Conflict Management Styles among Young Male Arabs and Americans:
Exploring the Effects of Ethnic Identity and Self-Construal

By

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Abstract

This study examined self-construal, ethnic identity, and conflict management styles among young male Arabs studying in the United States ($n = 185$) and American college students ($n = 145$). Findings indicated that Arabs had a stronger ethnic identity than Americans. Both cultural groups were more independent than interdependent in their self-construal. In addition, both cultural groups held high independent and interdependent self-construal simultaneously, suggesting that self-construal is an orthogonal and not a unidimensional construct. In terms of conflict management styles, Americans preferred the integrating, the compromising, and the dominating styles the most, whereas Arabs preferred the same styles except the dominating. Americans chose the emotional expression and the aggressive style significantly more than Arabs did, and Arab participants chose the integrating, the third-party help, and the avoiding styles more than Americans did. Arab and American participants did not differ in their preference of the compromising, the dominating and the obliging conflict management styles. Self-construal predicted more conflict management styles in the American sample than in the Arab sample, suggesting that other dimensions may play an important role in conflict management style preferences among Arabs. Overall self-construal predicted more conflict styles than ethnic identity in both cultural groups.

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Introduction

Conflict is evident in any relationship. As such, interpersonal conflict management has been conducted in various contexts, including romantic (Cahn, 1990; Caughlin & Vangelisti, 1999; Fitzpatrick & Winke, 1979; Hubbard, 2001), small group (Kotlyar & Karakowsky, 2006; Rau, 2005), intergenerational (Bergstrom & Nussbaum, 1996; Zhang, Harwood, & Hummert, 2005), intercultural (Cai, Wilson, & Drake, 2000; Kochman, 1981), organizational (Putnam & Wilson, 1982; Stohl, 2001), and gender (Cupach & Canary, 1995; Halpern & McLean Parks, 1996). Conflict can be defined as a disagreement between two or more parties, who perceive incompatible goals, interests, viewpoints, during interaction and interfere with each other's goal directed activities (Deutsch, 1973; Pruitt & Kim, 2004; Ting-Toomey et al., 2000). Although conflict is often viewed as problematic, it is not all negative. The management of conflict can be a productive experience in that it can bring about positive changes in a relationship and/or achievement of goals (Canary & Spitzberg, 1990; Deutsch, 1973; Thomas, 1976; Ting-Toomey et al., 2000). Prior research has established that effective conflict management could enhance relational satisfaction and closeness (Canary, 2003). That said, if conflict is not managed well, it can result in feelings of dissatisfaction and a decay of a relationship (Pruitt & Kim, 2004; Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001).

The Arab world has been in the centre of global events in the last few decades. The whole area covers approximately 20 countries united by the ties of a common language and one religion (Barakat, 1993; Patai, 1983). Although the Arab countries

have been recently given much media attention, especially in the context of political unrest, there has been little empirical research on how Arabs manage interpersonal conflict.   Although limited, a few studies have examined intercultural communication between Israeli and Arab participants, including the topics of intercultural negotiation (Morray & Liang, 2005; Said, 1974) and intergroup bias (Eshel, 1999; Haidar & Zureik, 1987). Other studies examined effective intervention strategies in Arab-Israeli conflict (George, 2003; Schechtman & Tanus, 2006). In general there is a dearth of empirical studies on the ways Arabs communicate with each other in conflict situations. Extending research on interpersonal conflict, the current study examines the influence of ethnic identity and self-construal on conflict management styles from the perspectives of Arab and American young adults. Findings in this study will enhance our understanding of how young adults in Arab countries and North America manage interpersonal conflict in light of their ethnic identity and self-construal.

Conflict and Conflict Management Styles

Previous research found that an individual chooses different conflict management styles to use across different situations (Sternberg & Soriano, 1984). Research has shown that the choice of a conflict style is significantly influenced by one's cultural beliefs (Gudykunst & Nishida, 1986; McCan & Honeycutt, 2006; Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). Studies by Blake and Mouton (1964), Thomas (1976), and Rahim (1983) differentiated between the different types of conflict on two dimensions: concern for self, or assertiveness, and concern for others, or

cooperativeness. Individuals can have high or low concern for self, high or low concern for others, or no concern at all. Based on these dimensions, five conflict management styles emerge. High concern for self and high concern for others lead to the *integrating* style, also referred to as collaborating or problem-solving style (Cai & Fink, 2002; Thomas, 1976). An individual who uses the integrating style tries to satisfy the goals and needs of both parties a conflict. Moderate concern for self and others results in the *compromising* style, when parties look for mutually satisfactory outcomes superficially without digging into the problem (i.e., not necessarily the best solution). The compromising style can be placed somewhere between the competing and the accommodating styles, and often involves an equal distribution of resources (Thomas, 1976). The *dominating* style is the most confrontational, and assumes the use of forceful tactics while parties are unwilling to reconcile. A conflict managed with a dominating style results in the victory of one party at the expense of the other (Thomas, 1976). Individuals who adopt the dominating style have high concern for themselves and little concern for other's interests. On the opposite side, when an individual has a low concern for self, but is highly concerned about the other, he or she will adopt the *obliging* style. When using the obliging style, also referred to as accommodating (Thomas, 1976), an individual strives to preserve relational harmony by accommodating to the other's desires. Last, when a person has low concern for both, self interests and interests of the other, he or she will use the *avoiding* conflict management style. It is a non-confrontational style that involves withdrawing from the situation and avoiding the other party (Thomas, 1976).

Scholars argue that the two-dimensional typology was developed based on the Western view of conflict management, which was not sensitive to the complexity of all conflict management styles in other countries (Cai & Fink, 2002; Ting-Toomey et al., 2001; Ting-Toomey et al., 2000; Kim, Wang, Kondo, & Kim, 2007). For example, Ting-Toomey et al. (2000) included three more styles (i.e. emotional expression, third party help, and neglect) for handling conflict among African Americans, Asian Americans, European Americans, and Latina(o) Americans based on the conflict literature in Western and Eastern cultures. The e*motional expression* style focused on the use of emotions during the conflict interaction. Individuals who use emotional expression strongly rely on their feelings to guide conflict responses. The *third party help* style is utilized when the parties invite an outsider to mediate the conflict. The *neglect* style emphasizes aggressiveness in handling the conflict with the goal to threaten the opponent's image. Individuals who use the neglect are not only direct and assertive, as those who use the dominating style to attain their goal. The neglect style involves open aggressive behavior with the goal to hurt or harm the other person's image.Ting-Toomey et al.'s study (2001) examined the influence of culture and ethnicity on conflict styles among the four ethnic groups residing in the US. The panethnic factor analysis revealed seven conflict styles across the four ethnic groups, dropping the obliging style from the analysis. Ting-Toomey et al. (2000) suggested that there was no clear relationship between the dominating style and ethnic identity. Thus, they concluded that the dominating style may have a stronger connection to other possible influences, such as self-construal, a construct which describes

individual affiliation with social groups. Further, Ting-Toomey et al. (2000) found

that the avoiding and the third party conflict management styles were more frequently

used by Latino (a) Americans and by Asian Americans than by African Americans,

whereas Asian Americans avoided conflicts more than European Americans did.

Self-Construal

Markus and Kitayama (1991) viewed individuals as independent and

interdependent. Independent self-construal was defined as separation of self from the

others. An independent individual values self-realization, self expression, individual

rights, and developing one's potential, and views him or herself as whole and unique.

From the independent perspective, individual action is driven by one's own thoughts

and ideas. Interdependence, on the other side, assumes strong affiliation with one's

social groups; individuals value their social world and are concerned with

maintaining group cohesion and harmony over individual expression. More

importantly, Oezel (1998) pointed out that individuals can be independent and

interdependent simultaneously, but in different degrees. Besides, according to the

recent research, self-construal is related to the individualism-collectivism framework

in that independent self-construal is more common in individualistic cultures,

whereas interdependent self-construal is typical for collectivistic countries (Oetzel,

1998).

The individualism-collectivism framework is the most common typology in

explaining cultural similarities and differences (Hofstede, 2001; Gudykunst et al.,

1996). Individualistic societies put a greater value on individual identity rather than

group identity. In an individualistic society, personal rights are of primary importance and group obligations are secondary (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). Collectivistic societies, on the opposite, place a greater emphasis on group identity. In collectivistic cultures group concerns are more important than individual desires.

The self-construal framework posits that although there is a general tendency towards collectivism or individualism in a certain culture, there can be individualists in a collectivistic society, and collectivists in individualistic societies (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). The distinguishing feature of the self-construal framework is the consideration of individual variability within a culture. In conceptualizing the connection between collectivism-individualism dimension and self-construal, Oetzel (1998) argued that the cultural dimension of collectivism and individualism could not predict individual behavior because it was not clear which particular aspect of culture influenced communication behavior. Thus, Oetzel (1998) suggested that self-construal was a better predictor of communicative behavior, as it considered both cultural values and individual differences. Specifically, he posited that self-construal mediated the influence of cultural individualism-collectivism on individuals' communicative behaviors. In his research on effects of self-construal and ethnicity on conflict styles, Oetzel (1998) found that self-construal was a better predictor of conflict management styles than ethnic or cultural background. Additionally, the study of Ting-Toomey et al. (2000) found that ethnic identity had a greater impact on conflict styles than ethnic background. To continue this line of research, one of the goals of this study is to examine which construct, self-construal or ethnic identity, is a

better predictor of conflict management styles among Arabs and Americans.

Barry, Elliott, and Evans (2000) suggest that Arabs may score high on both dimensions of individualism and collectivism. On the one hand, Arab society holds a great value for an individual (Allen, 2006; Patai, 1983). Allen (2006) argued that "the whole culture and social order of the Arab world is built around persons in community, not collectives of people without names" (p. 5). Conversely, due to the tribal history of the Arab countries the major social unit is the group and not the individual. Family is regarded as a major social unit, and an individual is identified with his or her *ahl*, which represents the concept of an extended family, "a shared public identity" (Fernea & Fernea, 1997, p. 207). Based on this combination of collectivistic and individualistic tendencies, it stands to reason that the self-construal framework will better predict and explain the preference for one conflict management style over the other in the context of the Arab culture.

Ethnic Identity, Self-Construal, and Conflict Management Styles

According to the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), individuals, in addition to personal identity, maintain a social identity, which serves as a connection to certain groups and ultimately strengthens positive self-image. Social identity can mean affiliation with different entities based on the country of birth, nationality, social class, race, education level, ethnicity, to name a few. In terms of the influence of ethnicity on conflict management styles, Ting-Toomey et al. (2000) found that ethnic identity played a greater role than ethnic or cultural background among African Americans, Asian Americans, European Americans, and Latino (a) Americans.

Moreover, Ting-Toomey et al. (2000) found that the strength of ethnic identity determined the choice of a conflict management style. Specifically, individuals with a strong ethnic identity utilized the integrating style more than those with a weak ethnic identity, and individuals who generally valued ethnic tradition used the integrating and the compromising styles more than those who did not associate with their ethnicity at all. Moreover, the marginal group (i.e., individuals who associated themselves neither with their ethnicity nor with the larger culture) used third party help more than the other groups.

In a later study, Ting-Toomey et al. (2001) included self-construal in the analysis of conflict styles among African American, Asian American, European American and Latino (a) American participants. Consistent with the idea that an individual could be independent and interdependent at the same time, Ting-Toomey et al. (2001) developed two additional types of self-construal. Biconstrual individuals scored high on both dimensions – independent and interdependent, whereas ambivalent individuals scored low on both of these dimensions. Ting-Toomey et al. (2001) used Rahim's (1983) typology of conflicts, adding, as mentioned earlier, neglect, third party help, and emotional expression styles to accommodate the cross-cultural nature of research. The findings confirmed that self-construal explained the choice of a conflict management style better than ethnic background and gender (Ting-Toomey et al., 2001). Moreover the authors identified a link between certain self-construals and particular conflict management styles. First, biconstruals, independents, and interdependents used the integrating and the compromising styles

more than ambivalents did. Second, biconstruals used the emotional expression more

than ambivalents did. Third, biconstruals used the dominating style more than

interdependents and ambivalents did. Fourth, interdependents and ambivalents used

the third-party help style more than biconstruals and independents did. Last,

ambivalents used the neglect more than biconstruals, independents, and

interdependents. Thus, Ting-Toomey et al. (2001) suggested that individuals who

scored high on independence and interdependence simultaneously had more styles

available to use in conflict situations, while individuals who scored low on both

dimensions limited their choice to one conflict style, which appeared to be neglect.

However, the researchers did not report the means for the four types of self-construal

that would show how much each type was endorsed by the participants. Thus it is

impossible to judge the overall validity of the four self-construal types.

Culture, communication, and conflict management styles

From the communicative perspective, culture is "a learned meaning system

that consists of patterns of traditions, beliefs, values, norms, and symbols that are

passed on from one generation to the next and are shared to varying degrees by

interacting members of a community" (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p. 10). From this point of

view culture and communication are closely connected and sustain each other.

Many studies have been conducted on culture and its pervasive influence on many

aspects of social life. Kagan, Knight, and Martinez-Romero (1982) studied the

influence of culture on conflict management styles utilized by rural Mexican, Anglo

American, and Mexican American children. Using multiple methodologies, the

researchers found that Mexican children cooperated and avoided conflicts more than

children in the United States (Kagan, Knight, & Martinez-Romero, 1982). Rural

Mexican children consistently responded with non-conflict to conflict situations in

70% of the trials, while Anglo American and Mexican American children used the

non-conflict style only in 15 % of the trials. In another study Collier (1991) found that

African Americans, Mexican Americans, and Anglo Americans approached conflict

differently and used differing conflict management styles in close friendships. Anglo

Americans focused on positive and neutral effects of conflict, gave little consideration

to context, and were direct when managing conflict. African Americans viewed

conflict as negative, and preferred clear argument and a problem-solving attitude.

Mexican Americans emphasized mutual understanding and support for the

relationship as the way to manage conflicts. Consistent with these two studies it

stands to reason that culture can significantly affect the choice of a conflict

management style.

Arab culture has a number of features which distinguishes it from the other

cultures. One of the main problems that scholars face in the study of the Arab world is

its diversity and homogeneity at the same time. Consisting of approximately 20

countries in the Arabian Peninsula and the North Africa, the Arab world represents

economic, political, and social diversity (Hutchings & Weir, 2006), and is often

referred to as a mosaic of various cultures and subcultures (Lutfiyya & Churchill,

1970). However, scholars also talk about its homogeneity. The first unifying factor is

language. Many scholars define an Arab as anyone whose mother tongue is Arabic

(Patai, 1983; Zaharna, 1995). Another unifying force is religion. The majority of Arab countries are unified by Islam, which has a great influence on individual and social life. Also research has shown the similarity of cultural upbringing among the Arabs regardless of the country of origin (Yousef, 2001) and the similarity of behavior at work (Ali, Taqi, & Krishnan, 1997; Hutchings & Weir, 2006). Therefore, there are sufficient reasons to consider the Arab world as one unit, but each scholar interpreting the results should keep in mind the difference in national and tribal cultures as possible variables. Another difficulty associated with the study of the Arab world today is its state of social transition. Due to the colonization of many Arab countries in the 20th century and its subsequent exposure to the outside world, the society in that region is in a state of transition. It is neither traditional nor modern, as Barakat (1993) points out. Therefore it is difficult to make generalizations about its social life; however, that is an unavoidable circumstance.

Arab communication and the topics of identity and conflict have not received as much attention as communication in the United States (Ting-Toomey et al., 2000), or East Asia (Kim et al., 2007). A few studies attempted to uncover the relationship between Arab identity and communication patterns. However, research in this area lacks empirical findings. Zaharna (1995) discusses how Arabs and Americans structure persuasive and appealing messages. Firstly, Zaharna (1995) argues that culture has a major influence on communication. Arab culture is high-context, and American culture is low-context. In other words, Arabs put less emphasis on the spoken words; meaning is embedded in the situation in which communication is

occurring or in the individuals involved. On the opposite, Americans place meaning in the words, making their communication specific and explicit. Another cultural difference is directness versus indirectness. Americans say directly what they mean, whereas Arabs are more ambiguous and emotional in their communication. Additionally, Zaharna (1995) classifies Arab culture as a "being" culture, where an individual is evaluated based on his or her background, family, or tribe, rather than on his or her deeds. American culture is a "doing" culture, and places more emphasis on individual accomplishments.

Secondly, Zaharna (1995) talks about the role of language. Language in the West is used to convey information. Thus accuracy, precision, and facts are the main features of communication in the West. On the opposite, Arabic language is more than a medium of sending and receiving information. Arabs use their language as poetry. Moreover, Arabic language is closely associated with religion. The holy book of Islam was revealed in Arabic language, and the founder of Islam himself was believed to be illiterate, therefore the majesty of the language is viewed as a kind of miracle. Moreover, it is language that unites the different countries in the Arab world. To summarize, Arabs put more emphasis on how messages are conveyed, rather than what is conveyed.

Thirdly, Zaharna (1995) discusses how culture and language influence message design. For Arabs the sound of the message, the structure of it, is more important than the actual facts. Metaphors, adjectives, and adverbs, are used more often than in English. Arabs also tend to exaggerate and repeat the facts in order to

make the message more vivid. In addition, Arabs are ambiguous and indirect in their communication in order to maintain harmony and save other's face.

Conflict management in the Arab world has been studied predominantly in organizational contexts. Elsayed-Elkhouly (1996) compared conflict management styles between Arab and American executives. Results showed that Arab participants used the integrating and the avoiding styles more than American executives did, whereas American executives used the obliging, the dominating, and the compromising styles more than Arabs did. Another study considered networking in China and Arab countries as a method to manage conflict situations (Hutchings and Weir, 2006). Networking in Arab countries is referred to as *wasta*, which originally meant connection and mediation, but its meaning has recently evolved into that of intercession and even corruption. Traditionally, intermediary *wasta* was performed by the head of the family to solve interpersonal conflicts, or by a group of notable personalities in the community to manage intergroup conflicts. The elected individuals gathered together and consulted on the best way to solve the issue, after that they invited each party separately or together and led it to the resolution of conflict. This form of *wasta* was the primary method of managing conflicts between families and tribes in the Arab region. Based on this tradition, it stands to reason that Arabs are prone to involve a third party in managing their conflicts.

Another study examined decision making styles among managers in Kuwait. Ali, Taqi, and Krishnan (1997) found that Arab managers had a high commitment to collectivism, and a low commitment to individualism. Kuwaiti managers gave more

preference to consultative and participative decision making styles than to autocratic, pseudoconsultative, consultative, participative, pseudoparticipative, and delegative styles. Autocratic and delegative were viewed as the least effective styles. When participants were asked about the most commonly used style by their immediate supervisors, they reported that pseudoconsultative was used most often. Pseudoconsultative decision making style referred to an individual's desire to show that a decision was made collectively although it had been predetermined by that individual prior to any discussion. The fact that Kuwaiti managers reported pseudoconsultative style as the most frequently used by their supervisors shows the dichotomy of values and actual deeds in the Arab society. Consultation and cooperation are a norm of communication, by which all are expected to abide. Given the values in the Arab society, it stands to reason that Arab participants will give preference to the conflict management styles that assume cooperation and consultation, i.e. the integrating, the compromising, the and obliging styles.

A few studies were conducted on the relationship between self-construal and the Arab identity. Barry et al. (2000) developed the Male Arabic Ethnic Identity Measure (MAEIM) and investigated the relationship between self-construal and ethnic identity of male Arab immigrants in the United States. To construct the items for the MAEIM Barry et al. (2000) conducted in-depth interviews with ten Arab immigrants in the US and identified general themes relevant to being Arab. Then, statements were developed and verified by the participants. Last, Arab immigrants filled out the questionnaire. Using the self-report inventory developed by Singelis

(1994), Barry et al. (2000) found a significant correlation between the MAEIM scale and the interdependent self-construal. Additionally, the results showed that individuals with strong Arab ethnic identity were more interdependent than independent.

The development of the research questions for this study is guided by the individualism-collectivism framework (Hofstede, 2001), self-construal and conflict management styles typologies (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Rahim, 1983; Singelis, 1994) and the literature on conflict management, ethnic identity, and self-construal (Barry et al., 2000; Oetzel, 1998; Ting-Toomey et al., 2001):

> RQ1: How do conflict management styles compare between American and Arab participants?
>
> RQ2: How do self-construal and ethnic identity compare between American and Arab participants?
>
> RQ3: Will self-construal and ethic identity predict conflict management styles for both groups?

Method

Participants

Three hundred and thirty male subjects participated in the study, including 145 European Americans (*M*age = 20.19, *SD* = 2.28) and 185 Arab international students studying in the United States (*M*age = 24.46, *SD* = 4.98). The Arab participants came from 16 countries, including Saudi Arabia (*n* = 62), Palestine (*n* = 28), Lebanon (*n* = 26), Egypt (*n* = 14), Syria (*n* = 8), United Arab Emirates (*n* = 8), Jordan (*n* = 7), Kuwait (*n* = 8), Tunisia (*n* = 6), Iraq (*n* = 5), Bahrain (*n* = 3), Morocco (*n* = 3), Qatar (*n* = 3), Libya (*n* = 2), Oman (*n* = 1), and Yemen (*n* = 1). The average years of education for American participants was 14.01 (*SD* = 2.34) and for Arab participants 16.99 (*SD* = 4.20). All participants were male, because Arab women are rarely allowed to travel alone from most of the Arab countries, and it would be difficult to gain a representative sample of the female population.

The respondents were recruited via three methods. American participants were students at a medium-size Midwestern university, who received extra credit for their participation. Arab participants were recruited through Arab Associations in various Universities throughout the United States. All the American participants and 164 Arabs completed an online survey posted on www.surveymonkey.com. Twenty one Arab participants at a medium-size Midwestern University completed the printed version of the survey (see Appendix C).

Procedures and measures

The first purpose of this study was to compare conflict management styles,

self-construal, and ethnic identity between American and Arab participants. The second purpose was to examine the influence of self-construal and ethnic identity on conflict management styles within both groups. Before filling out the questionnaire participants answered the demographic questions about their country of origin, gender, age, ethnicity, years of education, and the length of stay in the US. Participants were assured that all responses to the questions were strictly confidential.

In section one, participants were asked to think of a typical conflict with their same sex peers. Then participants filled out the questionnaire developed by Ting-Toomey et al. (2000). The questionnaire was based on the modified Rahim's (1983) Organizational Conflict Inventory – II (ROCI-II) and measured five conflict styles, including the compromising (e.g., I would win some and lose some so that a compromise could be reached), the integrating (e.g., "I would sit down with the other person to negotiate a resolution to his objectionable behavior"), the avoiding (e.g., "I would stay away from disagreement with the other person"), the dominating (e.g., "I would sometimes use my power to win a competitive situation"), and the obliging styles (e.g., "I often go along with the suggestions of the other person"). Other items were added to Rahim's (1983) inventory to accommodate the cross-cultural nature of research and assess three additional conflict management styles: third-party help (e.g., "I would typically go through a third party to settle our conflict"), neglect (e.g., "While in the presence of the other person, I would act as though he did not exist"), and emotional expression (e.g., "I would listen to what my "gut" or "heart" says in the conflict situation"). All three styles were adapted from the study of Ting-Toomey

et al. (2000), however the *neglect* style was labeled as *aggressive* to better represent

the nature of the style. Participants were asked to respond on a 5-point Likert-type

scale, with 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly

agree. Reliabilities of the subscales for each conflict management style within each

culture group were computed. Cronbach's alphas ranged between .74 and .90 for the

American sample, and between .72 and .91 for the Arab sample (see Table 1).

Table 1

Cronbach alpha's for the Conflict Management Styles, the Independent Self-Construal,

the Interdependent Self-Construal, and the Identity Scales.

	Arabs	Americans	All participants
Integrating Conflict Style	.84	.85	.86
Compromising Conflict Style	.72	.78	.74
Dominating Conflict Style	.72	.76	.74
Obliging Conflict Style	.81	.74	.78
Avoiding Conflict Style	.85	.90	.88
Emotional Conflict Style	.78	.78	.79
Third-Party Conflict Style	.91	.88	.90
Aggressive Conflict Style	.83	.85	.84
Independent Self-Construal	.73	.78	.75
Interdependent Self-Construal	.89	.86	.88
Ethnic Identity	.86	.88	.88

In section two, participants responded to 21 self-construal items, drawn from the inventory developed by Gudykunst et al. (1996), and used by Ting-Toomey et al. (2001) in a similar study. Again, participants responded on a 5-point Likert-type scale with 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. The statements in the questionnaire either supported an independent self-construal (e.g., "I try not to depend on others") or an interdependent self-construal (e.g., "My group memberships play a large role in my view of myself"). The Chronbach's alpha for the interdependent self-construal items in the American sample was .86, and in the Arab sample .89. Cronbach's alpha for the independent self-construal was .78 for the American sample and .73 for the Arab sample (see Table 1).

In section three, students responded to six items that measured their ethnic identification. The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) is a revised version of Phinney's (1992) similar instrument. MEIM was revised by Phinney and Ong (2007). The items on the scale were preceded by an open-ended question about participant's ethnic label. The items tap on individual's efforts to explore (e.g., "I have often done things that will help me understand my ethnic background") and to commit (e.g., "I feel strong attachment towards my own ethnic group") to his or her culture. Reliability of the scale was confirmed with the Cronbach's alpha .88 for the American sample and .86 for the Arab sample. All survey items were in English. Participants who completed the paper –based survey commented that the items were clear.

Results

RQ1: Conflict Management Styles

The first research question asked how conflict management styles compared

between Arab and American students. Eight univariate one-way analysis of variance

tests were conducted to examine conflict management styles among the two cultural

groups. American and Arab participants differed significantly in their preferences for

five conflict styles, including the avoiding ($F(1,269) = .7.99$, $p < .01$), the integrating

($F(1, 271) = 24.84$, $p < .01$), the aggressive ($F(1,284) = 8.26$, $p < .01$), the emotional

expression ($F(1,281) = 9.72$, $p < .01$), and the third-party help styles ($F(1,285) = 6.31$,

$p < .05$). As shown in the Table 2, Arabs preferred the integrating, the avoiding, and

the third-party help styles significantly more than Americans did. American students

preferred the emotional expression and the aggressive styles more than Arabs.

Participants did not differ significantly in their preference for the compromising

($F(1,300) = .40$, $p > .05$), the dominating ($F(1,292) = 3.93$, $p > .05$), and the obliging

($F(1,295) = 1.27$, $p > .05$) conflict styles. American and Arab participants equally

preferred the compromising, the dominating, and the obliging styles.

Additional analyses. Paired *t*-tests were conducted to identify preferences for

conflict management styles within each cultural group. Twenty eight comparisons

were analyzed with significance level set to .002 (05/28) within each group. American

students chose the compromising, the integrating, and the dominating as the most

preferable conflict management styles (no significant difference among the three

styles), followed by the emotional expression and the obliging conflict styles. The

next preferred style was the avoiding, followed by the third-party help style. The least

preferred style among American participants was the aggressive conflict style. The

most preferable conflict management styles among Arabs were the integrating and the

compromising styles (no significant difference between the two styles), followed by

the dominating and the obliging styles. The next preferred styles included the

avoiding, the emotional expression, and the third-party help styles (no significant

difference among the tree styles). There was no significant difference in the

preference of the obliging and the avoiding styles. The least preferred style among

Arabs was the aggressive conflict management style. Table 2 shows the means and

the standard deviations for conflict styles in the Arab and American samples.

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations of Conflict Styles.

	Arabs		Americans	
Conflict Style	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Integrating	3.87[a]	.44	3.60[b]	.46
Compromising	3.74[a]	.55	3.70[a]	.51
Dominating	3.36[a]	.66	3.50[a]	.55
Obliging	3.20[a]	.64	3.12[a]	.54
Avoiding	3.14[a]	.52	2.96[b]	.54
Emotional	3.03[a]	.67	3.27[b]	.62
Third-Party	2.94[a]	.82	2.71[b]	.71
Aggressive	2.22[a]	.71	2.46[b]	.71

Note: Means with different superscripts in rows indicate a significant difference

between the two cultural groups.

The least preferred conflict management style for both cultural groups was the

aggressive style. One-sample *t*-tests comparing the means of conflict management

styles to 3, the midpoint of the 5-point Likert-type scale, showed that both Americans

($t(140) = - 8.98$, $p < .01$) and Arabs ($t(144) = -13.20$, $p < .01$) preferred not to use the

aggressive style in conflict situations with their same sex peers.

RQ2: Ethnic Identity and Self-Construal

The second research question asked how self-construal and ethnic identity

compared between American and Arab participants. To examine the ethnic identity in

the two cultural groups, one-way analysis of variance was conducted. Results showed

that American and Arab participants differed significantly in their levels of ethnic

identification, $F(1,323) = 47.53$, $p <.01$, $\eta^2 = .13$. Arab participants' ($M = 3.84$, *SD*

$= .78$) ethnic identity was significantly stronger than Americans' identity ($M = 3.23$,

SD $= .81$).

To compare self-construal between the two groups, one-way multivariate

analysis of variance was conducted. Results revealed a significant multivariate main

effect for culture, $F(2, 274) = 6.22$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = 04$. Univariate analyses of variances

were conducted as follow up tests. The significance level was set to .025. Results

showed a significant cultural effect on interdependent self-construal, $F(1, 275) = 9.89$,

$p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .04$, but not on independent self-construal, $F(1, 275) = 4.82$, $p < .025$, η^2

$= .02$. Table 3 shows the means and the standard deviations for the two types of

self-construal. Arab participants (M = 4.15, SD = .45) did not differ significantly on the independent self-construal from American participants (M = 4.04, SD = .44); however, Arab young males (M = 3.85, SD = .61) were significantly more interdependent than American young males (M = 3.63, SD = .50).

Additional analysis was conducted to examine self-construal within each culture group. A paired-samples t-test showed that American participants were significantly more independent (M = 4.04, SD = .44) than interdependent (M = 3.63, SD = .50), $t(135)$ = 7.94, p < .01. Similarly, Arabs were more independent (M = 4.15, SD = .45) than interdependent (M = 3.85, SD = .61), $t(140)$ = 5.37, p < .01. To summarize, Arab males were predominantly more independent than interdependent, however in comparison with Americans, Arab participants were equally independent but more interdependent.

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations for Self-Construal.

		Arabs		Americans	
		M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Self-Construal	Independent	4.15[b]	.45	4.04[b]	.44
	Interdependent	3.85[a]	.61	3.63[c]	.50

Note: Means with different superscripts in rows and columns indicate a significant difference.

RQ3: Self-construal, ethnic identity, and conflict management styles

RQ3 asked whether self-construal and ethnic identity would predict conflict management styles among young male American and Arab participants. To answer

RQ3, eight multiple hierarchical regression analyses were conducted. Demographic

variables, including age and years of education, were entered in the first model.

Self-construals and ethnic identity were entered in the second model. Correlations

between the major variables in two samples are presented in the Appendix A and B.

Integrating

Demographic variables as a group did not predict the integrating style among

American participants ($R = .17$, adjusted $R^2 = .02$, $F(2,128) = 1.96$, $p > .05$). The

second set of variables significantly predicted the choice of the integrating conflict

management style ($R = .42$, adjusted $R^2 = .14$, $F(3,125) = 7.48$, $p < .001$).

Independent ($\beta = .31$, $t(125) = 3.43$, $p < .05$, $sr^2 = .08$) and interdependent ($\beta = .18$,

$t(125) = 2.36$, $p < .05$, $sr^2 = .04$) self-construals both were significant positive

predictors of the integrating conflict style. The more independent and interdependent

American participants were, the more they used the integrating conflict management

style.

In the Arab sample, demographic variables as a group did not predict the

integrating style ($R = .07$, adjusted $R^2 = -.01$, $F(2,118) = .26$, $p > .05$). The second set

of variables significantly predicted the integrating style ($R = .30$, adjusted $R^2 = .05$,

$F(3,115) = 3.66$, $p < .05$). The independent self-construal positively predicted the

integrating conflict style ($\beta = .22$, $t(115) = 2.34$, $p < .05$, $sr^2 = .04$). The more

independent Arab participants were, the more they used the integrating conflict

management style. The interdependent self-construal and ethnic identity were not

significant predictors of the integrating style (see Table 4a).

Table 4a

Relationships between Ethnic Identity, Self-Construal and the Integrating Conflict Management Style.

	R^2 change	β	sr^2
Americans			
1. Demographics	.03		
Age		.04	.03
Years of education		-.00	.00
2. Culture	.15**		
Identity		.03	.00
Independent Self-Construal		.31**	.08
Interdependent Self-Construal		.18*	.04
Arabs			
1. Demographics	.00		
Age		.01	.00
Years of education		-.01	.16
2. Ethnic Identity/Self-Construal	.09*		
Identity		-.02	.00
Independent Self-Construal		.22*	.04
Interdependent Self-Construal		.12	.03

*Note. *p < .05, **p < .01.*

Compromising

Demographic variables as a group did not predict the compromising conflict style among Americans ($R = .17$, adjusted $R^2 = .02$, $F(2,130) = 2.04$, $p > .05$). The second set of predictors was significant ($R = .40$, adjusted $R^2 = .13$, $F(3,127) = 6.77$, $p < .001$). The significant positive predictors were the independent self-construal ($\beta = .23$, $t(127) = 2.35$, $p < .05$, $sr^2 = .04$) and the interdependent self-construal ($\beta = .27$, $t(127) = 3.21$, $p < .01$, $sr^2 = .07$). The more independent and interdependent American participants were, the more they compromised during conflicts. For the Arab sample, both the demographic variables ($R = .02$, adjusted $R^2 = -.02$, $F(2,125) = .02$, $p > .05$), and the self-construal/ethnic identity set ($R = .18$, adjusted $R^2 = -.01$, $F(3,122) = .1.42$, $p > .05$) failed to predict the compromising style (see Table 4b).

Dominating

Demographic variables as a group did not predict the dominating conflict style among Americans ($R = .06$, adjusted $R^2 = -.01$, $F(2,128) = .21$, $p > .05$). The second set of predictors, i.e. identity and self-construal, showed a significant result ($R = .39$, adjusted $R^2 = .12$, $F(3,125) = 7.29$, $p < .001$). The two positive significant predictors were ethnic identity ($\beta = .13$, $t(125) = 2.31$, $p < .05$, $sr^2 = .04$) and the independent self-construal ($\beta = .42$, $t(125) = 3.95$, $p < .01$, $sr^2 = .10$). The more Americans identified with their ethnicity and the more independent they were in their self-construal, the more they chose the dominating style. Interdependent self-construal was not a significant predictor of the dominating style among Americans.

Table 4b

Relationships between Ethnic Identity, Self-Construal and the Compromising Conflict Management Style

	R^2 change	B	sr^2
Americans			
1. Demographics	.03		
Age		.04	.02
Years of education		.00	.00
2. Ethnic Identity/Self-Construal	.13**		
Identity		-.09	.02
Independent Self-Construal		.23*	.04
Interdependent Self-Construal		.27**	.07
Arabs			
1. Demographics	.00		
Age		.00	.00
Years of education		.00	.00
2. Ethnic Identity/Self-Construal	.03		
Identity		.03	.00
Independent Self-Construal		.09	.00
Interdependent Self-Construal		.12	.02

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01.

Table 4c

Relationships between Ethnic Identity, Self-Construal and the Dominating Conflict Management Style

	R^2 change	B	sr^2
Americans	.00		
1. Demographics			
Age		-.01	.00
Years of education		.00	.00
2. Ethnic Identity/Self-Construal	.15**		
Ethnic Identity		.13*	.04
Independent Self-Construal		.42**	.10
Interdependent Self-Construal		-.01	.00
Arabs	.03		
1. Demographics			
Age		-.03	.03
Years of education		.01	.00
2. Ethnic Identity/Self-Construal	.04		
Ethnic Identity		.10	.01
Independent Self-Construal		.19	.01
Interdependent Self-Construal		.08	.00

Note. $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$.

For the Arab sample neither the demographic variables ($R = .18$, adjusted R^2

= .12, $F(2,124) = 2.12$, $p > .05$), nor the self-construal/identity set of variables (R

= .28, adjusted $R^2 = .04$, $F(3,121) = 1.89$, $p > .05$) predicted the dominating style.

Results for the dominating conflict management style are presented in Table 4c.

Obliging

Demographic variables as a group did not predict the obliging conflict style

among Americans ($R = .12$ adjusted $R^2 = .01$, $F(2,131) = .95$, $p > .05$). The second set

of variables significantly predicted American participants' choice of the obliging

conflict management style ($R = .43$, adjusted $R^2 = .15$, $F(3,128) = 8.72$, $p < .001$). The

significant effect was due to the interdependent self-construal ($\beta = .44$, $t(118) = 4.95$,

$p < .01$, $sr^2 = .16$). The more interdependent Americans were, the more they used the

obliging conflict management style. The independent self-construal and ethnic

identity were not significant predictors.

For Arab participants both demographic ($R = .33$, adjusted $R^2 = .09$, $F(3,121)$

= 7.21, $p < .01$) and ethnic identity/self-construal set ($R = .47$, adjusted $R^2 = .18$,

$F(3,118) = 5.57$, $p < .01$) predicted the obliging conflict management style. Among

the demographic variables, years of education were the negative significant predictor

($\beta = -.06$, $t(121) = -2.74$, $p < .01$, $sr^2 = .06$). The interdependent self-construal was

the positive predictor in the second set of variables ($\beta = .37$, $t(118) = 4.08$, $p < .01$, sr^2

= .11). The more educated Arab participants were, the less they used the obliging

style, and the more interdependent, the more they were obliging in conflict. The

independent self-construal and identity were not significant predictors of the obliging

conflict style among Arab participants. Results for the obliging conflict management

style are presented in Table 4d.

Table 4d

Relationships between Ethnic Identity, Self-Construal and the Obliging Conflict Management Style

	R^2 change	β	sr^2
Americans	.01		
1. Demographics			
Age		.02	.01
Years of education		-.03	.01
2. Culture	.17**		
Ethnic Identity		.00	.00
Independent Self-Construal		-.20	.02
Interdependent Self-Construal		.44**	.16
Arabs	.11**		
1. Demographics			
Age		-.01	.00
Years of education		-.06**	.06
2. Ethnic Identity/Self-Construal	.11**		
Ethnic Identity		-.06	.00
Independent Self-Construal		-.11	.05
Interdependent Self-Construal		.37**	.11

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01.

Avoiding

Demographic variables as a group did not predict the avoiding conflict management style among American participants ($R = .16$, adjusted $R^2 = .02$, $F(2,122) = 1.53$, $p > .05$). Controlling for the effect of demographic variables, the second set with self-construal and ethnic identity as variables, significantly predicted the avoiding conflict management style ($R = .34$, adjusted $R^2 = .08$, $F(3,119) = 4.27$, $p < .01$). The independent self-construal was the negative predictor ($\beta = -.28$, $t(119) = -2.48$, $p < .05$, $sr^2 = .04$) and the interdependent self-construal was the positive predictor ($\beta = .26$, $t(119) = 2.66$, $p < .01$, $sr^2 = .05$) of the avoiding style. The more independent American participants were, the less they avoided conflicts; and the more interdependent they were, the more they used the avoiding conflict management style. Ethnic identity was not a significant predictor.

For the Arab participants, demographic variables as a group did not predict the avoiding conflict style ($R = .18$, adjusted $R^2 = .01$, $F(2,122) = 1.53$, $p > .05$). Regression analysis for the second set of predictors was significant ($R = .31$, adjusted $R^2 = .06$, $F(3,117) = 2.75$, $p < .05$). The significant positive predictor was the interdependent self-construal ($\beta = .22$, $t(117) = 2.74$, $p < .01$, $sr^2 = .06$). The more interdependent Arab participants were, the more they used the avoiding style. The independent self-construal and ethnic identity were not significant predictors for the avoiding style among the Arab participants. Results for the avoiding conflict management style are presented in Table 4e.

Table 4e

Relationships between Ethnic Identity, Self-Construal and the Avoiding Conflict

Management Style

	R^2 change	B	sr^2
Americans			
1. Demographics	.02		
Age		-.00	.00
Years of education		-.03	.02
2. Ethnic Identity/Self-Construal	.10**		
Identity		-.09	.02
Independent Self-Construal		-.28*	.04
Interdependent Self-Construal		.26**	.05
Arabs			
1. Demographics	.03		
Age		-.00	.00
Years of education		-.02	.02
2. Ethnic Identity/Self-Construal	.06*		
Identity		-.10	.02
Independent Self-Construal		-.05	.00
Interdependent Self-Construal		.22**	.06

Note. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$.

Emotional Expression

Demographic variables as a group did not predict the emotional expression conflict style among Americans ($R = .13$, adjusted $R^2 = .00$, $F(2,130) = 1.07$, $p > .05$). The second set of variables was a significant predictor ($R = .34$, adjusted $R^2 = .08$, $F(3,127) = 4.76$, $p < .05$). The significant effect was due to the interdependent self-construal ($\beta = .23$, $t(127) = 2.17$, $p < .05$, $sr^2 = .03$). The more interdependent Americans were, the more they used emotions in managing conflicts with peers.

Arab participants' choice of emotional expression style was significantly predicted by the demographic variables ($R = .28$, adjusted $R^2 = .08$, $F(2,125) = 5.51$, $p < .01$). Years of education negatively predicted the emotional expression conflict style ($\beta = - .05$, $t(125) = - 2.53$, $p < .05$, $sr^2 = .05$). The more educated participants were, the less they used the emotional expression style. Identity and self-construal were not significant predictors for the emotional expression style among Arabs ($R = .34$, adjusted $R^2 = .08$, $F(3,122) = 1.61$, $p > .05$). Results are presented in Table 4f.

Third-party Help

Both demographic ($R = .10$, adjusted $R^2 = .00$, $F(2,131) = .70$, $p > .05$) and self-construal/ethnic identity set of variables ($R = .20$, adjusted $R^2 = .00$, $F(3,128) = 1.39$, $p > .05$) failed to predict the third-party help conflict style among young male Americans. For the Arab participants demographic variables significantly predicted the choice of the third-party hep conflict management style ($R = .29$, adjusted $R^2 = .07$, $F(2,125) = 5.82$, $p < .01$). Years of education were the significant negative predictor ($\beta = - .08$, $t(131) = -3.10$, $p < .01$, $sr^2 = .07$). The older Arab students were, the less

they asked a third party to help resolving an interpersonal conflict. Self-construal and ethnic identity did not significantly predict the third-party conflict management style in the Arab sample (R = .37, adjusted R^2 = .10, $F(3,122)$ = 2.56, p > .05). Results are shown in Table 4g.

Aggressive

For the American sample, the set of demographic variables (R = .24, adjusted R^2 = .04, $F(2,129)$ = 3.92, p < .05) and the set with ethnic identity and self-construal (R=.34, adjusted R^2 = .08, $F(3,126)$ = 2.83, p < .05) were both significant predictors. Age (β = -.06, $t(129)$ = -2.09, p < .05, sr^2 = .03) was the negative predictor and ethnic identity was the positive predictor (β = .19, $t(122)$ = .70, p < .05, sr^2 = .04). The older American participants were, the less they used the aggressive style to manage conflicts. The stronger Americans identified with their ethnicity, the more they used the aggressive conflict management style. Self-construal was not a significant predictor.

In the Arab sample neither the demographic variables (R = .13, adjusted R^2 = .00, $F(2,125)$ = 1.05, p > .05), nor the set of variables with identity and self-construal (R = .23, adjusted R^2 = .01, $F(3,122)$ = 1.57, p > .05), predicted the aggressive conflict management style. Results for the aggressive style are presented in Table 4h.

Table 4f

Relationships between Ethnic Identity, Self-Construal and the Emotional Expression

Conflict Management Style

	R^2 change	B	sr^2
Americans	.02		
1. Demographics			
Age		-.04	.01
Years of education		.00	.00
2. Culture	.10**		
Ethnic Identity		.12	.03
Independent Self-Construal		.18	.02
Interdependent Self-Construal		.23*	.03
Arabs	.08**		
1. Demographics			
Age		-.01	.00
Years of education		-.05*	.05
2. Ethnic Identity/Self-Construal	.04		
Ethnic Identity		.00	.00
Independent Self-Construal		-.02	.00
Interdependent Self-Construal		.22	.03

Note.$*p < .05$, $**p < .01$.

Table 4g

Relationships between Ethnic Identity, Self-Construal and the Third-Party Help

Conflict Management Style

	R^2 change	B	sr^2
Americans			
1. Demographics	.01		
Age		-.01	.00
Years of education		-.02	.01
2. Culture	.03		
Identity		.03	.00
Independent Self-Construal		-.23	.02
Interdependent Self-Construal		.19	.02
Arabs			
1. Demographics	.08**		
Age		.01	.00
Years of education		-.08**	.07
2. Ethnic Identity/Self-Construal	.05		
Identity		.02	.00
Independent Self-Construal		-.28	.02
Interdependent Self-Construal		.30	.04

Note. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$.

Table 4h

Relationships between Ethnic Identity, Self-Construal and the Aggressive Conflict

Management Style

	R^2 change	B	sr^2
Americans			
1. Demographics	.06*		
Age		-.06*	.03
Years of education		-.03	.01
2. Ethnic Identity/Self-Construal	.06*		
Identity		.19*	.04
Independent Self-Construal		-.13	.00
Interdependent Self-Construal		-.19	.02
Arabs			
1. Demographics	.02		
Age		-.01	.00
Years of education		-.02	.01
2. Ethnic Identity/Self-Construal	.04		
Identity		.07	.00
Independent Self-Construal		-.24	.02
Interdependent Self-Construal		-.13	.01

*Note. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$.*

Discussion

The purpose of the current study was twofold. First, this research examined conflict management styles, ethnic identity, and self-construal among young male Arabs and American college students. Second, this study explored the relationship between ethnic identity, self-construal and conflict management styles within each cultural group.

In terms of conflict management styles, American participants preferred the integrating, the compromising, and the dominating styles (there was no significant difference among the three styles), followed by the emotional expression and the obliging conflict styles (there was no significant difference between the two styles). The next preferred style was the avoiding, followed by the third-party help style. The least preferred style among American participants was the aggressive conflict management style. Arab participants preferred the integrating and the compromising styles the most, followed by the dominating and the obliging styles. The next preferred styles included the avoiding, the emotional expression, and the third-party help conflict styles (there were no significant difference among the three styles). There was no significant difference in the preference of the obliging and the avoiding styles. The aggressive conflict style was the least preferred among Americans. The comparison of conflict style preferences between the two cultural groups showed that Arabs preferred the integrating and the avoiding style significantly more than Americans, whereas Americans preferred the emotional expression and the aggressive styles significantly more than Arab participants.

Findings in this study showed that the young Arab participants had a stronger ethnic identity than did American participants. Ethnic identity predicted only the aggressive and the dominating conflict styles in the American sample, and did not predict any conflict styles in the Arab sample. Analysis of self-construal also revealed significant differences between the two cultural groups. Arabs had a higher interdependent self-construal than independent self-construal, and Americans held a higher independent self-construal than interdependent self-construal. In addition, the comparison of self-construal between the two cultural groups revealed that Arabs and Americans were equally independent, but Arabs were more interdependent than Americans. The means of independent and interdependent self-construals in both cultural groups were significantly above the midpoint scale.

The independent self-construal, which emphasizes individual rights, self-reliance, personal identity, and assertiveness, positively predicted the integrating style for both American and Arab participants. In addition, the independent self-construal positively predicted the compromising and the dominating styles and negatively predicted the avoiding style in the American sample.

The interdependent self-construal, which emphasizes group membership, sense of belonging, loyalty to one's group, and heightened awareness of the other, positively predicted the obliging and the avoiding conflict styles among Arab and American participants. In addition, the interdependent self-construal positively predicted the integrating, the compromising, and the emotional expression conflict styles among American participants. Altogether, results in this study have

demonstrated that Arabs and Americans vary in the strength of their ethnic identity and their preferences in conflict management styles. In addition, the findings suggest that self-construal is not a unidimensional construct, and participants can have high independent and interdependent self-construals simultaneously. Results also showed that self-construal is a better predictor of conflict management styles than is ethnic identity. These themes will be discussed in light of conceptualizations of prior research in conflict styles, self-construal and ethic identity.

Ethnic identity

Results showed that Arabs had a stronger ethnic identity than Americans. There are a few explanations to this finding. First, Arabs are generally born into families with set ethnic practices. Therefore, Arabs in traditional families do not have a choice between different ethnicities, and identify only with their own. Many Arabs may not even encounter another culture until they grow up and have opportunities to travel. On the opposite, there is a high rate of intermarriage and social mobility in the US (Ting-Toomey et al., 2000). As a result, Americans have multiple heritages, and it is almost impossible to identify strongly with every background. Therefore, ethnic identity becomes a choice rather than an inheritance, whereby individuals choose certain practices from different cultures and adapt them to their lives, forming a "symbolic ethnicity" (Ting-Toomey et al., 2000). To summarize, Arab ethnic identity has a more defined character and is an integral part of one's mindset from childhood. On the opposite, identity among Americans can be heterogeneous, and individuals may adopt certain practices according to their wants and needs, and change them

throughout their lives.

Second, Arab participants in this study all resided in the United States temporarily, belonging to a minority group in contrast to the majority group of European Americans. Social-structural and categorization theories posit that members of majority and minority groups differ in how they identify with their groups. Gurin, Peng, Lopes, and Nagda (1999) attribute this difference to power relationships, where the dominating group ignores other groups. The dominant group has the power to structure social life according to their needs and wants, and disregard the needs of others. Consequently, ethnic differences become apparent to those who suffer, especially if they have to fight for their rights and protect their ethnic identity. Therefore, group identity is stronger in subordinate groups than in dominant groups (Gurin et al., 1999). Power relationships are particularly valid in this study. All American participants identified themselves as European Americans. The United States consists of different cultural subgroups, but historically European Americans have been the only dominant group, while Latino(a) Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, and even Native Americans are minorities in the US. Thus American participants in this study are the dominant group not only in relation to Arabs but also in relation to other subgroups in the United State. As for Arabs, the salience of Arab ethnicity must be stronger in the US, considering the current political situation and growing prejudice towards Arabs in this country (Barry, Elliot, & Evans, 2000). Ethnic history of Arabs and Americans as well as the current power relationships between the two cultural groups may have led to a stronger ethnic

identity among Arabs in comparison with Americans.

Ethnic identity was not a good predictor of conflict management styles among young American and Arab participants. This finding extends previous research where cultural background and ethnicity was not found to be a good predictor of conflict management styles (Oetzel, 1998). It is important to note that this research focused exclusively on cross-cultural rather than intercultural conflict. When individuals of the same ethnic group communicate with other, ethnicity is not as salient as in intercultural encounters. Forbes (1997) argued that individuals who strongly identify with their group will more likely deal with members of other groups in stereotypical ways. Consequently, conflict behavior may change with the increased salience of ethnic identity. Therefore, future research should examine the influence of ethnic identity on conflict behavior in intercultural situations.

Self-Construal

The analysis of self-construal in both cultural groups showed that Arabs and Americans scored high on both dimensions of self-construal. This finding extends past research on self-construal as an orthogonal rather than a uni-dimensional construct. The initial uni-dimensional view of self-construal stems from the Western tendency to dichotomize constructs. Kim (2002) explains that this tendency to dichotomize is evident in psychological descriptions of individuals, such as extroversion and introversion, emotion or cognition, etc. Consequently, self-construal was also dichotomized into linear extremes, assuming that an independent individual is not interdependent and vice versa. However, results of this study do not support the

uni-dimensional view of self-construal, because both cultural groups had high scores on both dimensions.

Earlier research confirms that people can develop both self-construals. For example, similar results have been obtained by Cross and Markus (1991) where they found that East Asian college exchange students in the US placed more emphasis on the interdependent self than did North Americans; however, the two groups did not differ on the scores for the independent self-construal. Another study by Sinha and Tripathi (1994) suggests that the Indian culture is neither individualistic nor collectivistic. Indians use elements of both dimensions according to a situation. Moreover, Ting-Toomey et al. (2000) posit that an individual who develops both self-construals has a wider choice of conflict styles in conflict situations than individuals who develop only one self-construal or who score low on both self-construals. This study confirms the orthogonal view of self-construal, where independent and interdependent self-construals are two separate constructs, and individuals can develop both of them simultaneously. It is important to note that this study involved young members of society who are highly receptive to the ongoing social changes in the world. Due to the current globalization movement, youth in traditionally collectivistic cultures may be influenced by a strong force that encourages them to become increasingly independent.

Another developing theme in communication research distinguishes among four types of individuals according to their independent and interdependent self-construals (Kim, 2002; Ting-Toomey et al., 2000). Ting-Toomey et al. (2000)

divided research participants into four groups, i.e. those who were highly independent and not interdependent, who were highly interdependent and not independent, who scored high on both self-construals, and who scored low on both dimensions. However, the four-type categorization of self-construal is not valid for this study, because both cultural groups scored high on both dimensions simultaneously. Therefore, dividing individuals into four types may be an imposed action, rather than an emerging theme.

Lastly, self-construal was overall a better predictor of conflict management styles than ethnic identity in both cultural groups. Results in this study extend previous findings where self-construal was found to be a better predictor of conflict styles than ethnicity or cultural background (Oetzel, 1998; Ting-Toomey et al., 2000). This finding is not surprising, considering the nature of the self-construal concept. Self-construal was developed to measure communicative behavior according to the collectivism-individualism framework, and considers both the culture where an individual comes from as well as his or her relationship with the community. It stands to reason that both culture and individual disposition in relation to others impact conflict behavior.

Conflict Styles and Self-Construals

The major findings about the preferences for conflict management styles in both cultural groups confirm and extend past research on collectivistic-individualistic values and self-construal. According to Hofstede (2001), North American culture is individualistic (i.e. individual freedom and welfare is more important than group

welfare). Arab culture is collectivistic (i.e. group welfare take preference over individual wishes and needs). Collectivistic cultures encourage direct and solution oriented conflict management styles, whereas individualistic cultures imply satisfaction of others' needs and avoidance (Trubitsky, Ting-Toomey, & Lin, 1991). Self-construal is one of the ways to measure individual's inclination toward collectivism or individualism. The independent self-construal is associated with individualistic values, whereas the interdependent self-construal is associated with collectivistic values, however as discussed earlier an individual can develop both self-construals simultaneously.

American participants preferred the integrating, the compromising, and the dominating styles the most. While Arab participants shared the first two styles with Americans as their most preferred styles in peer conflict, the dominating style did not make their list. The dominating management style is associated with individualistic values because it assumes low concern for others and high concern for self. Ting-Toomey et al. (1991) found that North Americans were more dominating in conflict than Japanese and Koreans, both being collectivistic cultures. In this study the dominating style in the American sample was predicted by the independent self-construal, which is an indicator of the individualistic values on a personal level. In addition, American participants preferred the aggressive style (i.e., a style that neglects other's needs) significantly more than Arabs. Although the aggressive style is not directly from Blake and Mouton's (1964) typology of conflict management styles, it is defined as a style that shows little concern for other's needs by Ting-Toomey et al.

(2000). To summarize, American participants' preference of the dominating style in relation to other conflict styles as well as greater use of the aggressive style in comparison with Arab participants can be explained by the individualistic values prevalent in the North American culture.

Arabs preferred the avoiding, the integrating, and the third-party help styles more than Americans did. The integrating style, which implies high concern for self and high concern for the other party, was positively predicted by the independent self-construal in the Arab sample. Individual behavior is influenced by cultural values (individualism-collectivism) and individual factors (self-construal). Therefore, the preference of the integrating style among Arabs is an example of the interplay between culture and individual disposition. Arab culture is predominantly collectivistic, with high concern for the other. Independent self-construal is associated with concern for self. Thus the combination of the collectivistic cultural values and the independent self-construal can explain the preference of the integrating style among the Arab participants. Interestingly, Trubitsky, Ting-Toomey, and Lin (1991) also found that participants from collectivistic countries (Taiwan in their study) used the integrating style more than participants in individualistic countries (the United States), despite reverse expectations of the researchers. As for the avoiding and the third-party help styles, both of them are normally associated with collectivistic cultures. Thus the fact that Arabs preferred these two styles can be explained by the Arab cultural values (Leung, 1988; Lee & Rogan, 1991; Trubitsky, Ting-Toomey & Lin, 1991; Ting-Toomey et al., 1991).

Although the third-party conflict management style was preferred by Arabs significantly more than by Americans, overall it was the second least preferred style. It was an unexpected result, because the tribal history of the Arab countries encouraged third-party intervention in conflict situation. It was common to call on community leaders and the elders to solve problems and consult on difficult situations, including personal issues. Sometimes mediators had meetings with parties individually in order not to challenge their face in front of families. During family conflicts, the head of the family could appoint a council to resolve serious conflicts (Ammar, 1970; Hutchings & Weir, 2006). Considering these traditional ways to find solutions and manage conflicts, it was surprising to find that Arabs in this study did not give much preference to the third-party conflict style. There are a few explanations to the lack of preferences for the third-party conflict management style. First, cultural values in the Arab region are changing. Second, Arab participants in this study lived and studied in the United States. Thus, they were inevitably influenced by the American culture. Third, being far away from their extended families, Arab participants did not have anyone to ask for help. Last, all participants in this study were male. Asking a third party to help assumes a certain level of incompetence; therefore, the lack of preference for a third-party help conflict management style in both cultural groups could be attributed to the exclusive participation of males in this study.

Lastly, it was unexpected that American participants preferred the emotional expression style significantly more than Arabs. The items that measured the

emotional expression conflict style reflected participants' reliance on feelings to guide

conflict responses (i.e. "I would use my feelings to determine what I should do in the

conflict situation".) Initially, emotional expression style was added to Rahim's (1983)

typology to accommodate the cross-cultural nature of the research, and is associated

with collectivistic cultures (Markus & Lin, 1999). But in this study the result was

reverse to the expectation. One of the explanations to this finding may be that

American participants in this sample were young students and had not yet developed

other ways to manage conflicts (Bergstrom & Nissbaum, 1996; Bergstrom, 1997;

Williams & Giles, 1996). Thus young Americans relied on their feelings more than

Arab participants, who were a little older. Moreover, the emotional expression style

was predicted by the interdependent self-construal among Americans. The preference

of the emotional expression conflict style among Americans can be attributed to

relatively young age of the participants, and to the influence of the interdependent

self-construal.

Arab communication

One of the most interesting findings in this study was that both Arab and

American participants were more independent than interdependent in their

self-construal. Moreover, Arabs were equally independent with Americans, and more

interdependent than Americans. Although results for American participants are

consistent with the individualistic cultural values, findings for the Arabs reflect the

complexity of the Arab cultures and the interplay between individualism and

collectivism. In other words Arabs in this study were more independent than

interdependent, but more interdependent than Americans. Thus young Arab students in this sample developed both independent and interdependent self-construals simultaneously. In describing Arab people, Patai (1983) argues that among the most treasured personal qualities in the Arab world are honor and self-respect, which are associated with the independent self-construal. At the same time, honor and self-respect are determined by a group rather than by an individual. In other words, an Arab has self-respect if others respect him or her (Patai, 1983). Thus, individual qualities are determined by the group. This interplay between personal and group values may explain the fact that Arabs were independent and interdependent at the same time.

Self-construal, however, predicted fewer conflict styles among Arabs than among Americans. There are a few theoretical implications to this finding. First, recent discussions in cross-cultural and intercultural communication research raised concerns about the measurements of conflict styles, which were developed in the West based on the Western values but are now used in cultures with differing values. For instance, Kim (2002) discusses how avoidance is viewed as a negative and not a productive style in the West. According to Rahim's (1983) conceptualization of conflicts, avoidance assumes low concern for self and low concern for the other. However, Kim (2002) argues that avoidance in many Eastern cultures may mean the opposite, i.e. high concern for the other. In those cultures individuals avoid conflict in order to maintain harmony and preserve the opponent's face. Moreover, Cai and Fink (2002) found that the meaning of four conflict styles, including the integrating, the

obliging, the avoiding and the compromising styles, is different for collectivists and individualists. Future research should develop new methods to capture conflict behavior in a non-Western society.

Second, there may be other cultural and social constructs that influence preferences for conflict management styles among Arabs. For example, one of those influences may be Islam, the prevalent religion in the Arab world. Patai (1983) argues that Islamic teachings are the foundation on which views, values, and social life is built. In fact, the very word *Islam* means *submission* in the Arabic language. Muslims submit their will to the will of God, and align their thoughts with the teachings of Islam. Rabie (1994) also argues that most religious groups consider themselves as culturally different from others, and have their own values and traditions. Religious identity has not been considered as an influence in communication. As Gaines (1997) argues, "western social scientists generally have shunned spiritualism in their theories and research, apparently out of concern that their work otherwise would be regarded as "unscientific" (p.11)." Gaines (1997) further suggests that spiritualism can be a key factor in explaining interpersonal behavior in many cultures. Future research should examine the influence of religious identity on communicative behavior in the Arab world.

The current study has provided some initial forays into the similarities and differences over conflict management styles, ethnic identity, and self-construal between Arabs and Americans. This research considered the role of one cultural dimension, i.e. collectivism-individualism, in conflict management style preferences.

Future research should explore the influence of other cultural constructs. According to

Hofstede (2001) cultures differ in the dimensions of uncertainty avoidance, time

orientation, power distance, and masculinity/femininity. For example, Kozan (1997)

discussed the tendency of Jordanian managers for prolonged discussion and debate.

While conflict in Western cultures is viewed as something negative and therefore

should be resolved quickly (Markus & Lin, 1999), conflict in the East is approached

as a natural and even a necessary part of social life and relationships. Therefore,

Arabs do not rush into decision making, but spend a lot of time exploring different

issues of the problem and debating. Thus, time orientation, for example, can be a

strong influence on conflict behavior. To summarize, future research should explore

other constructs that may explain conflict management style preferences.

Limitations

The first obvious limitation of this study is the exclusive participation of

males. The current status of women in the Arab world limits the possibilities for their

involvement in research. Even if women were included, it would be difficult to have a

representative sample. Women in traditional families in many Arab countries are

cautious about participating in anything outside the family. In the future, researchers

who are originally from the Arab countries may devise ways to access representative

female samples. It may also be possible to conduct future studies in Tunisia, Morocco,

Jordan or a few other countries, where women are integrated into society life more

than in the rest of the Arab world.

The second limitation is that the findings can not be generalized to the Arab

male population. Although participants in this study were born in different Arab countries, all of them spent some time in the United States. The influence of another culture is inescapable. At the same time, it can be a challenge to gain access to participants in the Arab countries. In many Arab countries researchers are required to apply for permission from the government to conduct research, and the process may take up to several months or years. However, considering the limited number of studies conducted in the Arab countries, future research involving a representative sample will be a significant contribution.

It is also important to note that most Arab participants were students in American universities; thus the educational level was rather high. Moreover, people of a certain class have the opportunity and desire to come to the United States. Studying in the US requires either money or a high educational level and exceptional achievements that allow applying for study grants. In addition, those individuals who wish to leave the country may already have different views on life, and therefore may not be a representative sample. Future research should attempt to reach participants from other social classes in the Arab countries.

The third limitation is that conclusions are made based on participants' responses and not on actual behaviors. Although individual opinions inform us about preferences for conflict management styles, there is no guarantee that perceptions match behavior. Often individuals engage in wishful thinking. For example, it is not surprising that the aggressive conflict management style was the least preferred style in this study. People do not wish to appear aggressive, and may not even want to

accept that they act aggressively when they actually do. Additionally, communication is not predictable. Conflict situations are usually complex, and even an individual himself or herself may not precisely predict how he or she will behave in certain circumstances. The study of communication in natural groups is particularly important in the Arab countries, where language seems to live a life of its own, and participants of the study may use it as a fantasy rather than a way to reflect on their true feelings and observations.

Despite the limitations, this study is an important exploratory step in comparing conflict management styles, self-construal, and ethnic identity among Arabs and Americans. This study also extends previous research on the relationships between self-construal and conflict styles. While there is a considerable number of conflict studies in the United States, little research on ethnic identity, self-construal, and conflict, has been conducted among Arabs. Growing prejudice and negative stereotyping towards Arabs, as well as political misunderstanding, call for more studies in the area of Arab communication. Hopefully this research has provided some baseline data for future studies in the area of conflict management, ethnic identity, and self-construal in the Arab world as well as the United States.

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Appendix A: *Correlations between Major Variables in the American sample.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	1										
2	.61**	1									
3	.13	.-9	1								
4	.30**	.30**	.06	1							
5	-.04	.18*	-.18*	.42**	1						
6	.13	.11	.23**	.22**	.08	1					
7	.16	.03	-.03	.29**	.30**	.22*	1				
8	-.23**	-.22**	.26**	.03	.07	.31**	.15	1			
9	.34**	.23**	.28**	-.05	-.19*	.18*	-.09	-.14	1		
10	.26**	.29**	.08	.35**	.18*	.26**	.11	-.11	.18*	1	
11	.11	-.04	.21*	.07	-.09	.20*	.04	.18*	.00	.19*	1

Note. 1 = integrating conflict management style, 2 = compromising conflict management style, 3 = dominating conflict management style, 4 = obliging conflict management style, 5 = avoiding conflict management style, 6 = emotional expression conflict management style, 7 = third-party help conflict management style, 8 = aggressive conflict management style, 9 = independent self-construal, 10 = interdependent self-construal, 11 = identity; $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$.

Appendix B: *Correlations between Major Variables in the Arab sample.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	1										
2	.44**	1									
3	.16	.26**	1								
4	.21*	.28**	.10	1							
5	-.04	.35**	.21*	.54**	1						
6	.02	.20*	.26**	.43**	.43**	1					
7	.25**	.29**	.16	.33**	.28**	.31**	1				
8	-.28**	.01	.20*	-.10	.12	.32**	.27**	1			
9	.23**	.13	.17*	-.08	-.025	-.03	-.15	-.17*	1		
10	.24**	.19*	.15	.37**	.25**	.23**	.24**	-.12	.21*	1	
11	.15	.13	.21**	.11	.02	.15	.09	.02	.11	.28**	1

Note. 1 = integrating conflict management style, 2 = compromising conflict management style, 3 = dominating conflict management style, 4 = obliging conflict management style, 5 = avoiding conflict management style, 6 = emotional expression conflict management style, 7 = third-party help conflict management style, 8 = aggressive conflict management style, 9 = independent self-construal, 10 = interdependent self-construal, 11 = identity; *p < .05, **p < .01.

Appendix C: *Questionnaire*

Thank you for participating in this study. There are three sections in the questionnaire. The questions are related to your ethnic identification and your conflict management style.   It is estimated that it will take approximately 30 minutes of your time. Before proceeding with the questionnaire, please answer some demographic questions:

Your gender   Male   ☐   Female   ☐

Age   _____

Years of education   _____
(Please count all the years spent in primary school to high school, and any college or university)

Your completed level of education
- ○ High school   ☐
- ○ Undergraduate degree   ☐
- ○ Masters degree   ☐
- ○ PhD degree   ☐
- ○ Other   ☐
     If other, please specify
                              _____

Section 1

Think of how you typically manage a conflict with a person of the same sex and ethnicity as yourself. Please read the following statements, 66 in total, and rate how much you agree or disagree with them on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Please choose only one answer for each question.

1.   I would attempt to avoid being "put on the spot" and try to keep my conflict with the other person to myself.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

2.   I generally try to satisfy the needs of the other person.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

3.   I would try to stay away from disagreement with the other person.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

4. I usually accommodate the wishes of the other person.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

5. I would give some to get some in order to reach a compromise.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

6. I give in to the wishes of the other person.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

7. I would use my influence to get my ideas accepted.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

8. I would try to find a middle course to resolve an impasse.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

9. I would use my authority to make a decision in my favor.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

10. I would win some and lose some so that a compromise could be reached.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

11. I would avoid an encounter with the other person.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

12. I would argue my case with the other person to show the merits of my position.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

13. I usually allow concessions to the other person.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

14. I would try to keep my disagreement with the other person to myself in order to avoid hard feelings.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

15. I would use my expertise to make a decision in my favor.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

16. I would usually propose a middle ground for breaking deadlocks.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

17. I would try to avoid unpleasant exchanges with the other person.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

18. I am generally firm in pursuing my side of the issue.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

19. I would generally avoid an argument with the other person.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

20. I would sometimes use my power to win a competitive situation.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

21. I often go along with the suggestions of the other person.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

22. I would use a "give and take" so that a compromise could be made.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

23. I would sit down with the other person to negotiate a resolution to his objectionable behavior.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

24. I would generally ask a third person to intervene in our dispute and settle it for us.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

25. I try to satisfy the expectations of the other person.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

26. I would be emotionally expressive in the conflict situation.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

27. I would ask a third party to make a decision about how to settle the dispute between myself and the other person.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

28. I would rely on a third person to negotiate a resolution to the conflict.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

29. I would generally "grin and bear it" when the other person did something I did not like.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

30. I would typically leave the other person alone.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

31. I would ask a third person for advice in settling the dispute.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

32. I would meet with the other person to see if we could work out a resolution to our conflict.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

33. I would use my feelings to guide my conflict behaviors.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

34. I would prefer the other person to be emotionally expressive with me in the conflict situation.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

35. I would generally endure actions by the other person that I did not like.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

36. I would integrate my viewpoints with the other person to achieve a joint decision about the conflict.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

37. I would typically go through a third party to settle our conflict.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

38. I would meet with the other person to bargain for a resolution to our conflict.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

39. I would appeal to a person at a higher level to settle my conflict with the other person.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

40. I would use my feelings to determine what I should do in the conflict situation.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

41. I would work with the other person to reach a joint resolution to our conflict.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

42. I would ask another person to help negotiate a disagreement with the other person about his behavior.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

43. I would try to tolerate our disagreement and not make waves.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

44. I would be patient and hope the other person would change his behavior.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

45. I would use my feelings to determine whether to trust the other person.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

46. I would usually bear my resentment in silence.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

47. I would attempt to solve our problems by talking things over in a calm and polite manner.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

48. I would say nothing and wait for things to get better.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

49. I would generally keep quiet and wait for things to improve.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

50. When we discuss the problem I would refuse to cooperate.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

51. I would listen to what my "gut" or "heart" says in the conflict situation.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

52. I would try to get us to work together to settle our differences.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

53. Out of anger, I would say things to damage the other person's reputation.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

54. I would say noting and deal with the situation by adopting a strategy of forgive and forget.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

55. I would make sure the other person realized that resolving our differences was important.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

56. I would hope that the situation would solve itself.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

57. I would say nasty things about the other person to other people.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

58. I would let the other person know that I did not want him to ever talk to me again.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

59. I would usually let my anger be known in a conflict situation.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

60. I would try to negotiate upfront a solution to our conflict.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

61. I would allow things to cool off rather than taking any action.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

62. I would tell the other person that there were problems and suggest that we work them out.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

63. I would say and do things out of anger to make the other person feel bad.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

64. While in the presence of the other person, I would act as though he did not exist.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

65. I would tell the other person what was bothering me and ask for his opinions on the matter.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

66. I would talk openly and honestly about our differences.

1	2	3	4	5

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

Section 2

All of us belong to different groups throughout our lives, whether it is family, school, country, ethnicity, or other. Read the following statements and mark how much you agree or disagree with the sentence. If the sentence is absolutely false for you, please mark 1 (strongly disagree). If you disagree with the statement with some reservation, please mark 2 (disagree). If the sentence does not apply to you or you do not agree nor disagree, please mark 3 (neutral). If you agree with a sentence but with reservation, please mark 4 (agree). Finally, if the statement absolutely fits your life and identity, please mark 5 (strongly agree). Please choose only one answer.

1. I believe I should be judged based on my own personality.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

2. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

3. My personal identity is very important to me.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

4. I prefer to be self-reliant rather than depend on others.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

5. My group memberships play a large role in my view of myself.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

6. My group memberships are an important part of my self-concept.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

7. I stick with my group even through difficulties.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

8. I respect decisions made by my group.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

9. I stick with the groups of which I am a member even through difficulties.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

10. I maintain harmony in the groups of which I am member.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

11. I respect the majority's wishes in groups of which I am a member.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

12. If there is a conflict between my values and the values of groups of which I am a member, I follow my values.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

13. I respect decisions made by the groups of which I am a member.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

14. I try not to depend on others.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

15. I take responsibility for my own actions.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

16. It is important for me to be able to act as a free and independent person.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

17. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

18. I assert my opinion when I disagree strongly with members of my group.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

19. I enjoy being unique and different from others.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

20. I do not change my opinions to conform with those in the majority.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

21. I do not support a group decision when it is wrong.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Section 3

In this country, people come from many different countries and cultures, and there are many different words to describe the different background or ethnic groups that people come from. Some examples of the names of ethnic groups are Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, Asian American, Chinese, Filipino, American Indian, Mexican American, Caucasian or White, Italian American, and many others. These questions are about your ethnicity or your ethnic group and how you feel about it or react to it.

Please mark:

In terms of ethnic group, I consider myself to be:

o Arab
o Asian or Asian American, including Chinese, Japanese, and others
o Black or African American
o Hispanic or Latino, including Mexican American, Central American, and others
o White, Caucasian, Anglo, European American; not Hispanic
o Mixed; parents are from two different groups
o Other (write in): _____

1. I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

4. I have often done things that will help me understand my ethnic background better.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

5. I have often talked to other people in order to learn more about my ethnic group.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

6. I feel strong attachment toward my own ethnic group.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree