This cross-cultural study explored the perceptions of people about what can make a person happy. A total of 215 students answered one of three open-ended questions: from Canada, French-speakers ($n = 57$) and English-speakers ($n = 54$), from El Salvador ($n = 42$), and from the United States ($n = 62$). Content and correspondence analyses revealed that factors contributing to happiness were perceived similarly across the four groups. The most stated factors overall were the importance of family relationships, of pursuing and reaching valued goals, and of a positive attitude toward self. On the other hand, whereas the Salvadoran participants referred specifically to religious values and sociopolitical conditions, the North American samples referred more to hedonistic factors (enjoying activities and life's little pleasures) and personal sources of power on their happiness (positive attitude toward life, personal strengths). Cross-cultural differences are discussed in relation to collectivism and individualism.

HAPPINESS
A Look Into the Folk Psychology of Four Cultural Groups

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What do people perceive as contributing to happiness? Does culture influence a person's perception of what can make someone happy? Regarded as a "basic building block, a value in terms of which other values are justified" (Braithwaite & Law, 1985, p. 261), happiness may be considered universal but, as stated by Schwartz (1992), its meaning remains complex and ambiguous.

Happiness is a pleasant emotional experience, the affective component of subjective well-being (SWB) (Andrews & Withey, 1976; Bradburn, 1969; Campbell, 1981; Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976; Diener, 1984). Diener, Sandvik, and Pavot (1991) have shown that happiness is actually composed of frequent positive affect and infrequent negative affect. Note that Csikszentmihalyi and Wong (1991) stated that "if one were to choose a single measure of SWB, happiness would be a likely candidate, both because everyone seems to understand what the concept means, and because concep-tually as well as empirically it perhaps represents the broader concept best" (p. 195).

Because meanings and concepts are molded by culture (Bruner, 1990), it seemed necessary to assess what people from different cultural groups perceive as being factors that contribute to happiness. Veenhoven (1991) recently stressed the importance of cross-cultural studies in seeking an understanding of the experience of SWB. Although one should always be concerned about conceptual and psychometric equivalence when conducting cross-cultural surveys, as indicated by Diener, Diener, and Diener (1995), previous studies have helped allay fears about artifacts in cross-cultural comparisons of well-being.

The present study was thus undertaken as an exploration within the domain of what Bruner (1990) has called *folk psychology*, which is, in his terms, "a culture's account of what makes human beings tick" (p. 13). Indeed, it is through shared meanings and concepts that people draw conclusions about the worthwhileness of their lives. Therefore, choosing to focus on people's own spontaneous accounts of the factors that they perceive can make a person happy, this study aimed at identifying cross-cultural similarities and differences between Central and North American cultural groups' perceptions of these factors.

Differences between these cultural groups on dimensions of individualism and collectivism have been identified (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis et al., 1986; Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1988; Triandis, McCusker, & Hui, 1990; Triandis et al., 1993). Whereas Hispanic cultures have been associated with high levels of collectivism, the dominating orientation in the United States and other English-speaking countries has consistently been found to be individualism (Hofstede, 1980; Marin & Triandis, 1985; Triandis et al., 1988). Note that Baer, Grabb, and Johnston (1990) have stated the importance of considering English-speakers and French-speakers as distinc-tive samples when conducting research in Canada. This view is supported by results obtained by Taylor and Dubé (1986) who found a sample of Canadian English-speaking students to have a more individualistic personal identity than a similar sample of Canadian French-speakers. Hence, though it appears

difficult to draw firm predictions concerning happiness from the theoretical notions of individualism and collectivism (Diener et al., 1995), we generally expected participants from Central America to disclose information that characterizes a collectivistic orientation in life, whereas participants from North America would disclose mostly information that characterizes an individualistic orientation. It was also assumed that French-speaking Canadians would slightly distinguish themselves from other North American participants, showing a tendency to value factors that are related to collectivism. Nevertheless, because basic need fulfillment has been shown to have an impact on SWB (Diener et al., 1995), we expected that, overall, many similar factors would be disclosed across the cultural groups.

A second purpose of the present study was to examine the potential impact of question wording on the disclosure of people's perceptions of factors contributing to happiness. Indeed, research has shown that responses to a question can be influenced by its precise wording (see Veenhoven, 1991).

DETERMINANTS OF HAPPINESS

Empirical studies have led to the identification of various factors related to happiness or life satisfaction. Diener (1984) reported that several personality factors—self-esteem, internality, extroversion, internal locus of control—show consistent relationships to SWB, further reporting that self-esteem is one of its strongest predictors. Note however that Markus and Kitayama (1991) have pointed out that the construal of self varies across cultures and that esteeming the self may be primarily a Western phenomenon. In a recent study, Diener and Diener (1995) reported that self-esteem tends to be a stronger predictor of life satisfaction in individualistic societies than in collectivistic ones. On the other hand, a study conducted with Mexican families (Diaz Guerrero, 1985) who come from a collectivistic society (Marin & Triandis, 1985) revealed that personal characteristics, including self-esteem, had the greatest influence on individuals' judgment of their quality of life. Because our study was conducted solely on the American continent, we expected factors related to self-esteem to be generally high in rank in people's perception of factors that contribute to happiness.

Another factor that appears to have a definite positive impact on a person's happiness in life is social relationships. Being in love and feeling loved are certainly perceived as important to one's happiness (Dubé, Blondin, & Kairouz, 1991). Also, Diener (1984) reported that family and marriage satisfaction are among the most important predictors of SWB. Furthermore, consistent correlations have been found between happiness and friendship: people who have more friends, or who spend more time with their friends,

tend to be happier (see Argyle, 1987). Diener and Diener (1995) reported correlations between satisfaction with one's family and friends to vary across nations, noting that individualism mediated this variation in the case of friendship. Contrary to their expectations, the relationship between family satisfaction and life satisfaction was not stronger in collectivistic societies. Nevertheless, because family relationships are the strongest discriminating factor between individualistic and collectivistic cultures (Triandis et al., 1993), we assumed that whereas relationships with friends and family would be perceived as important factors contributing to happiness by the majority of participants, family would be referred to more often by the Latin American individuals, whereas friendships would appear more often in the North American reports.

Finding meaning in life is also an important factor in a person's happiness (Wong, 1989), and it can be considered a motivational component of SWB. Wong pointed out that "one must be committed to something or someone in order to experience a sense of meaning" (p. 520). Hence we expected that personal goals in life would be perceived as contributing to happiness, regardless of cultural background.

Other conditions seem to have a positive impact on a person's level of happiness. Having a job appears to be very important (Diener, 1984), and we expected accomplishment at work to be considered a contributing factor. Also, many studies have revealed a relation between a positive evaluation of one's health and happiness (see Argyle, 1987; Diener, 1984); we assumed good physical health would be reported as contributing to happiness. Finally, Veenhoven (1991) has noted that conditions such as the political system under which people live may influence a person's happiness. We thus expected that participants with more unstable political conditions would be inclined to consider such influences when reflecting on factors that contribute to happiness. Note that though we assumed that all the above mentioned factors would be disclosed by the participants, our study aimed at revealing any perception they might have about the causes of happiness.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

Two hundred and fifteen undergraduate students, age 18 to 25, participated in the study. The samples were constituted of 57 French-speaking Canadians from the province of Québec (17 men, 40 women; age: $M = 21.5, SD = 1.54$), 54 English-speaking Canadians from the province of Québec (17 men, 37

women; age: $M = 20.5$, $SD = 1.80$), 42 Salvadorans from the department of Santa Ana in El Salvador (24 men, 18 women; age: $M = 20.9$, $SD = 2.01$), and 62 Americans from the state of New York (18 men, 44 women; age: $M = 20.9$, $SD = 1.03$).

STIMULI AND PROCEDURE

Three open-ended questions were used to tap into the participants' experience without a predefined closed structure. The questions were passed out to approximately equal numbers of participants, each participant receiving only one of the questions. Each respondent was given 10 to 15 minutes to voluntarily and spontaneously answer his or her question in class.

Seventy participants from the four groups answered the first question ($n = 70$) that addressed the respondents directly by having them reflect on their personal determinants of happiness: "What makes you happy?" The second question ($n = 69$) directed the respondents toward the necessary conditions for happiness for men and women in general: "What does a person need to be happy?" The third question, "What is a happy person?" ($n = 76$), was also general. These questions were translated from French into English and Spanish and were then verified by bilingual individuals who knew the language and culture of each group.

RESULTS

CONTENT ANALYSIS

The responses to the open-ended questions were screened for the presence of any statement revealing factors perceived as contributing to happiness. This produced a list of 970 statements. To ensure the accuracy of this operation, two independent judges rescreened a random sample of 43 questionnaires (20% of the 215 questionnaires), revealing a 96% level of accuracy.

Six independent judges established a conceptual structure composed of 18 non-overlapping categories to classify the statements. Classification of the statements was then done by three of the six judges who obtained an 89% level of agreement (869 of the 970 statements were classified identically by the three separate judges; the same judges classified the remaining statements by mode of consensus).

Computation of the number of respondents stating at least one factor contributing to happiness in each category of factors, within each group, and in answer to each question was executed. This led to a contingency table

(Table 1) of the number of respondents in each sample disclosing at least one specific factor within a given category, for each of the three questions. Rank of each factor was established on the basis of the percentage of people from the total group of participants who referred to each specific category. Note that these categories were grouped into three wider categories: interpersonal factors, intrapersonal factors, and diverse factors.

As can be seen, with the exception of the factors religious values and good sociopolitical conditions, each specific factor was mentioned at least once within each cultural group. The interpersonal factors were those most stated overall, by 78% of the participants. These factors were stated in relatively similar frequencies by each sample. The intrapersonal factors were stated by 73% of the total group of respondents. A chi-square analysis revealed a significant difference between the cultural groups in regard to the frequencies of the statements related to intrapersonal factors, $\chi^2 (3, N = 215) = 38.25$, $p < .001$. The American respondents referred to these factors less than the other groups of respondents. The remaining factors, grouped in the diverse factors category, were stated by 53% of the participants distributed in the four cultural groups. The specific factors stated most often were, in descending order: family relationships, pursuing and reaching valued goals, having a positive attitude toward self, and having friends.

CORRESPONDENCE ANALYSES

The nonparametric method of correspondence analysis (Benzécri, 1971; see Greenacre, 1984) was used to examine similarities and differences between responses given by the four groups and generated by the three types of questions. Correspondence analysis is a statistical graphical method designed to help in the interpretation of complex data matrices. It is especially suited to a multivariate data set such as the one collected in this study.

More precisely, this method is used to interpret data from a contingency table by displaying the elements (i.e., the rows and columns) as points in a bidimensional space. Distances between the points in the display are chi-square measures of the relationships between the elements. Thus patterns of association between all elements will reveal themselves in the graphical display. The closer the elements are in the bidimensional space, the greater is the similarity or relationship. Conversely, elements that are empirically independent will lie apart. Furthermore, the data are interpreted in relation to the two main axes in the graph, which represent the dimensions that contribute the most to the distinction between the elements. Elements that lie close to the intersection of the axes represent a force opposing the dispersion of points within the space and they are less differentiated from other elements.

Correspondence analysis was conducted on the data matrix presented in Table 1. This three-way contingency table includes 18 factors perceived as contributing to happiness (rows of the contingency table), four cultural groups (columns of the contingency table), and three types of questions (subcolumns of the contingency table). Additional correspondence analyses were done, collapsing either the question types or the cultural groups across the two remaining variables. An analysis using sex as a variable was also conducted.

The bidimensional space displaying all elements is presented in Figure 1. First note that the factors friends, intimate relationships, or relationships with people in general, pursuing and reaching valued goals, and money, all located toward the center of the graph, were not discriminant between the groups participating in the study. On the other hand, the dimension represented by Axis 1, which has been termed Type of Concerns, was responsible for 35.3% of the dispersion of elements within the display. It opposes hedonistic concerns (enjoying life's little pleasures, feeling free to do as one pleases) to religious and social concerns (religious values, good sociopolitical conditions). The second dimension (Axis 2), responsible for 27.8% of the given distribution of elements, represents the respondents' identification of their Sources of Power for being happy in life, whether they are personal (e.g., positive attitude toward life, personal strengths) or considered to be related to a higher being (religious values) or to social environmental conditions (good sociopolitical conditions).

The Salvadoran respondents distinguished themselves from the three North American groups to a larger extent than did these three groups between each other: The Salvadoran respondents, associated with religious values and good sociopolitical conditions, which characterize a pole of each dimension found in Figure 1, are in a distinct area of this graphical display. On the other hand, the three North American groups of respondents are located in proximity to each other, especially the two Canadian groups. The hedonistic factor enjoying activities and life's little pleasures, was stated mostly by the American and Canadian respondents in answer to Question 1, as was the other factor related to hedonism, feeling free to do as one pleases, a prominent factor for the French Canadian respondents. The following intrapersonal factors, characterizing the internal pole of the dimension Sources of Power, were stated mostly by both the French and English Canadian respondents in answer to Question 3: having a positive attitude toward life, having personal strengths, and having a positive attitude toward self.

Because of inverse proportions of men and women between the three North American samples (30% men, 70% women) and the Salvadoran sample (57% men, 43% women), it was necessary to verify if gender could be

TABLE 1

Contingency Table: Factors Perceived as Contributing to Happiness, According to Each Sample and Each Question Type (Q), Followed by the Overall Percentage of People Stating Each Factor and the Overall Rank of Each Factor

Factors Perceived as Contributing to Happiness	French Canadians (n = 57)				English Canadians (n = 54)			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Total	Q1	Q2	Q3	Total
I. Interpersonal factors				46 (80%)				47 (87%)
1. Family relationships	6	8	3	17	8	11	6	25
2. Friendships	6	8	6	20	10	6	8	24
3. Relationships with people in general	9	4	8	21	4	5	5	14
4. Intimate relationships	5	8	5	18	8	6	2	16
5. Helping others; seeing others happy	6	3	6	15	7	1	4	12
6. Feeling loved and appreciated	8	3	2	13	5	6	3	14
II. Intrapersonal factors				53 (93%)				45 (83%)
7. Pursuing and reaching valued goals	11	7	7	25	11	8	5	24
8. Having a positive attitude toward self	4	13	11	28	6	6	10	22
9. Having a positive attitude toward life	6	6	7	19	1	3	9	13
10. Personal strengths (e.g., openness)	0	6	10	16	1	1	11	13
11. Having religious values	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
12. Accomplishment at work	3	5	5	13	1	1	1	3
13. Feeling responsible for one's own happiness	1	2	4	7	1	1	1	3
III. Diverse factors				35 (61%)				27 (50%)
14. Enjoying activities and life's little pleasures	18	2	0	20	10	7	1	18
15. Having money	1	6	4	11	4	9	2	15
16. Being healthy	1	2	3	6	1	0	0	1
17. Feeling free to do as one pleases	5	1	0	6	0	0	1	1
18. Living in good sociopolitical conditions	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0

responsible for the observed differences. Rather than having subcolumns for the types of question in the contingency table, subcolumns of gender were used. This contingency table showed that 10 Salvadoran men (42% of this subsample) and 5 Salvadoran women (28% of this subsample) referred to

TABLE 1

Salvadorans (n = 42)				Americans (n = 62)				Overall (N = 215)	
Q1	Q2	Q3	Total	Q1	Q2	Q3	Total	Percentage	Rank
			30 (71%)				45 (73%)	78	
9	8	3	20	7	7	5	19	38	1
2	4	1	7	6	10	4	20	33	4
1	6	4	11	7	8	5	20	31	5
3	3	2	8	6	2	1	9	24	7
0	1	3	4	3	0	2	5	17	11
1	0	0	1	1	4	3	8	16	12
			32 (76%)				28 (45%)	73	
6	4	5	15	6	3	4	13	36	2
1	4	7	12	0	5	7	12	34	3
1	0	2	3	0	1	7	8	20	8
0	4	3	7	1	0	3	4	18	10
3	9	3	15	0	0	0	0	10	14
2	1	0	3	0	0	1	1	9	15
1	2	1	4	0	0	2	2	8	16
			18 (43%)				34 (55%)	53	
3	1	0	4	13	6	3	22	28	6
0	5	1	6	3	3	3	9	19	9
1	6	2	8	3	4	4	11	13	13
0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	4	17
2	2	1	5	0	0	0	0	3	18

NOTE: The numbers of people referring to the wider categories are not equal to the sums of the frequencies of the specific factors within each wider category because participants often stated more than one factor within the wider category.

religious values as contributing to happiness. Except for one statement related to religious values from an English Canadian man (0.6% of this subsample), no other mention of religious values was found in any of the other subsamples of men and women. As for good sociopolitical conditions, except for one
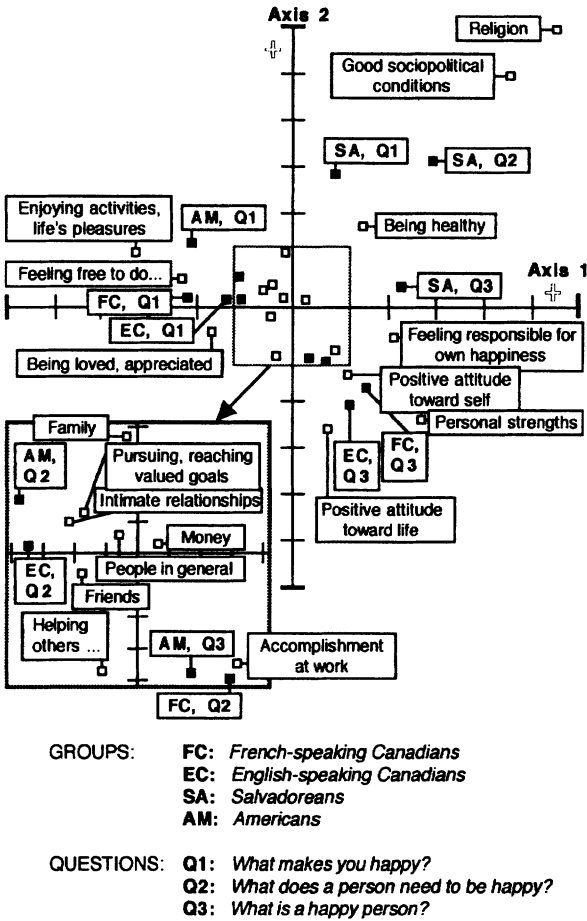
Figure 1: Configuration of Factors Perceived as Contributing to Happiness According to Correspondence Analysis: Total Picture of the Associations Between Elements

French Canadian woman (2% of this subsample), only Salvadoran men (5, or 21% of this subsample) referred to this factor as contributing to happiness.

Results of the correspondence analysis conducted on this contingency table are shown in Figure 2. Salvadorans, both men and women, once again appear isolated from the three other samples of participants, maintaining their influence on the location of religious values and good sociopolitical conditions at the extremity of Axis 1. The Salvadoran men seem, however, to have had the greatest impact on the importance of good sociopolitical conditions
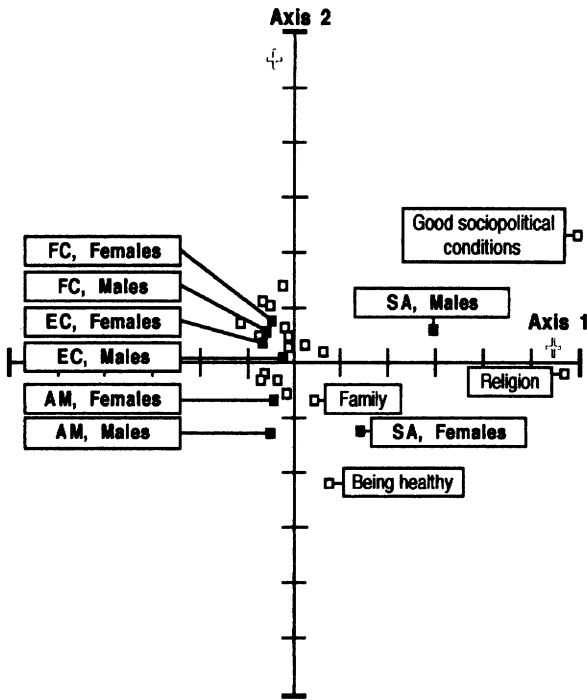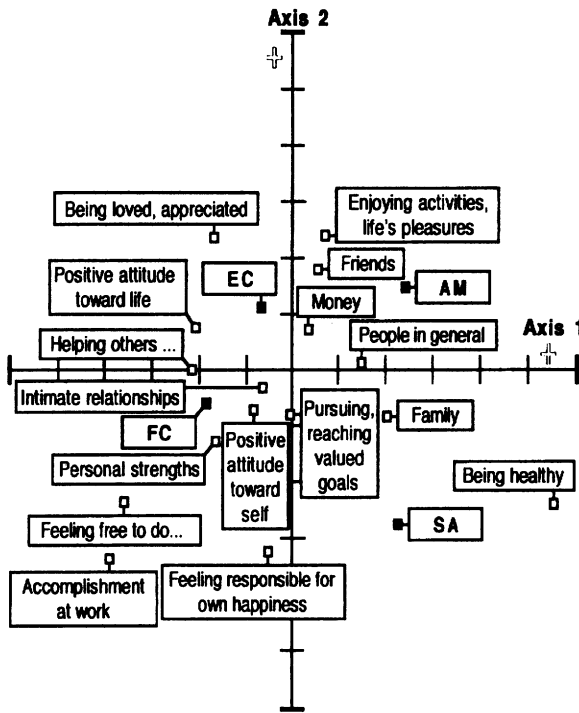
GROUPS: **FC**: *French-speaking Canadians*
            EC: *English-speaking Canadians*
            SA: *Salvadoreans*
            AM: *Americans*

Figure 2: **Comparison Between Men's and Women's Relations to the Factors Perceived as Contributing to Happiness According to Correspondence Analysis**

as a determining factor within the structure of the display. The Salvadoran women had a greater impact on the location of family and being healthy within the display. The men and women of the three North American samples are located in close proximity to each other, showing no differentiation according to sex.

To obtain a clearer picture of the cultural groups' differences, a third graphical display was produced by collapsing the frequencies of the three types of questions presented in Table 1. Also, because of the strong pull by religious values and good sociopolitical conditions in the configuration of points in Figures 1 and 2, and to see how the statements of the Salvadoran

GROUPS: **FC**: *French-speaking Canadians*
           EC: *English-speaking Canadians*
           SA: *Salvadoreans*
           AM: *Americans*

Figure 3: Configuration of Factors Perceived as Contributing to Happiness According to Correspondence Analysis: Comparison Between Groups

respondents were associated with the other factors, these two factors were considered as supplements in this third analysis and do not appear in Figure 3. As a consequence, most of the elements tend to converge toward the center of the display. Though each cultural group is located in a different area of the graphical display, indicating clearly that some factors were mentioned more frequently in certain groups than in others, there still appear to be more similar perceptions between the three North American groups of respondents than between them and the Salvadoran respondents who remain relatively isolated in the display.

Statements from the American respondents were strongly associated with the factors enjoying activities and life's little pleasures, and friends. The two Canadian groups of respondents remain close to each other in the display. However, the English Canadian respondents contributed most to the location of the factor being loved and appreciated. The French-speaking respondents had the highest frequencies of statements related to feeling free to do as one pleases and accomplishment at work, as well as to the following intrapersonal factors: positive attitude toward self, personal strengths, and feeling responsible for one's own happiness. This third display of elements does not show a strong relationship between the Salvadoran respondents and any specific factor, though they tend to have influenced the emergence of the factor being healthy.

IMPACT OF THE QUESTION TYPES ON THE RESPONSES

The impact of the question types on the data is rather concealed in Figure 1. Therefore, another correspondence analysis was performed, this time collapsing the groups into columns for each specific question. This analysis revealed more clearly that certain factors were generated in higher frequencies by the different open-ended questions. The first question, "What makes you happy?" generated greater frequencies of reponses related to hedonistic factors: enjoying activities and life's little pleasures and feeling free to do as one pleases. The second question, "What does a person need to be happy?" gave the participants the opportunity to stress the importance of having religious values, having money, and being healthy. The third question, "What is a happy person?" elicited mostly the disclosure of intrapersonal factors, especially having personal strengths and a positive attitude toward life.

DISCUSSION

Overall, the first three factors in rank, as shown in Table 1, disclosed the perceived importance of family relationships, of having meaning in life, and of a positive self-concept for happiness. This concurs with our predictions that factors related to self-esteem, relationships, and pursuing goals would be perceived as important contributors to happiness. Also, as expected, perceptions of factors contributing to happiness appear to be rather similar across the four cultural groups that participated in this study. Indeed, with the exception of religious values and good sociopolitical conditions, stated almost solely by the Salvadoran participants (see Table 1 and Figure 1),

intergroup variability of statements referring to factors that contribute to happiness was not substantial.

The factor stated overall by the highest number of participants was family relationships, confirming the importance of relationships within the family as a predictor of SWB. Moreover, as shown in Figure 1, factors perceived by relatively similar numbers of respondents across the groups were mostly related to relationships, whether they were with friends, of an intimate nature, or with people in general. These data are consistent with Argyle and Martin's (1991) explanation that relationships are opportunities for joy. The disclosure of various intrapersonal factors concurs with the findings of consistent relationships between personality factors and SWB. Furthermore, the overall rank obtained by the factor pursuing and reaching valued goals (3rd) is concurrent with our view that this is an important motivational component of SWB.

Sources of satisfaction and happiness have been shown to be somewhat different for men and women. Argyle (1987) has noted that whereas women seem to get greater satisfaction than men from family life, men appear to be more concerned with the local community and with political affairs. As shown in Figure 2, this tendency was found in the Salvadoran sample who participated in our study: More women wrote about family as a factor contributing to happiness and only men mentioned good sociopolitical conditions. No notable differences were observed, however, between men and women in the three North American samples. We conclude that, overall, culture rather than gender was the most discriminating variable in terms of the participants' characteristics. This concurs with Diener and Diener's (1995) finding of a striking similarity between male and female data compiled in a cross-cultural study of SWB.

Apparent cross-cultural differences between the responses obtained from the four cultural groups can be explained, in part, by the cultural groups' orientation toward individualism or collectivism. Results tend to concur with the consistent finding that individualism is the dominant orientation in North America. Whereas the Salvadoran participants showed more concern than the others for religious values and security, both collective (good sociopolitical conditions) and individual (being healthy), the North American participants showed more concern for pleasure and personal sources of power on happiness (Figure 1). As identified by Schwartz (1992), hedonism, stimulation, and self-direction are values that serve individual interests. Triandis and his colleagues (1988) have stated that in an individualistic society, emphasis is put on self-reliance, a comfortable life, and pleasure.

Another issue should be considered, however, when interpreting these results. The Salvadoran participants are confronted daily with the conse-

quences of poverty, including illness; moreover, the majority of them spent at least half their lifetimes in a country torn apart by war.

Though the Salvadoran students who participated in this study appeared dissociated from an individualistic orientation, shown by their distance from hedonistic concerns in Figures 1 and 3, contrary to our expectation but concurrent with Diener and Diener's (1995) results, they did not noticeably distinguish themselves in relation to family. On the other hand, as expected, relationships with friends were stated most often by the North American respondents (see Table 1 and Figure 1). It might be that the participants from the three North American samples, living in individualistic societies, depend on friendships to a greater extent than the Salvadoran participants. Also, the fact that the American participants emphasized to a lesser degree the contribution of intrapersonal factors to happiness, in comparison with the interpersonal factors (see Table 1), or the fact that the English Canadian participants more often mentioned the need to feel loved and appreciated may also be manifestations of worrying about one's social relationships. Such tendencies are coherent with the view expressed by Triandis et al. (1988), who noted that strategies aimed at gaining acceptance by others are important in an individualistic society, whereas a strong interdependence between self and significant others prevails in a collectivistic society (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

We are aware of a particular limit to this interpretation: Many students in Canada and the United States live away from home while attending a university, and friends certainly become very important in such a context. On the other hand, all the Salvadoran participants reported living at home with their parents, a reality certainly related to collectivism.

Within the three North American samples, as shown in Figures 1 and 3, the French Canadian participants seem to have manifested the most concern for certain intrapersonal factors (positive attitude toward self, personal strengths, feeling responsible for one's own happiness) as well as for accomplishment at work and feeling free to do as one pleases. We were surprised by these results, which point to a rather strong individualistic orientation based on the importance of personal competence and independence. It appears important here to consider that individualism and collectivism are multidimensional constructs (Triandis et al., 1988). A person's tendency toward one or the other orientation may vary according to the in-groups under study (e.g., family, community, national group). The French Canadians from Québec, a province in the midst of a debate concerning its possible independence from Canada, may have a strong collective identity at the national level while showing, at the personal level, individualistic value priorities.

Furthermore, when many industrial societies adopted attitudes and behaviors that were centered on the self in the middle of the century (Corbeil, 1990),

the French community of Québec followed this movement quite strongly, putting aside authoritarianism, conservatism, and an unconditional submission to the Catholic Church. Going from one extreme to the other, they have manifested liberal attitudes (Baer et al., 1990). This might be related to the fact that in this study French Canadians tended to value the freedom to do as one pleases more strongly than the other groups.

It is important to be aware of the specific response tendencies related to a question type when exploring people's folk psychology. When asked what made them happy, participants focused more on *situational events* in their lives, such as when they can enjoy activities. When asked what a person needs to be happy, the participants stressed the importance of *essential elements*, such as religion, money, or health. Finally, when asked what a happy person is, *personal characteristics* were stated more frequently.

The different factors generated by the three different types of question showed that happiness is a complex concept to measure. If only one of the question types had been used—let's say the one leading participants to focus mainly on the essential elements for being happy ("What does a person need to be happy?")—other important features of this component of a person's well-being would not have been taken into just account. One must choose the most effective wording for the purpose of his or her research: The results of this study may help make the right choices.

This exploratory study had its methodological shortcomings. Though students are widely used research samples, they are not necessarily representative of the larger populations from which they are drawn. Furthermore, the students who participated in this study were from various disciplines in their respective universities, a factor that was not controlled. Dominant values in certain subgroups of students may have influenced the results. Another limitation of the present study is that it did not cover a range of diverse cultural groups.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTION

Though tendencies in value priorities were manifested in this study, the results revealed more strongly that people from different cultural groups have similar ideas about what makes them happy. It is important to remember that it is people's beliefs that were studied, rather than actual causes of happiness. The results are encouraging, considering that the perception of self-other similarity positively affects interpersonal attraction (Brown, 1984; Byrne, 1969) and that an understanding of cross-cultural similarities may help bring people from different cultures together (Klopf, 1987; Porter & Samovar,

1988). Furthermore, as indicated by Kagitcibasi and Berry (1989), whereas cultural differences in individual psychological and social functioning have been of long-standing interest, similarities have become central in a search for underlying regularities in human behavior.

A strength of the present study was that it allowed participants to put down what they wanted in a free-form way. Many questions remain, however. What are the levels of significance of the differences presented in this paper? Are underlying cultural differences between North American cultural groups present? If so, where do they lie? Are differences more significantly attributable to the cultural membership of individuals or to their personal value orientations? Can people's value priorities and their perceptions of what is important for happiness have an impact on their levels of SWB? Stemming from the results of this preliminary study, further cross-cultural studies will be pursued using objective instruments and conventional statistical methods aimed at measuring and comparing cultural and individual value priorities, the relative importance of the factors perceived as contributing to happiness, and levels of happiness.

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