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EFFECTS OF GENDER AND ETHNICITY ON ADOLESCENT EXPERIENCES IN
SAME-RACE AND INTERRACIAL ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

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Effects of Gender and Ethnicity on Adolescent Experiences in Same-Race and Interracial Romantic Relationships

In recent years, the field of psychology has seen considerable growth in the body of literature on adolescent romantic relationships (e.g., Florsheim, 2003; Furman, Brown, & Feiring, 1999). As this trend continues, the need for a more thorough understanding of the processes that underlie normal relationship development becomes increasingly apparent; particularly in the case of adolescent members of ethnic minority groups, for whom literature on normal development is sparse. The present study sought to gain insight into some of the forces that shape adolescents' experiences of romantic relationships: namely, race/ethnicity and gender. We hypothesized that, like their adult counterparts, adolescent romantic relationships would be significantly impacted by ethnicity. We also hypothesized that significant gender differences would be found in adolescents' attitudes, expectations, and experiences in dating relationships.

Studies have shown that culture accounts for a significant amount of variability in the way romantic relationships are experienced (Houssain, 2001; Lamphere, 2005; Rafaelli, 2005; Rafaelli & Ontai, 2004, & 2001; Sanderson & Kurdek, 1993; Tohe, 2000). Significant differences in relationship experiences for males and females have also consistently been found (Felmlee, 1994; Miller & Roloff, 2005; Rafaelli, 2005; Rafaelli & Ontai, 2004, & 2001; Sanderson & Kurdek, 1993). Although the mainstream culture in the United States is becoming increasingly egalitarian, significant differences in beliefs about appropriate gender roles and relationship behaviors still exist across cultural groups and between the genders (Hall & Barongan, 2001; Loo & Logan, 1977; Loo & Thorpe,

1998). Most of the existing literature, however, is based on adult relationships, or at best examines only retrospective reports of adults' recalled experiences from adolescence.

The existing literature suggests that beliefs about appropriate gender roles, power, and relationship behaviors differ significantly across ethnic groups in the United States; ranging from more egalitarian views to stronger endorsement of conservative gender roles and associated power imbalances (Hall & Barongan, 2001). The respective roles of race/ethnicity and gender in current adolescent romantic relationships, however, remain largely unexplored.

The present study took an exploratory look at the effects of race/ethnicity and gender on several dimensions of adolescent romantic relationships in White (European American), Native American, Latino, and interracial couples. The constructs examined included gender roles and several indices of interpersonal power, described below. Attitudes about gender roles were examined using the Attitudes Toward Women Scale for Adolescents (Galambos, Peterson, Richards, & Gitelson, 1985), which includes questions about the relative appropriateness of certain behaviors and roles for males and females respectively.

A multidimensional approach to assessing power in adolescent relationships was used. Cromwell and Olson (1975) proposed a tripartite approach to understanding power in relationships, consisting of: (1) power bases or resources, (2) processes of power, and (3) power outcomes. According to Cromwell and Olson's model, power bases or resources include access to financial, educational, or social resources. Processes of power emphasize relationship processes and characteristics of communication such as assertiveness and control. Finally, power outcomes involve couple members' relative

decision-making authority in the relationship. The multidimensional model of power in the present study was comprised of measures of decision making (power outcomes), and giving in and self-silencing communication patterns (processes); thus focusing on the latter two aspects of Cromwell and Olson's model.

Past research on power in adolescent romantic relationships has suggested that adolescent relationships tend to be more egalitarian than adult romantic relationships (Galliher, Rostosky, Welsh, & Kawaguchi, 1999). Bentley, Galliher, and Ferguson (manuscript under review) found significant associations between power and relationship outcomes for adolescent romantic relationships, suggesting that power is a salient aspect of adolescent relationships, warranting further exploration for better understanding. However, the effects of ethnicity on power in adolescent relationships have yet to be explored.

The present study sought to examine the effects of gender, ethnicity, and the interaction of gender and ethnicity, on adolescents' experiences of gender roles and power in same-race and interracial romantic relationships. Three racial/ethnic groups were included in the sample: Latino, Native American, and European American.

Effects of Race/Ethnicity and Gender

Latinos. According to Rafaelli and Ontai (2004), Latino cultures have traditionally been "marked by strong gender role divisions." Much of the existing literature on Latinos argues that certain cultural values held by many Latino groups, such as *respeto*, *marianismo*, and *machismo*, may contribute to a stronger endorsement of and adherence to conservative gender roles, as well as greater power discrepancies between

the genders (Denner & Dunbar, 2004; Fulgini et. al., 1999; Hall & Barongan, 2001; Rafaelli, 2005; Rafaelli & Ontai, 2001 & 2004).

According to Hall and Barongan (2001), *respeto* is a value requiring respect and deference to those in positions of authority. *Respeto* is based on hierarchical relationships in Latino cultures, including a gender-based hierarchical structure requiring “that women be respectful and subordinate to men” (p. 245). Another value, *marianismo*, bases the female gender role on the embodiment of certain traits of the Virgin Mary from Christian theology. This includes the endorsement of a self-sacrificing love style, avoidance of premarital sex, and the centrality of women’s roles as mothers (Cauce & Domenech-Rodriguez, 2002; Hall & Barongan, 2001). Finally, *machismo* is a cultural value regarding the masculine gender role. A broad range of positive and negative characteristics associated with *machismo* have been studied in Latino and non-Latino populations. There is considerable debate about what *machismo* actually includes, and how it is best captured with quantitative measures (Neff, 2001). Some characteristics associated with *machismo* include being patriarchal, controlling, sexually promiscuous, and insensitive; but also strong, protective, and honorable (Hall & Barongan, 2001; Neff, 2001).

Cauce and Domenech-Rodriguez (2002) contended that “exaggerated to the point of caricature, these Latino values have been used to paint a portrait of the “ideal” Latino family type as that of the self-sacrificing mother and the dominant, tyrannical man.” It is possible that Latino cultures have thus been misrepresented in the existing literature: characterized as having more rigid gender roles and gender-based power imbalances than actually exist in Latino relationships.

Several studies have been conducted examining gender role socialization and power in Latino families as they relate to adolescents. The results are fairly consistent, suggesting that Latino parents of various countries of origin tend to socialize male and female children differently, adhering to traditional conceptions of appropriate gender roles. Rafaelli and Ontai conducted several retrospective studies exploring adult Latino/as' recollections of adolescent dating experiences and gender socialization in their homes. In every study, Latina women and Latino men alike consistently reported that their parents were more lenient with regard to males' dating behaviors, curfews, and opposite-sex interactions (2001, 2004, 2005). In a qualitative exploratory study, Denner and Dunbar (2004) also found that the adolescent Latinas in their study reported similar gender role socialization.

While it seems clear from these findings that the adult members of many Latino cultural groups may still tend to favor traditional conservative gender roles, the question remains to what extent Latino/a youth also endorse traditional views of gender. Adolescents may be strongly influenced by their parents and other adults to endorse traditional conceptions of gender roles and power. Cauce and Domenech-Rodriguez (2002) point out, however, that many Latino cultures in South and Central America, as well as in the United States, are moving toward increasing egalitarianism. Thus it could be expected that Latino/a youth may be less likely than generations before them to favor conservative gender role conceptualizations.

The attitudes of Latino/a youth regarding gender roles have yet to be examined quantitatively. In a qualitative study, Denner and Dunbar (2004) explored Latina adolescents' attitudes about traditional gender roles. They found that most of the girls in

their study expressed ambivalence, sometimes endorsing traditional gender roles and power structures and sometimes strongly opposing them. Based on the findings of Dunbar and Denner, it is possible that significant gender differences may emerge for Latino/as' endorsement of traditional gender roles, as is the case with White males and females. Still, without information about Latino youths' attitudes, this prediction is speculative at best. This study builds on the findings of Rafaelli and Ontai, and Dunbar and Denner, adding the dimension of a quantitative measurement of the attitudes Latina and Latino youths themselves endorse regarding gender roles and power in relationships.

Native Americans. In contrast to the traditionally conservative views of some Latino/a cultures, some Native American groups have traditionally had more egalitarian practices. The Native American adolescents in this study are primarily Navajo. Historically, women and men in the Navajo culture have shared equally in household chores, child-rearing, and providing for their families (Houssain, 2001; Lamphere, 2005). Navajo culture is traditionally matrilineal and matrilocal in structure, with the male marrying into the female's family and with inheritance and ancestry being traced through female blood lines (Allen, 1992; Dehyle & Margonis, 1995; Houssain, 2001; Lamphere, 2005; Tohe, 2000). Even the traditional religion of the tribe is based on a pantheistic structure in which female deities play a central and pivotal role in the origin and sustenance of life (Allen, 1992). Although the dominant culture has significantly impacted Native American cultures since colonization, making them more similar culturally to more conservative patriarchal European cultures than they traditionally had been (Allen, 1992; Dehyle & Margonis, 1995), anthropological researchers have found that most tribal members still tend to have more egalitarian practices than the mainstream

culture (Lamphere, 2005). Fathers in this tribe still report roughly the same amount of involvement in household chores and childrearing responsibilities as mothers; a significantly higher level of involvement in these activities than most fathers in any other ethnic group in the United States report (Houssain, 2001).

In their article on Navajo women and education, Dehyle and Margonis (1995) explain that in traditional Navajo culture, women's roles as matriarchs are central to the extended family structure. Navajo women are often expected to remain close to the family and focus on their roles as mothers, wives, and daughters more than career-oriented aspects of their lives, a role that is similar in some respects to the dominant culture's more conservative conceptualizations of gender roles; however, this role for women is ascribed a higher status in Navajo culture. The traditional female gender role is associated with respect, authority, and decision-making power (Allen, 1992; Dehyle & Margonis, 1995; Tohe, 2000).

Little is known about Native American adolescents' views on appropriate gender roles and the implications, if any, for power in male-female relationships. Predictions can only be made based on existing knowledge about the historical background and current cultural context of Native adolescents and the communities they live in. Since our sample is primarily Navajo, and Navajo culture is traditionally very egalitarian, it seems likely that these adolescents will have the most egalitarian practices when compared to their Latino/a and White (European American) counterparts. To date, however, literature on gender differences in Navajos' adolescents' views is noticeably absent from psychological, anthropological, and sociological literature. The present study takes an

exploratory look at the extent to which Navajo adolescents identify with egalitarian views and practices regarding gender roles and power.

Whites (European Americans). According to Loo and Thorpe (1998), although the mainstream culture of the United States is still a largely patriarchal society, White males' and females' attitudes about gender roles in the dominant United States culture have become increasingly liberal and flexible (as measured by the Attitudes Toward Women scale; Spence & Helmreich, 1972). Despite this trend toward more liberal attitudes in the mainstream culture, there remains a gender gap with females holding more liberal attitudes than do males (Loo & Thorpe, 1998). Since the white adolescents in our sample come from a cultural background that is becoming more egalitarian, we predicted that our sample of European American adolescents would fall somewhere between the Latino/a and Native American adolescents in terms of how relatively liberal or conservative their views are. To the extent that white adolescents' attitudes about gender roles reflect the same patterns seen in European American adults' attitudes, it can be expected that males and females will differ in their endorsement of traditional gender roles, with males being more conservative and females being more liberal.

Studies on adult European American romantic relationships have found that significant power differences still exist between the genders. Where significant power imbalances are found, males generally hold more power in the relationship than do females (Carli, 1999; Felmlee, 1994; Gray-Little & Burks, 1983; Sprecher & Felmlee, 1997). The generalizability of these findings to adolescents, however, has yet to be confirmed. As Galliher et. al. (1999) found, adolescent romantic relationships may not be characterized by the same discrepancies of power found in adult romantic relationships.

Interracial Couples.

According to the United States Census Bureau (2000), interracial couples constituted 4.3 percent of married couples and 1.9 percent of dating couples. Despite increases in the number of interracial relationships, research on the relationship experiences of interracial couples is sparse at best. According to Foeman and Lance (1999), much of the existing knowledge about mixed race relationships is based on outdated research from the 1960s and 70s characterized by a focus on negative relationship qualities and deficiencies. Virtually all research on interracial couples to date has focused on one of three main questions: (1) what motivates people to engage in interracial relationships and (2) whether those who engage in interracial relationships are abnormal on psychological measures such as self-esteem, or are more rebellious than people in same-race relationships, and (3) whether or not interracial relationships are characterized by more relationship strain and less satisfaction than same-race relationships (Burnette, 1995; Foeman & Lance, 1999; Gurung & Duong, 1999; Lanceman, 2003).

Another limitation of the research on interracial relationships is that researchers have focused almost exclusively on married couples, assuming that knowledge about dating couples could be inferred from the existing data on married interracial couples. Lantsman (2003) argued that it is important to study interracial dating as a distinct phenomenon from interracial marriage, because interracial dating may have different goals and follow different relationship patterns. It cannot be assumed that findings on interracial marriages can be generalized to interracial dating relationships. This study

takes a very exploratory look at how gender roles are viewed and power dynamics negotiated by members of interracial adolescent couples.

Methods

Participants

Participants were 85 heterosexual adolescent couples. The ethnic backgrounds of the same-race couples in our sample were 53% White, 12% Latino/Hispanic, and 18% Native American. Interracial couples accounted for 17% of the sample. Couple members were between 14 and 18 years of age and couples were required to have dated exclusively for at least one month to ensure some degree of mutual relationship experience. The average couples' length of relationship was 55 weeks. The religious affiliation endorsed by girlfriends was 61% Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS), 17% Baptist, 10% Catholic, and 12% other, which most frequently was a traditional Native American religion. The religious affiliation of the boyfriends was 59% LDS, 13% Catholic, 5% Baptist, and 23% specified no religious affiliation. Latino and White adolescents were recruited from rural high schools located in Northern Utah. Native American adolescents and their partners were recruited from a public high school located near the reservation border.

Measures

Attitudes Toward Women Scale for Adolescents. The Attitudes Toward Women Scale for Adolescents (Galambos, Peterson, Richards, & Gitelson, 1985) is a twelve-item scale adapted from the short form of the Spence-Helmreich Attitudes Toward Women Scale (Spence, Helreich, & Stapp, 1973). Each item consists of a statement of opinion about the relative appropriateness of various roles and rights for men and women (e.g.,

“It is more important for boys than girls to do well in school.”). The degree to which respondents agree or disagree with each statement is indicated on a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1= “agree strongly” to 4= “disagree strongly.” Items indicating more egalitarian views are reverse-scored. A global score is calculated as the mean across all items. Higher scores on the scale correspond with more liberal attitudes. Reliability analysis conducted for this study revealed an alpha of .69 for girlfriends and .65 boyfriends.

Silencing the Self. The Silencing-the-Self scale (Jack, 1991) includes 31 items. These items are divided into 4 sub-scales: externalized self-perception, care as self-sacrifice, silencing the self, and divided self. Of these scales, only the silencing the self sub-scale was used in the present study (9 items; e.g., “I don’t speak my feelings in an intimate relationship when I know they will cause disagreement,” “I rarely express my anger at those close to me”). The items were answered on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree) and scale scores were calculated as a mean across items. Psychometric properties (Jack & Dill, 1992; Stevens & Galvin, 1995) are generally acceptable. High correlations with the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) support construct validity. Additionally, the scale has been used in numerous studies that identified the tendency to forfeit self-expression and correlated the tendency with expected outcomes. Jack and Dill (1992) also found internal consistency measures ($\alpha = .86 - .94$) to be acceptable. Finally, measures of test-retest reliability ($\alpha = .88 - .93$) are high. Reliability analysis conducted on the data for this study revealed an alpha of .77 for both girlfriends and boyfriends for the self-silencing subscale.

Decision Making. Discrepancies in power were also measured using a decision-making questionnaire used in previous research (Rostosky, Welsh, Kawaguchi, & Galliher, 1999). Ten items assessed couple members' perceptions of decision making authority in the relationship. Sample items included "When you and your partner disagree on something, who usually wins?" "When you and your partner talk about important things, who usually makes the final decision?", and "Who decides how much time you should spend together?" Subjects responded to the questions using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = my partner always does, 3 = we both do, 5 = I always do). Reliability analysis for the data collected for this specific study resulted in an alpha of .79 for girls and .82 for boys.

Video Recall Procedure

A final method for capturing interpersonal power in young couples' interactions used the video-recall method developed specifically for use with adolescent couples (Welsh, Galliher, Rostosky, & Kawaguchi, 1999). Couples were videotaped engaging in two 8-minute problem-solving conversations. Each couple member selected issues from an Issues Checklist and couples were asked to discuss boyfriends' issues and girlfriends' issues in separate conversations. Couple members then participated in a video recall procedure, in which they watched the conversations twice, once to rate their own behavior and again to rate their partners. The conversations were divided into 20-second intervals and couple members rated themselves and their partners on a scale from 1 - 4 on seven behavioral dimensions for each segment (connection, conflict, sarcasm, trying to persuade, giving in, feeling uncomfortable, and putting down). The present study

examined couple members' mean ratings of themselves across the 40 intervals on the dimension of "giving in" in the conversations.

Results

Preliminary Analyses & Descriptive Statistics

Means and standard deviations on all attitudinal outcomes for boyfriends and girlfriends in the four ethnic groups are summarized in Table 1. Preliminary analyses were conducted to evaluate the need to control for demographic factors. First, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to explore for difference between the four race/ethnicity groups (European American, Latino, Naïve American, interracial) with regard to relationship length. Relationship length in weeks was calculated as the mean of the relationship length reported by boyfriends and girlfriends. While boyfriends and girlfriends were not exactly concordant in their reports of relationship length, their reports were highly correlated ($r = .89$). No significant differences for relationship length were found among our couples (all p -values for pairwise comparisons $>.05$). Only one correlation between relationship length and relationship outcomes was statistically significant. The correlation between relationship length and girlfriends' reports of decision making authority was significant ($r = .34, p = .001$). Thus, relationship length was included as a covariate in the analyses predicting decision making authority only. ,

Primary Analyses

Primary analyses consisted of four two-way ANOVAs, with one within-subjects factor (gender) and one between-subjects factor (couple race).

Attitudes toward Women Scale for Adolescents. No significant interaction between gender and ethnicity was found for ATWSA scores. The main effect for gender was significant, $F(1, 79) = 27.630, p < .001, \eta^2 = .259$. Females had significantly more liberal attitudes regarding female gender roles than did males. A significant main effect for race was also found, $F(1, 79) = 4.819, p = .004, \eta^2 = .155$. Scheffe post hoc analyses indicated that significant differences existed between Native American and European American couples (mean difference = $-.25, p = .007$) and between Native American and interracial couples (mean difference = $-.40, p < .001$). Native American couples held the most conservative views of female gender roles. Latino couples did not differ significantly from any other group.

Silencing the Self. No significant interaction between gender and ethnicity was found for Silencing the Self scores. The main effect for gender was significant, $F(1, 79) = 6.998, p = .01, \eta^2 = .08$. Boyfriends had significantly higher scores than girlfriends, indicating a stronger tendency to avoid self-expression. No significant main effect for race was found.

Decision Making.

A significant interaction between gender and ethnicity was found for scores on the decision making questionnaire, $F(1, 79) = 3.057, p = .03, \eta^2 = .10$. While decision making power was roughly equal between the genders for most ethnic groups, greater differences existed between Native American girlfriends and boyfriends, with girlfriends reporting higher decision-making power and boyfriends reporting lower decision-making power (mean difference = $.63$). See Figure 1 for the graph of this interaction. No main effects for gender or race were found.

Giving Self-Ratings.

A marginally significant interaction between gender and ethnicity was found for couple members' ratings of how much they gave into their partner during the problem-solving conversations (from the video recall procedure), $F(1, 79) = .767, p = .08, \eta^2 = .08$. Although this finding should be interpreted with caution, the observed power for detecting any significant interaction was low (.562), indicating that a significant interaction could potentially be detected with a larger sample size. Given the small sample size and the exploratory nature of this study, cautious interpretation of this marginally significant interaction seems warranted. See Figure 2 for a graphical representation of the means. The main effect for gender was significant, $F(1, 79) = 7.993, p < .006, \eta^2 = .09$. Boyfriends rated themselves as giving in significantly more than did girlfriends rating themselves. A significant main effect for race was also found, $F(1, 79) = 4.603, p = .005, \eta^2 = .149$. Scheffe post hoc analyses indicated that significant differences existed between European American and Native American couples (mean difference = $-.63, p = .001$) and between European American and Latino couples (mean difference = $-.49, p = .029$). European American couple members were significantly less likely to perceive themselves as giving in than were Native American or Latino couple members. Native Americans and Latinos did not differ significantly from each other. Interracial couples did not differ significantly from any other group.

Discussion

The current study examined the effects of gender and ethnicity on adolescents' experiences of gender roles and power in same-race and interracial romantic relationships. Power was assessed using a multi-dimensional model including self-reports

of couple members' decision-making authority, tendency toward self-silencing, and perceptions of having given in to their partner during two video-taped problem-solving interactions. Significant gender differences were found in attitudes about gender roles and for two of the three measures of interpersonal power (self-silencing and giving in). Significant differences among our ethnic groups emerged for perceptions of having given in to one's partner and for attitudes about gender roles. Finally, there was a significant interaction between gender and ethnicity on decision-making power and a marginally significant interaction of ethnicity and gender on the self-reported tendency to give in to one's partner.

Gender Differences in Attitudes Toward Women and Power

Significant gender differences were found for couple members' scores on the Attitudes Toward Women Scale for Adolescents. Consistent with the findings of Loo & Thorpe (1998), we found that girlfriends endorsed more liberal views about the rights and roles of women than did boyfriends.

In our multidimensional model of power, significant gender differences emerged for two of the three scales measured. Similar to the findings of Page and Stevens (1996), boyfriends in the current study reported higher levels of silencing the self (see also Duarte & Thorpe, 1999). Duarte and Thorpe propose that self-silencing behaviors in males may be a function of the traditional masculine gender role, supporting the suppression of "emotion and affection." Boyfriends rated themselves as having given in to their partners more during the problem-solving interactions from the video recall procedure. No significant gender difference was found in decision-making overall,

supporting the previous findings of Galliher et. al. (1999) that adolescent couples may tend toward more egalitarian relationship practices than their adult counterparts.

Latinos

The current study found no support for the assertion that Latino cultures are characterized by rigid gender roles and imbalanced power in male-female relationships. The Latino adolescents in our sample consistently emerged with moderate views and practices (relative to their Native American, European American, and interracial counterparts) on almost every aspect of relationship experiences measured in this study.

Latino/a couple members did not differ significantly from any other ethnic group on Attitudes Toward Women, Silencing the Self, or the Who Does It measure of decision-making power. They did, however, differ significantly from European Americans (whites) in their perceptions of giving in to their partners, with Latinos and Latinas both reporting much higher levels of giving in. This contrast may be explained by the difference between white (European American) individualistic values and more collectivist Latino values such as *personalismo*, which is common to many Latino cultures. *Personalismo* emphasizes the importance of being agreeable and concerned about others thoughts and feelings in order to preserve interpersonal harmony (Cauce & Domenech-Rodriguez, 2002; Hall & Barongan, 2001). Latinos and Latinas reported almost exactly equal amounts of giving in to their partners.

Native Americans

The Native American couples in the current study were characterized by a distinctive pattern of gender roles and power dynamics. Native American couple members reported significantly more conservative attitudes toward women than did white

or interracial couples. Interestingly, though, Native American girlfriends reported much higher decision-making authority than did boyfriends. This may be a reflection of the matriarchal traditions in Navajo culture. As Tohe (2000) explains, the role of women as mothers in Navajo culture has historically been a high-status position associated with respect and decision-making authority (see also Dehyle & Margonis, 1995). The centrality of women's roles as mothers and matriarchs may thus be associated with more conservative views and expectations of the feminine gender role, but is also associated with greater decision-making authority in male-female relationships.

Similar to the Latina/os, Native American adolescents reported higher levels of giving in than did European American adolescents. This is especially true for Native American males. This difference may be a function of the collectivist orientation of Native American cultures, and of the greater decision-making authority of Navajo women relative to Navajo men.

European Americans

Using the Attitudes Toward Women scale developed by Spence and Helmreich (1973), Loo and Thorpe (1998) found that the mainstream United States culture has moved toward increasingly egalitarian views over the past 20 years. Consistent with this finding, European American (white) adolescents in the current study had fairly egalitarian views about gender roles. Also consistent with the findings of Loo and Thorpe, significant gender differences emerged. Girlfriends were more likely to have liberal views of the female gender role than were boyfriends.

European American boyfriends and girlfriends did not differ significantly on our measure of decision-making in the relationship. Both boyfriends and girlfriends reported

significantly lower levels of giving in than did Native American or Latina/o couple members. No significant differences were found between European Americans and any other ethnic group on the Silencing the Self scale.

Interracial Couples.

Interracial couple members, like white (European American) adolescents, reported relatively liberal views about gender roles. Girlfriends in interracial couples reported the most liberal views of any other group in the present study. No significant differences emerged between interracial couples and any other group on any of the three measures of interpersonal power, suggesting that normal relationship processes for adolescent interracial couples are not significantly different from same-race couples at least in terms of negotiating power dynamics.

Summary and Limitations

The current study suggests that gender and ethnicity are important factors in shaping adolescents' romantic relationship experiences, and certainly warrant further exploration. Interesting patterns emerged in the effects of gender and ethnicity separately and in interaction, influencing adolescents' gender role attitudes and power dynamics. A multidimensional model using two of the three components of power proposed by Cromwell and Olson allowed us to tap into various aspects of power relationships, revealing that the way in which power is defined in psychological research can have real implications for the findings obtained. Thus, the benefits of a multidimensional approach to measuring power are clear and applicable to research on adolescent romantic relationships.

Very little is known about how gender roles and power dynamics are played out in adolescent relationships. It cannot be assumed that literature on adult romantic relationships can generalize to adolescent experiences. Furthermore, the influence of gender and ethnicity on the experience of power in adolescent relationships has been completely neglected in the psychological literature to date. The present study, though exploratory in nature, is a contribution in the direction of greater understanding of the respective roles of gender and ethnicity in shaping adolescent romantic experiences.

Several limitations of the present study must be addressed. First, because of the geographical location of this sample (rural Utah and Arizona), the variables race/ethnicity and religion may have been confounded. A large majority of our European American (white) participants were members of the LDS church, whereas our Latino and Native American samples represented a broader range of religious affiliations. In addition, the small sample sizes within racial and ethnic groups may have implications for the generalizability of our findings, and may have also made it difficult to detect significant differences that may have been detected with a larger sample. The marginally significant interaction effect, combined with a medium effect size, for couple members' self-ratings of giving in, suggests that this may be the case for at least this particular scale.

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Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations on Attitudes Toward Women Adolescent Scale (ATWSA), Silencing the Self, Decision Making, and Giving In

	ATWSA Mean (SD)	Sil. Self Mean (SD)	Dec. Making Mean (SD)	Giving In Mean (SD)
Latino				
Girlfriends	3.31 (.52)	2.30 (.50)	2.97 (.32)	1.07 (0.90)
Boyfriends	2.91 (.40)	2.96 (.54)	2.90 (.77)	1.05 (0.92)
Native American				
Girlfriends	3.04 (.41)	2.58 (.60)	3.35 (.56)	0.93 (0.95)
Boyfriends	2.83 (.42)	2.90 (.64)	2.71 (.61)	1.48 (1.03)
White				
Girlfriends	3.30 (.34)	2.57 (.59)	3.00 (.27)	0.53 (0.51)
Boyfriends	3.07 (.43)	2.65 (.76)	2.95 (.32)	0.62 (0.60)
Interracial				
Girlfriends	3.62 (.22)	2.67 (.77)	2.89 (.27)	0.58 (0.77)
Boyfriends	3.05 (.47)	2.69 (.68)	3.00 (.33)	1.41 (0.94)

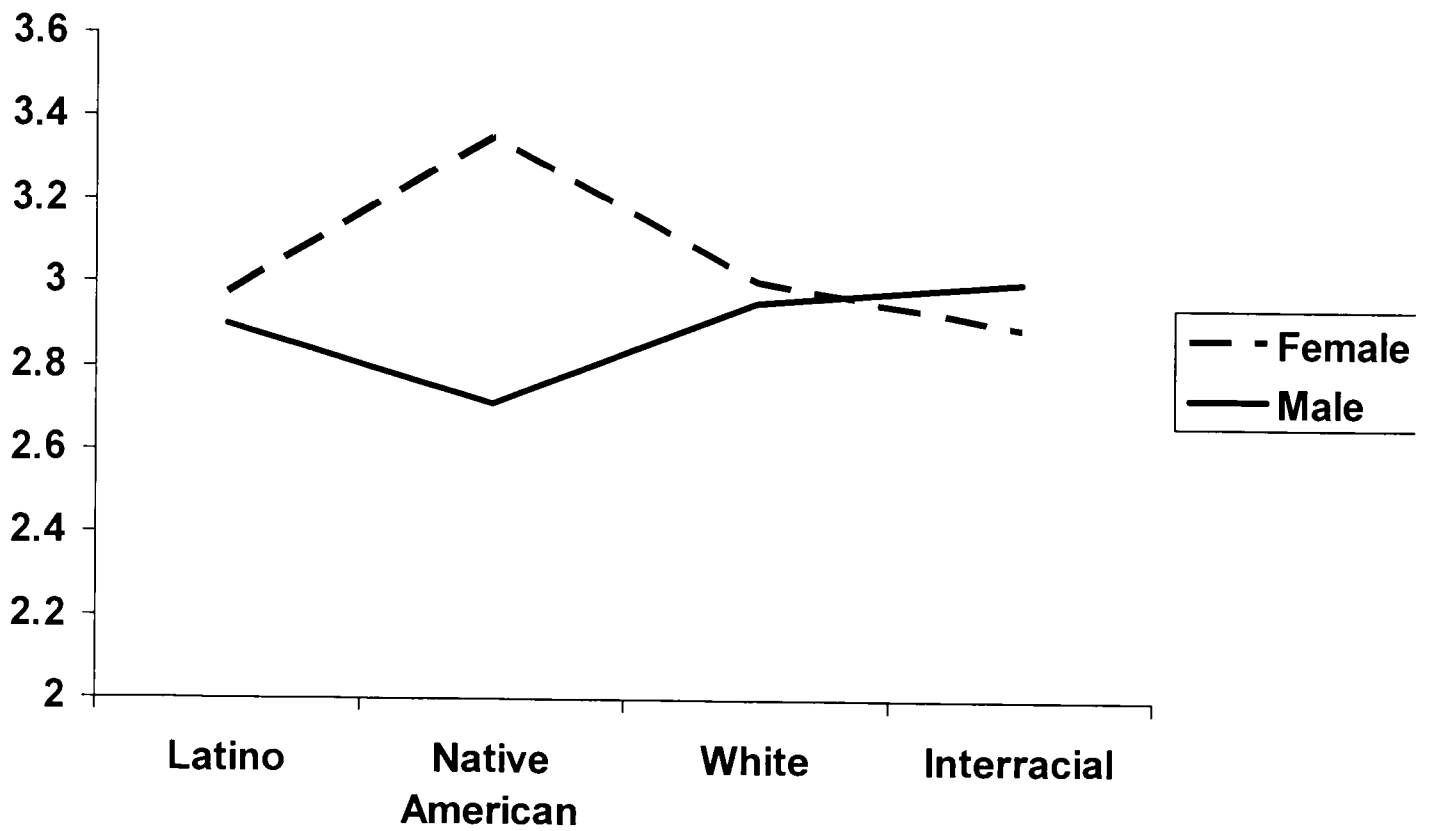
* possible range

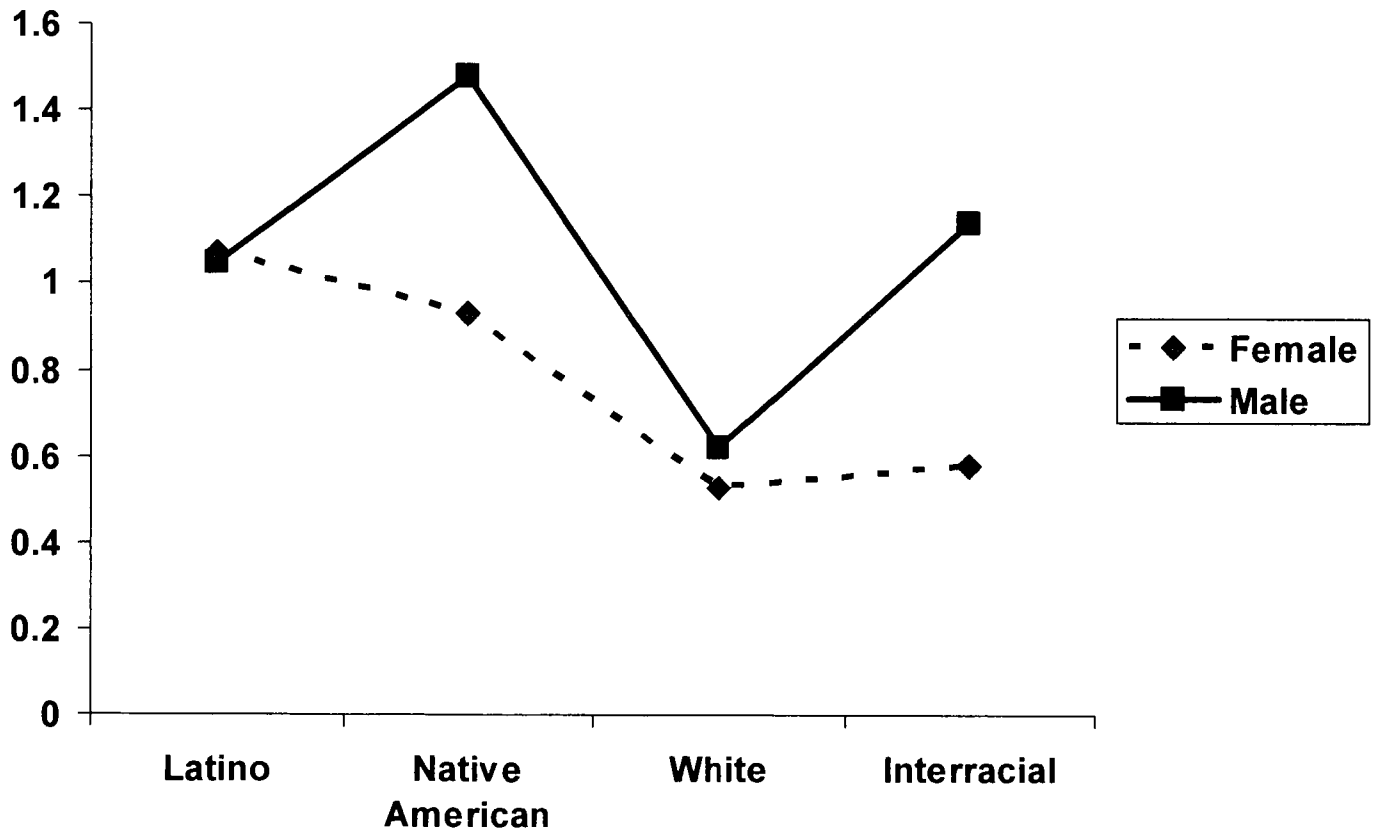
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Figure Captions

Figure 1. *Interaction of gender and ethnicity on scores on the Who Does It decision making questionnaire.*

Figure 2. *Marginally significant interaction of gender and ethnicity on ratings of self giving in to partner during video recall procedure.*





Effects of Gender and Ethnicity on Adolescent Same-Race and Interracial Romantic Relationships

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Need for Research on Normal Adolescent Development

- Romantic experiences a central aspect of adolescent development
 - Need for understanding the influences of ethnicity on normal adolescent romantic relationships (Coates, 1999)
- Lack of research on normal developmental processes for ethnic minority youth
 - Often research on minority groups is negatively-focused and filled with stereotypes

Latino/as

- Characterization of Latino cultures in the literature
 - Cultural values surrounding gender roles may be greatly exaggerated (Cauce & Domenech-Rodriguez, 2001)
- Studies examining attitudes of Latino/a youth regarding gender roles and power have had mixed results
 - Limitations of studies conducted to date

Native Americans

- Traditionally matrilineal and matrilineal structure
- Egalitarian division of household labor and finances
- Traditional female gender role is associated with respect, authority, and decision-making power (Allen, 1992; Dethle & Matgoris, 1995; Tohe, 2000)

European Americans

- Traditionally a patriarchal society
 - Evidence suggests that power differences still exist in most adult romantic relationships (Feinlee, 1994)
- Trend toward increasing egalitarianism
- Gender gap: male attitudes about gender roles more conservative than female attitudes (Lio & Thorpe, 1998 & 2005)

Interracial Couples

- Problems with the current literature
 - Outdated
 - Assumptions: deficiency models, focus on motivation
- Need for literature examining normal relationship processes, free of negative bias
- Need for research on unmarried dating couples

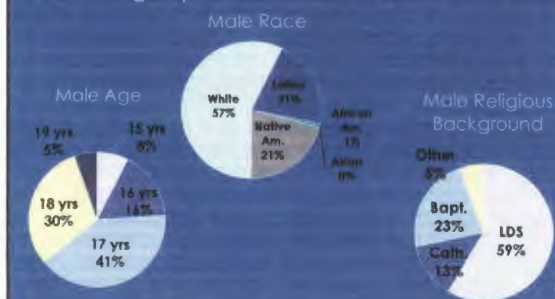
Research Questions

- How do gender and ethnicity, and the interaction of the two, affect adolescents' attitudes about gender roles?
- How do gender and ethnicity, and the interaction of the two, affect adolescents' experiences of power in heterosexual romantic relationships?

Female Participants Demographic Information



Male Participants Demographic Information



Participants Demographic Information

- **85 Adolescent Couples**
 - 53% White
 - 18% Native American
 - 17% Interracial
 - 12% Latina/Hispanic
- **Relationship Length**
 - Required to have dated at least 1 month
 - Average 55 months
 - Range 1 month-6 years
 - 75% had dated less than 1.5 years

Procedure

- Part of larger study examining relationship processes associated with psychosocial adjustment and relationship outcomes for mid-adolescent romantic couples
 - Extensive computer administered survey
 - Video-recall procedure

Procedure

- Video-recall procedure
 - Couples video taped having 3 conversations.
 - Couple members viewed video tapes
 - Each rated their own behavior and their partner's behavior in 20, 20 second segments of the 8 minute conversations.
 - Video recall codes used in present study
 - Giving in - assessed perceptions of own giving in during problem solving conversation

Measures

- Gender Roles
 - Attitudes Toward Women Scale for Adolescents
- Power: Multidimensional Model
 - The Silencing the Self scale
 - The Who Does It scale
 - "Giving In" Self-Ratings from video recall procedure

Analyses

- 4 X 2 ANOVAs
 - Between subjects factor: Couple Race/Ethnicity (Latino, Native American, White, & Interracial)
 - Within Subjects factor: Girlfriends vs. Boyfriends
- Dependent variables
 - Attitudes Toward Women Scale for Adolescents, Silencing the Self scale, Who Does It scale, "Giving In" Self-Ratings

Predicting Attitudes toward Women

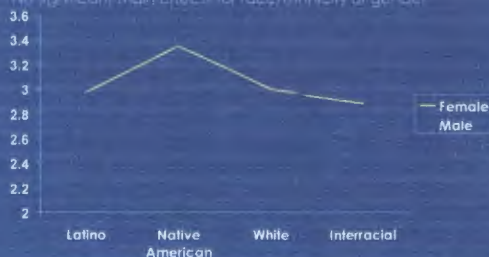
- Main effect – gender
 - $F(1,79) = 27.63, p < .001, \eta^2 = .26$
 - Boyfriends < Girlfriends
- Main effect – race/ethnicity
 - $F(1,79) = 4.819, p = .004, \eta^2 = .16$
 - Native American < White & Interracial
- Interaction – non-significant

Predicting Silencing the Self

- Main effect – gender
 - $F(1,79) = 6.998, p = .01, \eta^2 = .08$
 - Boyfriends > Girlfriends
- No main effect for race/ethnicity
- Interaction- non-significant

Predicting Decision-Making

- Significant Interaction between gender and race/ethnicity
 - $F(1,79) = 3.057, p = .03, \eta^2 = .10$
- No significant main effects for race/ethnicity or gender

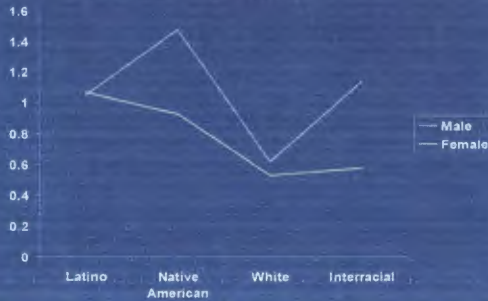


Predicting Giving In Self-Ratings

- Main effect – gender
 - $F(1,79) = 7.993, p = .006, \eta^2 = .09$
 - Boyfriends > Girlfriends
- Main effect – race/ethnicity
 - $F(1,79) = 4.603, p = .005, \eta^2 = .15$
 - White < Native American & Latina/o
- Interaction – marginally significant
 - $F(1,79) = 2.314, p = .082, \eta^2 = .08$

Giving In Self-Ratings

- Interaction – marginally significant
- $F(1,79) = 2.314, p = .082, \eta^2 = .08$



Conclusions

- Latinos
 - No support for assertion that Latino cultures are characterized by rigid gender roles or extreme power discrepancies between the genders
- Native Americans
 - Conservative gender role attitudes relative to Whites and Latinos
 - Unlike other groups, Navajo females have greater decision-making power than males

Conclusions

- European Americans
 - Characterized by lower levels of perceived giving in to partner than Native American or Latino couple members
- Interracial Couples
 - Not characterized by any huge differences
 - Only group for whom females had lower decision-making power
 - Characterized by a larger gap between male and female giving in
 - **Interaction was only marginally significant

Conclusions

- Males versus Females
 - Girlfriends had more liberal views about gender roles
 - Boyfriends had a stronger tendency toward self-silencing and giving in
 - No significant differences in decision making