second-generation immigrants have been socialized by their family to value their heritage cultural identity by their parents and other family members, who tend to emphasize the continuation of their own heritage values and norms through their children. In a study of parenting goals among South Asian Canadian mothers, Maiter and George (2003) found that *identity formation* appeared as one of the most important parenting goals in this group. Mothers felt that not educating their children about South Asian culture would leave them without a sense of belongingness and without a strong heritage identity.

While heritage cultural identity may play an important role in the shaping of immigrants' overall identity and ensuring cultural continuity, first and second generation immigrants also acquire a mainstream cultural identity. Moreover, heritage and mainstream cultural identities

have been shown to be independent from each other in their influence on the acculturation process among different Chinese immigrant samples in Canada (Ryder, Alden, and Paulhus 2000) and the United States (Tsai, Ying, and Lee 2000). Ryder et al. (2000) found that identification with the mainstream culture was a significant positive predictor of psychosocial adjustment for Chinese Canadians, whereas heritage culture identification was unrelated to adjustment. Lalonde, Hynie, Pannu, and Tatla (2004) found that heritage cultural identity was related to South Asian Canadians' preference for traditional attributes in a mate, but not mainstream cultural identity,

Immigrants are likely to be pulled and pushed by their heritage and mainstream identities and each culture's norms when engaging in their close interpersonal relationships. Integration, the most popular acculturation strategy (e.g., Phinney, Berry, Vedder, and Liebkind 2006), involves simultaneous identification with the heritage culture and participation in the mainstream culture (Berry 1980). With respect to views towards intergroup dating, both heritage and mainstream identities may play a role in the shaping of these views, albeit in opposite directions. Ingroup identification would be expected to drive stronger preferences and dating norms for endogamy (i.e., preference for traditional attributes in a mate; marrying or dating within one's heritage ethnic group) whereas identification with the majority culture would be expected to drive greater openness to exogamy (dating or marrying outside one's ethnic group). Given that Canadian identity and pride has been associated with greater acceptance and encouragement of ethnic diversity (Lalonde 2002; Cameron and Berry, 2008), Canadian national identification should be related to one's openness to inter-ethnic relationships. Moreover, Canadian identity can be construed as a superordinate or common identity for all Canadians regardless of ethnicity.

Thus, it should facilitate more openness to outgroup members (c.f., common ingroup identity model; Gaertner and Dovidio 2000). West, Pearson, Dovidio, Shelton, and Trail (2009), for example, found that perceptions of a common identity among randomly assigned college roommates facilitated the development of cross-group friendships.

Selected findings from two of our recent studies will be reported in this paper. The first study (Uskul et al. 2007) involved a cross-cultural comparison of young Chinese and European Canadians and their views on interracial dating. The second study (Uskul et al. 2011), involved a cross-cultural comparison of both younger and older South Asian and European Canadians and their views on interracial dating. Details of the statistical analyses (i.e., inferential statistics regarding comparisons of group means) can be found in the above papers. Selected aspects of the data from these studies will be examined to explicitly focus on a cultural (heritage and Canadian) identity hypothesis.

It was predicted that the superordinate national Canadian identity, rather than heritage identity, would drive the views of first and second-generation Canadians about interracial dating. The assumption is that whereas ingroup identification may be associated with an ethnic ingroup orientation in interpersonal relationships (i.e., intra-group dating), identification with the national culture would be more likely to lead individuals to contemplate others who belong to the larger national ingroup and this would include others who are not necessarily members of the ethnic ingroup. Stronger endorsement of Canadian identity, therefore, was expected to be associated with more favourable attitudes toward interracial dating (i.e., *superordinate identity hypothesis*).

## **Study 1 – A Comparison of Young Chinese Canadians and European Canadians**

### **Participants**

Participants were 61 Chinese Canadian (30 women & 31 men) and 59 European Canadian (30 women & 29 men) students from a large multicultural university in Toronto. Their average age was 22 years. The sample, therefore, was at an age where dating is acceptable by Canadian norms. All European Canadians self-identified as White and all Chinese Canadians self-identified as Asian. The majority of the European Canadians were born in Canada (80%). The percentage of Canadian-born Chinese was 39.3%, while the bulk of the remaining sample was born in China or Hong Kong (44.3%). The mean age of arrival to Canada for those born outside of Canada was 11.5 years for the European Canadians and 12.6 years for the Chinese Canadians.

The demographic split on country of birth for Chinese Canadians (i.e., those born outside and inside Canada) permitted us to examine differences in the views on interracial dating between first and second generation immigrants. Chinese Canadians born in Canada tended to be more personally open to interracial dating ( $M = 5.70$ ) than Chinese Canadians born in Asia ( $M = 4.95$ ). Second-generation Chinese Canadians also endorsed a stronger Canadian identity ( $M = 5.70$ ) than first-generation respondents ( $M = 4.76$ ), but the two groups did not differ in level of heritage culture identity. Chinese Canadians who had spent more of their lives in Canada, therefore, were more likely to be open to the norms of that society, but they still maintained stable levels of identification with their heritage culture (see Cheung, Chudek, and Heine 2011).

In terms of interracial dating, 51% of the European Canadians (13 men, 17 women) reported being currently in or have previously been in an interracial relationship, in comparison to 28% of the Chinese Canadians (6 men, 11 women). This differential pattern of greater interracial dating for European Canadians compared to Chinese Canadians was significant.

## Measures

All scale items were assessed with 7-point Likert-type scales, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). All participants completed the questionnaire in English.

*Social identifications.* Cameron's (2004) 12-item measure of social identity assessed the degree of both Canadian and heritage culture identification (e.g. "In general, I'm glad to be Canadian" and "I feel strong ties to other heritage group members"). Participants were asked to reiterate their ethnic identity before completing items relating to their heritage culture. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients for Canadian identity and heritage identities respectively were all equal to or above .82 for both samples.

*Attitudes toward Interracial Dating.* Fifteen items were adapted from a study on interracial dating between European Canadian and Black Canadians (Lalonde et al. 2007). This measure assessed two distinct components of dating attitudes that loaded onto separate factors in a factor analysis: one tapped general attitudes toward interracial dating (9 items, e.g. "It does not bother me if Chinese [White] people date White [Chinese] people") and the other assessed personal openness to interracial dating (6 items, e.g. "I would date a Chinese [White] person"). Items were adjusted such that the European Canadians were asked about dating Chinese, and the Chinese Canadians were asked about dating Whites. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients for the general attitude and for personal openness to interracial dating respectively were all equal to or above .88 for both samples.

## Results and Discussion

A Group (Chinese Canadian, European Canadian) by Gender ANOVA was first conducted for each interracial dating attitude measure. General attitude toward interracial dating was associated with significant main effects for Group and Gender, as well as a Group by Gender interaction. The personal openness to interracial dating measure was associated with a significant Group effect, as well as a significant Group by Gender interaction. Both group effects indicated that European Canadians had a more favourable attitude and were more open to interracial dating than Chinese Canadians.

An examination of the Group by Gender interactions indicated that the responses of male Chinese Canadians were driving the interaction effects. In their general attitudes toward interracial dating, Chinese Canadian females ( $M = 6.52$ ) were very similar to European Canadian females ( $M = 6.68$ ) and European Canadian males ( $M = 6.58$ ). In their personal openness to interracial dating, Chinese Canadian females ( $M = 5.54$ ) were again similar to European Canadian females ( $M = 5.53$ ), both of whom were less personally open to interracial dating than were European Canadian males ( $M = 6.19$ ). Chinese Canadian males, however, were less favorable than European Canadian males both in their general attitudes toward interracial dating ( $M = 5.60$ ) and in their personal openness to interracial dating ( $M = 5.08$ ). Chinese Canadian males also had significantly less favorable general attitudes towards interracial dating than did Chinese Canadian females.

#### *Relationship between Social Identities and Views on Interracial Relationships*

Correlations between general and personal views on interracial dating and the two identity measures provided clear support for our hypothesis (see Table 7.1). Heritage culture

identity was not significantly associated with either of the measures of interracial dating for either cultural group, whereas Canadian cultural identity was a significant correlate of both dating measures for Chinese Canadians. The more Chinese Canadians identified themselves as Canadian, the less likely they were to have a positive attitude towards interracial dating and to be open to interracial dating.

In order to rigorously test the hypothesis that Canadian identity, compared to heritage identity, is a better predictor of the interracial dating views of Chinese Canadians, one-tailed comparisons of correlation coefficients representing these associations were conducted following the method proposed by Meng, Rosenthal, and Rubin (1992). Both of these comparisons proved to be significant or near significance. For Chinese Canadians, Canadian identity was a stronger predictor of the general attitude toward interracial dating ( $z = 1.35, p < .09$ ) and personal openness to interracial dating ( $z = 2.50, p = .006$ ), compared to Chinese identity.

The *superordinate identity hypothesis* predicted that Canadian identity, rather than heritage identity, would drive the views of Chinese Canadians with regard to interracial dating. Among Chinese Canadians, Canadian identity, but not heritage identity, was associated with more favourable attitudes toward and greater personal openness to interracial dating. This finding replicates previous research findings that have found that mainstream and heritage culture identities play different roles in the acculturation process (Lalonde et al. 2004; Remennick 2005; Ryder et al. 2000). This finding is also in line with Mok's (1999) finding that among Asian American students, higher acculturation to an American/Western way of living was associated with greater likelihood of dating White Americans. Our contention is that mainstream (i.e., Canadian) identity, rather than heritage identity, plays a contributing role in interracial dating attitudes because from a Chinese Canadian perspective, such views are more outgroup-

focused than ingroup-focused. Canadian identity, moreover, has been specifically associated with greater acceptance and encouragement of ethnic diversity (e.g., Cameron and Berry 2008).

### *The Role of Interracial Dating Experience*

The two interracial dating attitude measures were also related to participants' interracial dating *experience*, but only for Chinese Canadians. Group (Chinese Canadian, European Canadian) by Dating history (no, yes) ANOVAs revealed significant interaction effects for general attitude, and for personal openness. Simple effects analyses indicated that interracial dating history made no difference for European Canadians. Chinese Canadians with interracial dating experience, on the other hand, reported significantly more positive general attitudes ( $M = 6.56$ ) and higher levels of personal openness to interracial dating ( $M = 6.46$ ) in comparison to those with no history ( $M = 5.72$ ,  $M = 4.75$ , respectively). It is worth noting that Chinese Canadians with interracial dating experience also reported significantly higher Canadian identity scores ( $M = 5.46$ ) than those with no such experience ( $M = 4.96$ ).

This differential effect of interracial dating history on the two cultural groups suggests that having dated someone of a different racial background may help second generation immigrants become more familiar with the norms of the mainstream culture, in this case a Canadian culture that encourages ethnic diversity. This is correlational data, however, and it may well be that it is Chinese Canadians who have more internalized Canadian norms who are more willing to experiment with interracial dating.

## **Study 2 – A Comparison of South Asian Canadians and European Canadians**

## Participants

The sample consisted of 118 South-Asian Canadians (60 women & 58 men) and 120 European Canadians (60 women & 60 men). Approximately half of the sample in each cultural group consisted of an older generation (60 European Canadians, 58 South-Asian Canadians) and the other half consisted of university students representing the younger generation (60 university students in each cultural group). Younger participants were recruited primarily on campus and through social networks, and older participants were recruited using convenience sampling in the Greater Toronto Area. The mean ages of each sample were as follows: older South-Asian Canadians ( $M = 51.70$ ), older European Canadians ( $M = 47.50$ ), South-Asian Canadian students ( $M = 24.10$ ), and European Canadian students ( $M = 24.31$ ).

All participants were either Canadian citizens or had permanent residency. European Canadians self-identified as White, and South-Asian Canadians as South Asian. The majority of the European Canadians (80%) were born in Canada; participants not born in Canada were primarily from the older generation (79%) and reported European countries as their birth place. All of the older South-Asian Canadians were born outside of Canada and can be clearly identified as first-generation immigrants. Within the younger generation South-Asian Canadian sample, the majority were born in Canada (78%), and of those who were not, the mean age of arrival in Canada was 13.36 years ( $SD = 7.06$ ). The younger South Asian Canadian sample, therefore, was largely composed of second-generation immigrants. The majority of South-Asian participants born outside of Canada came from India (80%), while the rest indicated countries such as Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Zambia and Kenya. Almost all of the participants in the older generation samples were married (84%) or divorced (10%), and most of them had children (88%

of the European Canadians and 98% of the South-Asian Canadian sample). All participants in the younger generation samples were unmarried.

In terms of interracial dating among the student sample, 53% of the European Canadians (19 men & 13 women) reported that they were in or have been in an interracial dating relationship, in comparison to 50% of the South Asian Canadians (13 men & 17 women).

## **Measures**

All scale items were associated with 7-point Likert-type scales, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). All participants completed the questionnaire in English.

*Cultural identifications.* Cameron's (2004) measure of social identity was again used to measure the strength of both mainstream (Canadian) and heritage culture identifications. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients were acceptable for all for samples (from .78 to .88).

*Intergroup dating items.* Ten of the items used in Study 1 were selected to examine views on intergroup dating. Four items tapping general attitudes towards intergroup dating were phrased without specifying particular groups (e.g. "Persons of different races should not become seriously involved"). Six items tapping personal openness towards intergroup dating were phrased such that the younger generation European Canadian sample was asked about dating South-Asians (e.g., "I would happily date a South-Asian person") and the younger generation South-Asian sample was asked about dating White European Canadians (e.g. "I am open to involvement in an intergroup relationship with a White person"). Older generation participants responded to the openness items by thinking of their child dating a member of the opposite cultural group (e.g. "I am open to my child's involvement in an intergroup relationship with a

South-Asian person”). The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients were acceptable for all for samples (from .75 to .96).

## **Results and Discussion**

A Group by Generation by Gender ANOVA was conducted for the general attitude towards intergroup dating measure. Significant main effects for Group and Generation, as well as a Group by Generation interaction were found. South-Asian Canadians ( $M = 5.25$ ) had less favourable attitudes towards intergroup dating than did European Canadians ( $M = 5.75$ ), and participants in the older generation group ( $M = 5.28$ ) had less favorable attitudes towards intergroup dating than did younger generation participants ( $M = 5.72$ ). The Group by Generation interaction indicated that it was the responses of the older generation South-Asians that were driving the interaction effect. Specifically, older generation South-Asian Canadians ( $M = 4.80$ ) had less positive general attitudes towards intergroup dating than did older generation European Canadians ( $M = 5.76$ ), younger generation South-Asian Canadians ( $M = 5.25$ ) and younger generation European Canadians ( $M = 5.74$ ). The latter three groups did not differ from each other on this measure. There is evidence of a generational divide on the issue of generational dating, but this gap is only present for South Asian Canadians, suggesting that second-generation South Asian Canadians have access to two different cultural views and that they are acculturating to the majority Canadian view.

Given that the personal openness towards intergroup dating measure was phrased differently for the older and younger generation samples, this measure was examined separately for the older and younger samples in Group by Gender ANOVAs. For the older sample, the openness measure was only associated with a significant main effect of Group, such that the

European Canadians ( $M = 5.79$ ) exhibited a higher level of openness towards their child dating a South-Asian compared to South-Asian Canadians' openness ( $M = 4.28$ ) towards their child dating a White Canadian. For the younger sample, the openness measure was also associated with a significant main effect of Group, with European Canadians ( $M = 5.54$ ) showing a greater level of personal openness towards intergroup dating than did South-Asian Canadians ( $M = 4.48$ ). This main effect of Group was qualified by a marginally significant interaction with Gender. Male South-Asian Canadian participants ( $M = 4.26$ ) showed significantly less favourable personal openness towards intergroup dating than European Canadian males ( $M = 5.79$ ) and females ( $M = 5.28$ ). Female South-Asian Canadians ( $M = 4.71$ ) differed significantly from European Canadian men, but not from European Canadian women on the personal openness measure.

The above results again provide evidence of a cultural gap between European Canadians and South Asian Canadians on the issue of openness to interracial dating. The gap is clear for the older generation of respondents with European Canadians being more open than South Asian Canadians. The gap is more nuanced for the younger group of respondents, where male South Asians appear to be less willing to share the views of their majority European Canadian peers.

### *Identity Measures and Intergroup Dating*

The identity hypothesis predicted that mainstream cultural identity, rather than heritage identity, would be associated with the views of both younger and older generation South-Asian Canadians about intergroup dating. Correlations between the two indices of views on intergroup dating and the two cultural identity measures are reported in Table 7.2. Support was found for

our hypothesis. On the one hand, heritage culture identity was not significantly correlated with any of the measures of intergroup dating for any of the groups except for the older generation South-Asian Canadian sample, where stronger endorsement of heritage cultural identity was associated with lower levels of openness towards intergroup dating of children. On the other hand, Canadian cultural identity was significantly correlated with both dating measures for the younger generation South-Asian Canadians as well as for the older generation South-Asian Canadians. More interestingly, Canadian identity was a significant or marginally significant correlate for the older generation but not the younger generation European Canadians. Thus, in all groups, except the younger generation European Canadians, the more participants identified themselves as Canadian, the more likely they were to have a more positive attitude towards intergroup dating and to be more open to intergroup dating.

In order to more rigorously test the hypothesis that mainstream cultural identity would be a better predictor of the views of South-Asian Canadians on intergroup dating compared to heritage identity, one-tailed comparisons of correlation coefficients representing these associations were conducted. All of these comparisons proved to be significant (see z-values in the last column of Table 7.2). It thus appears that the more South Asians identify themselves as Canadians, the more accepting they become of intergroup relationships of an intimate nature.

### *The Role of Interracial Dating Experience*

The two interracial dating attitude measures were also examined in relation to the younger respondents' previous interracial dating experiences. A Group (South Asian Canadian, European Canadian) by Dating history (no, yes) ANOVA revealed a significant dating history main effect for general attitude. Those with current or prior interracial dating experience reported

a more positive general attitude ( $M = 5.69$ ) compared to those with no experience ( $M = 5.43$ ). For personal openness to interracial dating, significant effects were found for dating history and Group. These effects were qualified by a significant Dating history by Group interaction. Simple effects analyses indicated that interracial dating history made no difference for European Canadians. South Asian Canadians with interracial dating experience, however, reported significantly higher levels of personal openness to interracial dating ( $M = 5.55$ ) in comparison to those with no history ( $M = 3.41$ ). This differential effect of interracial dating history on the two cultural groups can be interpreted in different ways, but it is clear that South Asian Canadians who have not dated interracially have aligned their behaviour with their attitude.

## **General Discussion**

The present paper has reviewed the literature on Asian immigrants and intermarriage in the North American context, and described empirical data examining attitudes towards interracial dating for Canadians with Chinese, South Asian, and European backgrounds. The census data from both Canada and the United States are clear. When it comes to marriage, the norm of endogamy along ethno-racial lines is strong. It does become weaker, however, with the passage of time. A number of structural (e.g., number and density of ingroup members) and cultural factors (e.g., cultural similarity in terms of language, level of education) have been linked to the norm of endogamy and to the increasing prevalence of exogamy. Given that immigration has fuelled more multicultural settings in North America, opportunities for contact between individuals from different cultures is on the rise and mixed unions will be one of the consequences of this ever increasing contact. It is therefore important for social scientists to

explore the structural, cultural, and psychological factors that may underlie interethnic and interracial relationships.

Our own research has focused on dating attitudes and behaviours, as these are typical precursors to marriage in a North American context. When we examine the rates of interracial dating that took place for the respondents in our samples, we found them to be quite high (e.g., 50% for the South Asian Canadian sample). These rates are clearly discrepant from the rates of intermarriage in the general population. There is, of course, considerable sampling bias in our studies as these were convenience samples that were obtained from a very multicultural university where there is ample opportunity for intergroup contact. Dating, which is a common precursor to marriage, helps individuals explore and experiment with the intricacies of intimate relationships. If most of these experimental relationships are positive, then research on the contact hypothesis would suggest that they will be beneficial in the long term for positive intergroup relations (see Pettigrew and Tropp 2006).

### **The Positive Role of National Identity and Its Geographical Limits**

The central hypothesis that was explored in our studies was that Canadian identity would be a positive predictor of positive views on interracial dating. There was clear support for this hypothesis. The second-generation samples in our studies have been educated and socialized in an atmosphere that tries to promote diversity. Some may interpret our data as providing evidence of success of the Canadian experiment in multiculturalism (e.g., Adams 2007). These results of our studies, however, may be limited in their generalizability. The relationship between national identity and interethnic dating attitudes would likely hold in other major Canadian urban centres in addition to Toronto (e.g. Vancouver), but would not necessarily hold in the province of

Québec where national identity (i.e., Québécois) and Canadian identity can differ in their meanings (see Cameron and Berry, 2008). In some European contexts, it has been found that a stronger national identity can be associated with more negative views of immigrants or non-majority ethnic groups (e.g., Esses, Wagner, Wolf, Preisser, and Wilbur 2006; González-Castro, Ubillos, and Ibáñez 2009; Verkuyten 1997) and it is quite likely that our findings would not be replicated in these contexts. Nonetheless, there are indications that promoting superordinate national identities that are inclusive can help attenuate negative responses towards other groups (see Gaertner and Dovidio 2000) and some of this evidence has been found in the Chinese context (Guan, Verkuyten, Fung, Bond, Chan, and Chen 2011).

### **Cultural Differences in Views on Interracial Dating**

When it came to self-report measures of personal openness to and general attitudes towards interracial dating, young Chinese Canadians scored lower than European Canadians on both of these measures in Study 1. A similar pattern of findings was found in Study 2, where the same group differences emerged when comparing the attitudes of older South Asian and European Canadians. For the younger samples in Study 2, the cultural group difference only emerged for the personal openness measure, with younger European Canadians being more open than their South Asian counterparts. We therefore have evidence that second-generation Chinese and South Asian Canadians are still partially holding to their heritage cultural norms regarding dating.

### **Gender - Another Cultural Layer in the Personal Relationships of Asian Immigrants**

There were a few moderating effects of gender in both of our studies. In Study 1, second-generation Chinese Canadian women's views on interracial dating were in line with those of their European Canadian peers, whereas Chinese Canadian males were somewhat more conservative in their views. A similar pattern was found in Study 2, where young South Asian Canadian men were less open to interracial dating than their European Canadian peers. A growing body of literature has highlighted gender differences in the acculturation experiences of East and South Asian immigrants in Western cultures (see Dion and Dion, 2004). Chung (2001) found that female Asian American students reported greater intergenerational conflict about issues of dating and marriage than did male students. Moreover, Huang and Uba (1992) found that Chinese American women were more sexually experienced and more likely to be currently involved in an interracial relationship than were Chinese American men of the same age. Given that sexual restraint and modesty are often viewed as characteristic to a degree of East Asian cultures (see Okazaki 2002), greater sexual experience among bicultural female Chinese Americans may be seen as an indicator of low traditionalism. Suggested reasons for these findings of lower traditionalism among female East Asian immigrants include faster acculturation among females than males (Mok 1999) and female immigrants' rebellion against social pressure to conform to heritage ideals of femininity (Dion and Dion 2004).

### **Implications for Young Bicultural Canadians**

The issue of dating and romantic relationships is a "hot point" of intergenerational conflict for both South Asian (e.g., Talbani and Hasanali 2000) and Chinese (e.g., Tang and Dion 1999) families. In short, dating a person of your choosing at a young age (e.g., 17) is a Western behavior that is non-normative in many Eastern families. A potential for cultural conflict exists

between immigrants to the Western world and their adolescent or adult children, particularly when these immigrants come from Asian countries such as China and India (see review by Kwak 2003). First-generation immigrants have usually developed their core cultural ideas, customs, and norms within the distinct political, legal, and educational systems of their heritage culture, as well as through its language, media, and caretaking practices (Fiske, Kitayama, Markus, and Nisbett 1998). In contrast, second-generation immigrants, whose social systems and peers are predominantly Western, access their heritage culture primarily through their families. As a result, these bicultural immigrants (Sung 1985) have access to two potentially distinct sets of cultural values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours (Baumeister, Shapiro, and Tice 1985). It is not surprising, therefore, to find that second-generation immigrants experience culturally-based inter-generational conflict and internal conflict (Lalonde and Giguère 2008; LaFromboise, Coleman, and Gerton 1993; Tsai, Ying, and Lee 2000).

Cultural conflict, however, is not an omnipresent reality for bicultural individuals. Since an individual's cultural identity is frequently context-driven (Clément and Noels 1992), only one culture of the bicultural individual is typically salient within any given context (e.g., home vs. work). A conflict between the two sets of a bicultural individual's cultural norms, therefore, is more likely to occur when these norms are in opposition to one another and when both social identities are salient (see Giguère, Lalonde, and Lou 2010). These conditions are often jointly met in the realm of interpersonal relationships, particularly when the dating norms of the two cultures put differential emphasis on individual versus ingroup needs or goals. For example, Ahluwalia, Suzuki, and Mir (2008) reported that while marriage is closely associated in Western cultures with romantic love, it is often construed in some East and South Asian cultures primarily

as an alliance between two families. Individuals who have access to both of these discourses, such as South and East Asian immigrants in North America and their bicultural children, may therefore experience intergenerational and internal cultural conflict surrounding discrepancies between the two sets of cultural norms. We hope that the insight provided by social science research on this topic can help inform the public about the additional complexities that are involved when romance and relationships cross intergroup boundaries.

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