Analyzing Cultural Models in Adolescent Accounts of Romantic Relationships

Constance Milbrath

University of British Columbia

Brightstar Ohlson

Paul Gibson & Associates

Stephen L. Eyre

University of California, San Francisco

Research on academic achievement has led the way in demonstrating how culturally constructed meanings shape adolescent scholastic behavior. The aim of this research is to move this standpoint of analysis more centrally into the area of adolescent dating and sexuality by focusing on the cultural components of adolescent romantic relationships. This study examines cultural models of romantic relationships in Vernacular Term Interviews of 68 African American and 59 Mexican American 11th- and 12th-grade female and male high school students. A subset of interviews was analyzed first qualitatively to identify the models. The models then were committed to a manual and 4 analytic coders established reliability before coding all interviews blind as to race/ethnicity and gender of the adolescent. The resultant data were summarized by a principal components analysis that yielded 5 interpretable factors. Factor scores were computed and compared for gender and...
race/ethnicity differences. The results demonstrated clear differences in factors by race/ethnicity but not by gender. Results are discussed in relation to cultural differences described in the literature for these 2 populations.

For many youth, adolescence is a challenging but often perilous developmental period. The risks and consequences of adolescence are well documented across many studies of adolescent delinquency, substance abuse, and precocious sexuality (Abma, 2003; Jessor, Turbin, & Costa, 1998). What is less studied, however, are the cultural models that adolescents of different backgrounds bring to their peer relationships and how these models are used to reason about the decisions they make. Adolescents come into opposite-sex romantic relationships with a set of specific cultural expectations and at the same time they also act as culturing agents for partners (Coates, 1999). In order to understand these potentially bidirectional influences as formative sources of adolescent experience, an essential first step is to comprehend how cognitive models relating to peer group relationships vary in different sociocultural groups. This study examines the cultural models of romantic relationships in interview accounts of 11th- and 12th-grade female and male high school students of different race/ethnicity.

Our approach is that of cognitive anthropology in our emphasis on membership in social groups as a strong determinant of cognition. Accordingly we appropriate the anthropologist’s construct of a cultural model to refer to group-specific cognitive models that function to guide an adolescent’s reasoning about specific aspects of romantic relationships. D’Andrade (1995) defines a cultural model as, “... an interrelated set of concepts representing an object or event that is shared by members of a social group.” The idea that culture can be studied by examining shared knowledge emerged from the emphasis anthropology put on systems of meaning inherent in culturally created entities (e.g., marriage) (D’Andrade, 1984). In this view, culture consists not of behaviors, or even patterns of behavior, but rather of shared information or knowledge encoded in systems of meaning. However, D’Andrade (1984) raised three issues in this regard: (1) many things one would want to call culture are not shared, (2) culture consists of more than just knowledge, and, most notably for this research, (3) it is not clear whether cultural systems are to be found inside or outside the minds of individuals. Hutchins (2002) asserts that culture is better defined as a human cognitive process “... that takes place both inside and outside the minds of people” (p. 354), a process that is distributed across individuals and which collectively leads to more than what is contained in the mind of a single individual. Hutchins summarizes this
by stating, “(t)he very same processes that constitute the conduct of an activity and produce changes in the individual practitioners . . . also produce changes in the social, material, and conceptual aspects of the setting” (p. 374). Behavior as inseparable from culture, therefore, is not determined solely by what is inside an individual but also by the sociocultural system that is representative of the artifacts of individuals engaging in cultural activities.

It is only in the last dozen years that researchers have begun to take seriously the study of romantic relationships in adolescents. In part, the reluctance of researchers to pursue this area has been based on the mythology that teenage romances are short-term unstable affairs with little lasting impact on the quality of their adult relationships (Collins, 2003). Recent estimates from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, however, suggest many adolescents have long-term relationships that persist for a year or more (Carver, Joyner, & Udry, 2003; Wang, Kao, & Joyner, 2006). In addition, studies point to similarities between adolescent and adult romances in terms of relationship goals and what constitutes relationship satisfaction (Connolly, Goldberg, Craig, & Pepler, 1999; Levesque, 1993). As a final point, dramatic changes in the life of adolescents have the potential to greatly intensify the impact of adolescent romance as youth spend more time in school interacting with peers and have greater involvement in sexual relationships than past generations, and as new youth cultures emerge with greater emphasis on “peer worlds” (Larson, Suzanne, Brown, Furstenberg, & Verma, 2002).

Much of the theorizing about adolescent romance has been based on research with White middle-class youth (Jessor, 1993). Research that has examined cultural differences in adolescent romantic relationships through the lens of race/ethnicity typically has focused on dating and sexual behavior (e.g., Cavanagh, 2004; Udry & Billy, 1987). This has origins in the search for practical solutions to social problems such as teen-age pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and HIV/AIDS. Although these studies often suggest key cultural differences in the constructed meaning of relationships, there is little attempt to characterize the cultural environments in which reported sexual behaviors occur. We make the claim that, although behavioral choices are multidetermined, the cultural meanings and socially constructed realities that adolescents of a given sociocultural group attribute to their world are fundamental in their reasoning. Research on academic achievement has led the way in demonstrating how such culturally constructed meanings shape adolescent scholastic behavior (Carter, 2003; Fordham, 1993; Ogbu, 1978). One aim of our research is to move this standpoint of analysis more centrally into the
area of teen dating and sexuality by focusing on the cultural components of adolescent romantic relationships.

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF ROMANCE IN ADOLESCENT PEER GROUPS**

One of the most salient and reliable results of the research on adolescent romantic relationships is that dating and sexual behaviors associated with romantic involvements appear in the context of peer social groups. The significance of peer groups for the emergence of romantic relationships was appreciated first by Dunphy (1963) in his classic study of Australian youth. Adopting Dunphy’s framework, many contemporary researchers have consistently confirmed his observations of the importance of mixed gender peer groups in promoting the opportunity for heterosexual interactions and, more significantly, as contexts for observing heterosexual relationship models from which members learn these social roles (Brown, 1999; Connolly, Furman, & Konarski, 2000; Eder, Evans, & Parker, 1995; Feiring, 1999b). Peer groups as the prime socializing force for adolescent romance underscores their importance for the transmission of cultural knowledge about romantic love (Simon, Eder, & Evans, 1992). Variation with respect to timing of relationship behaviors and quality of images of romance are reported features of different cultural or ethnic groups (Cavanagh, 2004; Flores, Eyre, & Millstein, 1998; Simon, Bouchey, & Furman cited in Furman & Simon, 1999; Udry & Billy, 1987) and of different crowds (Brown, 1999).

Recent qualitative research further supports the view that friends play a critical socializing role in how youth of both sexes construct dating and sexual relationship (Harper, Gannon, Watson, Catania, & Dolcini, 2004). O’Sullivan and Meyer-Bahlberg (2003) found that friendship groups were important in the development of romantic scripts and socialization of intimate relationships for both low-income African American and Latina girls. Girls from both sociocultural groups reported learning romantic and sexual standards from same-sex friends and in mixed gender groups. But what the Latina and African American girls learned in these distinct sociocultural groups differed markedly. Latina girls described having less understanding of sexual behavior than African American girls and were less frank and open in peer focus group discussions of their sexual experiences. Latinas emphasized the pressure on girls to maintain their virginity until marriage (marry “with a veil”), to find a boyfriend, and to plan eventually to marry and have children. Latinas also expressed idealized
versions of love relationships and the shame and degradation of girls who were sexually active outside of love relationships.

In contrast, African American girls held less romantic views and communicated a more adversarial approach to sexual relationships, regarding sex as a sensible measure to maintain opposite-sex relationships. The pressure that African American girls reported was to be sexually active. They attached less stigma to adolescent pregnancy and saw it as an expected outcome of sexual involvement (O’Sullivan & Meyer-Bahlberg, 2003). Based on her studies of African American girls, Stevens (2002) speculates that an “early-birth timetable” is a likely outcome in families who have experienced “intergenerational economic depletion” because the birth of a child represents a tangible reward, conferring grown-up status on a young female. In a somewhat complementary manner, low-income African American males may construct sexual conquest in relation to status because other forms of status achievement are unavailable to them (Anderson, 1990; Eyre, Bercovitch, Ohlson, & Milbrath, 2006; Kerrigan et al., 2007).

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN ROMANCE

Accounts and qualitative studies of values and gender role expectations in Latino and African American families reveal unmistakable cultural differences in their views of romance. Traditional Mexican American cultural values emphasize the primacy of the family, the value of children, and nurturing roles for women as “familismo” (Baca Zinn, 1982), with great import given to marital fertility and large family size (Darabi & Ortiz, 1987). Deference to the authority of parents and elders, honoring the family and community through “good” behavior, and adhering to traditional gender roles are embraced by the concept of “respeto” (Alvirez, Bean, & Williams, 1981; Pavich, 1986). Socialization of gender roles is influenced by cultural concepts of “machismo” and “marianismo” (Gil & Vazquez, 1996). “Machismo” emphasizes male responsibility, trustworthiness, courageousness, honor, fatherhood, and providing fully for one’s family (Alvirez et al., 1981; Mirande, 1988; Pavich, 1986) whereas female “marianismo” stresses chastity, virtue, premarital virginity, obedience to males, spiritual strength, and caregiving of family and community members (Baca Zinn, 1982; Pavich, 1986). Studies of Mexican American adolescents suggest that, throughout adolescence, these youth continue to hold traditional gender role attitudes regarding virginity, the relationship between love and sex, and the importance of having children (Padilla &
Baird, 1991; Villarruel, Jemmott, & Jemmott, 2005). Males in particular maintain a double standard of virginity for females whereas neither sex believes it is important for males to be virgins. Females are expected to defer to male power and authority and adhere to traditional cultural standards for sexual conduct (Pavich, 1986).

Cultural values of African Americans have been described as arising in an oppositional cultural frame that has its origins in the involuntary immigrant status of these people. Ogbu (1994) characterized this oppositional cultural frame as a protective defense against social and economic rejection by the American cultural mainstream. One historical counter to the recurring social problems African Americans endure has been “playing the dozens.” This game has its roots in the earlier call and response of field work (Chimesie, 1976), as well as developmental origins in the childhood and adolescence of African Americans who learn the vernacular verbal sparring of the dozens as a form of social mastery (Dollard, 1939; Garner, 1983). Eyre, Hoffman, and Millstein (1998) describe a variant form in the gamesmanship of African American adolescents that operates around sex. Noteworthy are the descriptions of verbal strategies that males use to court and obtain sex from females and the double standard intrinsic to such gamesmanship conveyed by females. Males who have multiple sexual conquests are applauded and accorded status by their male peers whereas females suffer the cost to their reputation as “hos” (see also Eyre, Auerswald, Hoffman, & Millstein, 1998). The oppositional stance young African American women often adopt to survive such assaults on their self-worth (Fordham, 1993) results in a pragmatic view of romance with few expectations from partners (Coates, 1999). But pragmatic views of romance are also reinforced by mothers who teach their daughters about the negative side of romance based on their own experiences (Carothers, 1990; Taylor, Gilligan, & Sullivan, 1995).

This study focuses on the cultural knowledge adolescents have of opposite-sex romantic relationships. Employing both a qualitative and quantitative approach to the accounts of African American and Mexican American male and female adolescents, we examine how cultural models of romantic relationships differ according to the ascribed race/ethnicity and gender of the adolescent. We hypothesized that the models of romance and opposite-sex relationships would be particularly distinct for these two sociocultural groups because despite sharing the school context, the cultures of origin of the two groups have quite different views of romance. We also expected to find differences between the female and male models in a sociocultural group based on salient differences in culturally prescribed gender role expectations.
METHOD

Participants

Study sites. The study was conducted at two urban high schools in Northern California situated in ethnically diverse middle to lower middle income neighborhoods. The average parent at both schools was a high school graduate but the modal parent (42%) had not graduated from high school. Both schools generally reflected the ethnic mix of their communities, except that few White students attended either school. High School A (approximate enrollment = 1,379 students) was predominantly Hispanic (49%) and African American (30%), followed by Asian American (16%), and drew on a surrounding community that was predominantly Hispanic (44%) and African American (30%), followed by White (24%) and Asian American (14%) populations. The second high school, B (approximate enrollment = 1,705 students) was predominantly Asian American (57%), followed by African American (22%) and Hispanic (14%), and drew on a surrounding community that was Asian American (33%), White (29%), African American (23%), and Hispanic (17%).

Recruitment of participants. Twelve hundred and ninety-nine students enrolled as juniors and seniors at the two high schools were invited to participate in the study. Of those, 993 (76%) returned parental consent forms and 819 (63%) obtained positive parental consent and/or agreed to participate in the study (if age 18 or older). Consenting students were administered a brief in-class screening survey designed to identify African American and Mexican American students with a high school dating history and English fluency (i.e., degree “other” language was used in home, with friends, or in thinking) for interview in the study. Surveyed high school dating history included the following: the number of dates, longest relationship, currently in a relationship, length of current relationship, age and race/ethnicity of current partner, and being sexually active. Students with more relationship experience were prioritized for interview. It was deemed preferable to exclude subjects who had little or no experience with romantic relationships from the sample because hypotheses about shared cultural knowledge cannot be investigated reliably if subjects sampled are overly diverse in their knowledge (cf. D’Andrade, 1987; Weller, 1987). In agreement, our previous pilot studies examining adolescents’ sexual knowledge showed that adolescents without sexual experience differed dramatically from those who did, often expressing bizarre ideas about sexual relationships.
Twenty-nine percent of those consenting to be in the study were African American and 23% were Mexican American. Of these 427 students, 61% of the African Americans were from High School A and 39% were from High School B whereas 83% of the Mexican Americans were from High School A and 17% were from High School B. This inequality in consenting students to some degree reflected the differences in distribution of race/ethnicity at the two schools and correspondingly the distribution of race/ethnicity in the catchment areas for the two schools. There were no significant differences in dating history between the two schools for the consenting African American and Mexican American students.

Interviews were conducted with a total of 110 African American and 73 Mexican American students during the school year. Seventy-two percent of those interviewed reported being in a current relationship as compared with 39% of those who were not interviewed, $\chi^2(3, N = 368) = 43.95, p < .001$. More of the interviewed participants (80%) than those not interviewed (59%) reported having had a relationship that lasted 4 months or longer, $\chi^2(4, N = 362) = 12.02, p = .02$. More interviewed participants (63%) also reported having had sex than those not interviewed (44%), $\chi^2(1, N = 368) = 13.15, p < .001$. These differences reflect the study selection criteria for interviews. Otherwise there were no significant differences in survey dating history or median household income—interviewed $M = \text{US}\$37,174, not interviewed $M = \text{US}\$35,116, Brown-Forsythe $F(1, 237) = 2.20, \text{ns}$, see participant section for details—between African American and Mexican American students interviewed and those not interviewed. Thirty-seven percent of the African Americans interviewed were from High School A and 63% from High School B whereas 74% of the Mexican Americans were from High School A and 26% of the Mexican Americans were from High School B. To some extent, this reflected the disproportionate race/ethnicity makeup of the two schools. Although we would have preferred to draw all participants from one school, this was not possible. Our assumption was that an ethnic group would retain essential characteristics even if from different schools in the same district.

**Participant sample.** From the 183 interviews, 68 African American (35 male and 33 female) and 59 Mexican American (29 male and 30 female) interviews with quality scores of 25 or above were selected for analysis. This score was assigned by each interviewer following an interview and reflected an interviewer’s judgment of the productivity of the material elicited. Quality scores ranged from 10 (*very poor*)\(^1\) to 20 (*mediocre*) to 30

\(^1\) An example of an interview that received a low-quality score begins and continues throughout as follows: “I: So why is it important to have confidence in yourself? *A: Like, I don’t
(good) to 40 (very good) to 50 (best). Quality scores for this group were on average 9 points higher than interviews excluded from analysis, \( t(180) = 6.60, p < .001 \). Selection based on quality score was necessary in order to maximize inclusion of informative interviews and exclude those that would not yield meaningful information (see footnote 1 as an example). Otherwise, participants in this selected group did not differ in age, screening survey dating history and English fluency, or median household income from the other African American and Mexican American interviewed students whose interviews were not used for analysis. Quality scores of males and females in the selected group did not differ, but African American (\( M = 40.66, SD = 6.13 \)) interviews generally received higher quality scores than Mexican American (\( M = 37.37, SD = 8.78 \)) interviews, \( t(125) = 2.47, p = .02 \). This is not surprising since Mexican American participants in this group were somewhat less fluent in English.

The mean age of the African American and Mexican American participants selected for analysis was identical, 16.9 years (range 15–19 years of age; 2 subjects were 15 and 3 subjects were 19). Females (\( M = 16.7 \) years) in this sample were younger than males, \( M = 17 \) years; \( t(125) = 2.32, p = .02 \). Parents’ income data were not available from participants, and so household income was determined using 2000 block group census information2 (Krieger, 1992). Individual participant addresses were obtained from school rosters and entered into the U.S. Census Bureau web site address search to obtain corresponding block group census designations and matching income data for the sample. African American household median income (\( M = \$39,655, SD = \$17,874 \)) was significantly higher, \( t(116) = 2.80, p = .006 \), than the Mexican American households (median = \$32,759, \( SD = \$7,357 \)) but both were below the median income for the county (median = \$55,946).

Seventy-six percent of the sample Mexican American participants were at High School A and 59% of the African American participants were at High School B, \( \chi^2(1, N = 127) = 15.92, p < .001 \). Analyses of the survey data for African American participants at High School A as contrasted with African American participants at High School B indicated that the two African American samples were equivalent on all survey questions. The results were the same when Mexican American participants from the two

---

2 Krieger (1992) found that block group census data closely approximated socioeconomic data gathered directly from participants in a health care study. She advocates this methodology when data are not directly available from participants.
schools were compared. Comparisons of African American and Mexican American sample participants on dating history are presented in Table 1. The two race/ethnicity groups were similar except in responses to ever had sex. African American participants were more likely to respond yes, \( \chi^2(1, N = 120) = 22.78, p < .001 \). On average Mexican American participants reported using Spanish and English equally in the home, with friends, or in their thinking, whereas African American participants reported using only English for all three, \( t(118) = 14.31, p < .001 \). A little more than half (56%) of the Mexican American participants were born in Mexico and had been in the United States an average of 11 years (range = 3–18 years). Almost all (98%) their parents were born in Mexico. There were no differences in English fluency or place of birth between Mexican American males and females.

Dating history of males and females was equivalent except for percentages in current relationship, partner age, and length of current relationship. Eighty-five percent of the females were currently dating someone as compared with 66% of the males, \( \chi^2(1, N = 118) = 6.28, p = .01 \). Females (\( M = 18.23 \) years of age, \( SD = 2.23 \)) were also dating partners significantly, \( t(90) = 5.73, p < .001 \), older than males (\( M = 16.08 \) years of age, \( SD = 0.94 \)). Analysis of length of current relationship indicated that gender interacted with race/ethnicity, \( F(1, 63) = 4.97, p = .03 \). African American females (\( M = 70.97 \) days, \( SD = 62.83 \)) and Mexican American males (\( M = 48.09 \) days, \( SD = 64.04 \)) had the longest current relationships as compared with

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Mexican American</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample size</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of dates</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longest relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \leq 3 ) months</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 months</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( &gt;6 ) months</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In current relationship</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length current relationship</td>
<td>55 days</td>
<td>37 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean age current partner</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner same race/ethnicity</td>
<td>89.6%</td>
<td>86.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever had sex</td>
<td>81%*</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *Race/ethnic differences \( p \leq .05 \).
African American males ($M = 38.53$ days, $SD = 32.52$) and Mexican American females ($M = 27.63$ days, $SD = 20.93$).

**Procedure**

*The interview.* Vernacular Term Interviewing (VTI) (Eyre, 1997) was used to conduct interviews. VTI is an exploratory interviewing method designed to focus on respondents’ conceptual thinking rather than personal experiences. VTI begins with a set of questions to which participants are asked to “free” list short responses (Weller & Romney, 1988). Respondents’ free lists are noted and in a follow-up open-ended interview format, interviewers ask respondents to elaborate on list statements selected as potentially productive routes to culture-rich material. This follow-up portion of the interview is aimed at discovering and documenting cultural meanings underlying terms or concepts. For example, free lists often contain vernacular terms; commonly used words or phrases that have special meaning to members of a particular group (e.g., “gold digger,” “punk,” “machista”). Participants are asked to elaborate on the meanings of such vernacular terms, and concepts associated with the terms are explored in depth. An important feature of VTI is general phrasing of inquiries, the aim of which is to avoid asking subjects to report personal experiences. Therefore, if as sometimes happens participants relate personal experiences, interviewers rephrase participants statements in a general form.

Free listing questions were developed using a pilot sample of two focus groups and 19 individual interviews at a high school in a nearby community school district. This resulted in the six free listing questions used in this study. The questions were: (1) What are some reasons to be in a relationship? (2) What are the rules of a relationship? (3) What things do partners need to talk about in a relationship? (4) What things screw up a relationship? (5) What are some issues people have about sex in a relationship? and (6) What are the most important things someone can do to make a relationship work?

The same two interviewers (one male and one female) were assigned to do all interviews at a single school site in order to ease school administrators concerns about security and disruption of daily routines. Interviews were conducted by same-sex interviewers that were of different race/ethnicity than the participants (two White females and two White males, between 23 and 29 years of age). Interviewers of different race/ethnicity were used as a compromise because African American and Mexican American students were interviewed at the two high school sites.
making it unfeasible to consistently match participant and interviewer race/ethnicity. All interviews were conducted in English, but all interviewers spoke Spanish and were able to continue interviews in Spanish if a participant was unable to present an idea in English. In these few cases, the Spanish portions of the interview were translated for transcription into English. Interviews were conducted during class time in a private room. On average, interviews lasted 40 minutes (range 20–80 minutes) and adolescents received a US$15 CD gift certificate for their participation. Interviews were transcribed following standards developed by the third author for working with Vernacular Concept Analysis (VCA) interviews. These instructed transcriptionists to type what was heard on the tape verbatim with no grammatical corrections, in order to capture the dialogue as it sounded.

**Qualitative analysis.** A large subset of interviews (60 African American, 30 male and 30 female, and 52 Mexican American, 25 male and 27 female) with interview quality scores of good or better was used to identify and describe the cultural models of opposite-sex relationships associated with the two sociocultural groups. Before qualitative analysis, the subset of interviews was first entered into NUDIST, a text data management program, and then indexed. All of the interviews (112) were indexed in their entirety by two interviewers using a set of index topics developed from a list initially generated by all four interviewers following each interview. The lists were condensed and organized by content into 6 super-ordinate (e.g., relationship, sex, self) and 27 subordinate (e.g., partner assessment, risk, identity) index topics. The index was used only to extract text for each index topic in order to organize text for the qualitative analysis.

A separate analytic team of three analysts with backgrounds in text analysis and advanced degrees in anthropology, psychology, and education prepared for each qualitative analytic session by independently reading all extracted text under an index topic (e.g., partner assessment under relationship) for a given gender and sociocultural group. In the course of reading the extractions, analysts independently identified short passages (e.g., ≈ 20 lines) suitable for closer reading during the group analytic sessions based on their judgments of relevance to the goal of identifying relationship concepts. At a group session, the team discussed each identified passage and collectively chose an appropriate number for in-depth analysis during the session. VCA (Eyre, 2006), a method for qualitative analysis adapted from grounded theory methodology (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), was used for the in-depth analysis of the selected passages. Analysis was performed separately for each race/ethnicity by gender (see Eyre,
2006 Eyre et al., 2006). Over the course of 6 months, analysts continually identified, defined, and redefined concepts drawn from the text, the larger constructs or models they seemingly represented, and whenever possible, the linkages between constructs that could constitute a larger system. Concepts, models, and linkages were noted through a series of analytic memos following each group session. Cultural models of romantic relationships shared by interview participants of the same gender and race/ethnicity were identified from the analytic memos as repeated across the reviewed material for a given sociocultural group (see examples in Eyre, Auerswald, et al., 1998; Eyre, Hoffman, et al., 1998).

The VCA method differs from grounded theory analysis in that it does not develop a system of analyst-generated categories but instead interprets the interview text using participants’ concepts in an effort to represent their cognitions with the least distortion and make explicit the models a given group uses to interpret the social world and guide behavior. VCA is similar to grounded theory in its use of analytic techniques such as contrasting identified concepts for clarification, dimensionalizing to account for multiple meanings of complex concepts, and theoretical sampling of concepts for repetition and validation (Glaser, 1978).

Cultural model coding system. The cultural models and concepts identified by VCA were used to prepare a coding manual that fully described each identified model and included coding criteria and examples taken from interviews. Twenty-four models relating to opposite-sex relationships were described in the manual. Eleven models, labeled as “major” models in Table 2a, represent relatively large discrete stand-alone models with defined boundaries (e.g., Serious Relationship, Work Relationship). These were coded as mutually exclusive and, along with an “other” category, as mutually exhaustive. The other 13 models, labeled as “nested” models in Table 2b, represent smaller subordinate models typically presented in conjunction with more than one “major” model. For example, expressions revealing concepts related to fidelity might arise in discourse about a Serious Relationship or a Work Relationship but were infrequent as a stand-alone model. Therefore, the 13 nested models were coded separately from the major models as mutually exclusive and, along with an “other” category, as mutually exhaustive. The 24 major and nested models, although identified by VCA with a specific race/ethnicity and gender, were not linked to race/ethnicity or gender when described in the manual. Whenever possible, examples used to illustrate each model were taken from interview text of both race/ethnicity groups and genders.
Cultural models coding. Before coding for cultural models, the follow-up open-ended portion of an interview transcript was segmented by thematic unit (TU). TU segmentation is a method developed to reliably segment transcribed text that contains dialogue (Stinson, Milbrath, Reidbord, & Bucci, 1994). A TU is the smallest unit that communicates a complete idea and typically varies in size from a clause to three sentences. Four judges were trained to a criterion reliability of .76 (81% agreement; Scott & Hatfield, 1985) on four standard segmented transcripts. Following training two judges segmented each transcribed interview independently and a third judge reviewed and reconciled any differences between the marks.

![Table 2A](image-url)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Cultural Models</th>
<th>Brief Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation for Parental Role</td>
<td>Parents are a resource whose experience and wisdom is valued and authority respected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextualized Male Behavior</td>
<td>Accepted set of male social norms for different social contexts including girlfriend versus male peers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Game*</td>
<td>A form of social mastery. Involves skills at verbal persuasion and social manipulation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morality of Sex</td>
<td>Moral evaluation of sexual behavior. An emphasis on female virginity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestige</td>
<td>Competitive strategies to improve one’s status among peers. Maintaining reputation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Baggage</td>
<td>Carrying with one a legacy of emotional trauma that influences subsequent relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romanticized Relationship</td>
<td>Main partner relationships with an emphasis on romantic love and idealized partner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serial Flings</td>
<td>Serial dating relationships that emphasize the value of fun and drama of romance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious Relationship</td>
<td>Main partner, claimed relationships with an emphasis on building trust through communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking To</td>
<td>Courtship characterized by information gathering and most often carried on with multiple partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Hidden side partner relationships for sex only with expectations and gendered goals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Italics denote a vernacular term in use by the adolescents.
Four new analysts were then trained to code cultural models. Training materials consisted of extracts from the transcripts that were chosen to unambiguously reflect a cultural model. However, the complexity of the judgments needed to code cultural models in interviews that typically included text with overlapping models warranted using consensus coding for reliable statistical analysis. Accordingly, two analysts coded all transcripts independently and then met together to reconcile differences and produce the final consensus coding. Only the follow-up open-ended portion of each interview was coded, and every major and nested model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nested Cultural Models</th>
<th>Brief Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation</td>
<td>Bicultural awareness of one’s traditional culture as contrasted to the dominant American culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care</td>
<td>Set of actions that express caring and denote love.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental Self</td>
<td>A narrative model of the development and transformations of the self in its journey from a past to future self.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange-Extraction</td>
<td>Keeping track of what is owed and what is credited including material and non-material debits and credits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fidelity—Fidelity</td>
<td>Expectations around fidelity and strategies to manage fidelity of a partner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impression—Management</td>
<td>“Fronting” or presenting the self in an aggrandized manner to the opposite sex.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans-Generational</td>
<td>Self modeled within the larger unit of family with reproduction of family as primary purpose of the individual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs Portfolio</td>
<td>Suite of needs negotiated with a partner around the terms of a relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Relationship</td>
<td>A main relationship in which partner’s claim each other but openly agree to “talk to” other people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect*</td>
<td>Respect modeled around issues of power in relationships and control over sexuality. Also includes self-respect related to positive self-esteem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romantized Courtship</td>
<td>Courtship with an emphasis on cultivating emotional intensity through non-verbal, culturally understood signals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow Love</td>
<td>The idea that real emotional feelings for a partner are developed slowly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory of Voice-in-the-Mind</td>
<td>A theory of regulation, particularly of females, where a voice inside her mind prescribes moral (sexual) behavior.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Italics denote a vernacular term in use by the adolescents.
received a present or absent code for every TU whether spoken by interviewer or adolescent.

The four analysts worked in rotating pairs so that every pairing of analysts coded approximately the same number of interviews. Analysts were blind to the research questions under study. Interviews had been stripped of race/ethnicity and gender identifiers, so that analysts were blind as well to the race/ethnicity and gender of the participants. Individual analysts’ reliability with consensus coding was $\kappa = .77$ (84% agreement) for major models and $\kappa = .81$ (89% agreement) for nested models across all interviews; both are well above the criterion of $\kappa = .70$ suggested by Bakeman and Gottman (1997) as acceptable for categorical coding systems.

## RESULTS

The frequency of each major and nested cultural model in each interview was summed across TUs by speaker (interviewer or adolescent) and then divided by the total number of speaker TUs (interviewer or adolescent) in an interview to arrive at the proportion of each interview devoted to a major or a nested model by a speaker. Proportion distributions for each major and nested cultural model were screened for departures from normality (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989). Significant departures were encountered for most models. Accordingly, all raw proportion scores were transformed using a nonlinear logit transformation appropriate for proportion data that do not have a constant denominator across observations (Cohen & Cohen, 1975, pp. 254–264). All subsequent analyses were conducted with transformed data but mean raw proportions are presented for interpretation (see Table 3a and b).

Before undertaking analyses to test the main hypotheses about race/ethnicity and gender differences in cultural models, a series of MANOVAs was performed to examine effects of interviewer, school site, and adolescent age on major and nested models. To evaluate for systematic bias in the

---

3 Although identifiers were stripped from the transcripts, it was sometimes possible to make inferences since an adolescent might talk about their “boyfriend” or “girlfriend” or their grandmother in Mexico. Judges, however, were not aware that adolescents were of two race/ethnicities and often assumed that European and Asian American students were included.

4 Evaluation of the correlation among sets of major or nested models using the Bartlett test of sphericity indicated significant correlations. Accordingly, Roy–Bargman step-down $F$ test was used to evaluate univariate $F$ values following all MANOVAs (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989). In addition, Bonferroni corrections for inflated Type I errors of $p = .005$ for major models and $p = .004$ for nested models were used to evaluate significance of step-down $F$ tests.
TABLE 3A
Major Cultural Models: F Values and Means for Race/Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Effect</th>
<th>Source Model</th>
<th>Univariate F (df = 1,123)</th>
<th>Stepdown F*</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>( \eta^2 )</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Mean Proportion of Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Mexican American</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/ethnicity</td>
<td>Morality of Sex</td>
<td>9.52</td>
<td>9.52*</td>
<td>1/123</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Game</td>
<td>9.29</td>
<td>8.22*</td>
<td>1/122</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>10.39</td>
<td>6.90</td>
<td>1/121</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Serious Relationship</td>
<td>6.40</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>1/120</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talking To</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>1/119</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parental Role</td>
<td>10.55</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>1/118</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contextualized Male</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>1/117</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relationship Baggage</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>1/116</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Serial Flings</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>1/115</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Romanticized Relationship</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>1/114</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prestige</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>1/113</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *Roy–Bargman step-down F was evaluated as appropriate because the Bartlett test of sphericity indicated significant correlations among measured variables.

*Bonferroni corrected significance value: \( p \leq .005 \) based on \( p = .05 \).
TABLE 3B
Nested Cultural Models: F Values and Means for Race/Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Effect</th>
<th>Source Model</th>
<th>Univariate F (df = 1,123)</th>
<th>Stepdown F²</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>η²</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Mean Proportion of Interview</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Mexican American</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race/ethnicity</td>
<td>Acculturation</td>
<td>12.90</td>
<td>12.90*</td>
<td>1/123</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>9.44</td>
<td>7.88¹</td>
<td>1/122</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td></td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>.053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exchange</td>
<td>7.10</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>1/121</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td></td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Needs Portfolio</td>
<td>6.63</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>11/20</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td></td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Romanticized Courtship</td>
<td>6.30</td>
<td>5.92</td>
<td>1/119</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td></td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open Relationship</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>1/118</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td></td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Care</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>1/117</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td></td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Developmental Self</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>1/116</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td></td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fidelity</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>1/115</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td></td>
<td>.149</td>
<td>.129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Impression Management</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>1/114</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td></td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trans-Generational Family Model</td>
<td>5.01</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>1/113</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td></td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slow Love</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>1/112</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td></td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theory of Voice in the Mind</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>1/111</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *Roy–Bargman step-down F was evaluated as appropriate because the Bartlett test of sphericity indicated significant correlations among measured variables.

¹Bonferroni corrected significance value: p ≤ .004 based on p = .05.

¹Bonferroni corrected significance value: p ≤ .007 based on p = .10.
models interviewers discussed, separate MANOVAs for major and nested models were calculated using only TUs spoken by interviewers. With few exceptions interviewers interviewed like-sex participants, which meant that participant gender and interviewer effects were confounded. These MANOVAs, therefore, were conducted sequentially after first adjusting sums of squares for participant gender effects. The racial composition of the samples from the two schools was also not equivalent. Therefore, to examine school site effects on adolescent models, separate MANOVAs for major and nested models were conducted sequentially after the effects of race/ethnicity were taken into account; in this case only adolescent TUs were analyzed. The analyses for interviewer bias and school site influences found only one significant effect, Needs Portfolio. Needs Portfolio was discussed significantly less by one interviewer and was proportionally higher at High School B.5 Initial MANOVAs of race and gender using age as a covariate found no effect on either major or nested models, and so age was excluded as a factor in analyses presented below.

Influence of Race/Ethnicity and Gender on Cultural Models

The effects of race/ethnicity and gender were evaluated with two separate MANOVAs, one each for major and nested models; only adolescent data were used in all subsequent analyses. Race/ethnicity had a significant effect on both major, Pillai’s Trace $F(11, 113) = 3.72$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .27$, and nested models, Pillai’s Trace $F(13, 111) = 3.04$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .26$. Table 3a and b show the univariate $F$ analyses and raw proportion means for major and nested models. Race/ethnicity effects for the major cultural models were significant for Morality of Sex and Game. Morality of Sex was proportionally greater in Mexican American participant interviews whereas Game was greater in interviews of African Americans. Only race/ethnicity differences for Acculturation were significant for the nested models. Differences in the nested model of Respect approached significance. Both nested models were proportionally greater in interviews of Mexican American participants.

Although it was expected that participant gender would play a role in the types of cognitions expressed about opposite-sex relationships, gender did not show significant effects for either the major, Pillais Trace $F(11, 113) = 1.67$, ns, or nested cultural models, Pillais Trace $F(13, 111) =$

5 No adjustments for either interviewer or school site effects were made because the number of TUs coded as Needs Portfolio constituted a small proportion of the total. Detailed results for analyses of interviewer, school site, and age effects can be obtained from the senior author, as space does not permit presentation of these analyses.
1.15, ns, and no significant interactions of gender and race/ethnicity were found. Separate MANOVAs for the effect of gender on major and nested cultural models within either the African American or the Mexican American adolescent groups’ discourse were also not significant. Although surprising, it appears that, despite an intuitive alignment of certain models with females or males, both sexes were equally familiar with and able to discuss models that might prescribe opposite-sex relationship scripts.

Principal Components Analysis Summarizing Interrelated Cultural Models

The number of individual cognitive models observed was sufficient to warrant summarizing the data as a reduced number of (weighted) linear combinations of variables. It was anticipated that the linkages between cultural models might prove more revealing than the appearance of any single model by itself. Principal components analysis lends itself particularly well because the analysis is based on the correlations of sets of variables within individuals. Such associated cultural models could index an interrelated cognitive organization often interpreted as schema networks or knowledge structures specific to domains (D’Andrade, 1991; Strauss, 1992). A principal components analysis with varimax rotation was performed on the adolescent speaker data using all 24 cultural models (major and nested). An orthogonal rotation was chosen for considerations of parsimony and the ability of orthogonal rotations to reproduce the original correlations precisely (Thompson, 2004). Based on the screen test and interpretability of the obtained factors (components), a five-factor solution that explained 45% of the variance appeared to best fit the data. The resulting rotated component matrix is presented in Table 4. Factor scores were then calculated using the regression method (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989, p. 641).

Factor 1, Cultural Mores, explained 12% of the variance. This factor links expressions of traditional cultural values, including the legacy of family as a tradition to be carried on, respect for the wisdom of one’s

---

6 A comparison of oblique and orthogonal rotation solutions demonstrated that the two types of rotations produced results that were almost identical. The orthogonal rotation was chosen because these solutions estimate fewer parameters than oblique rotations and reproduce the original correlations precisely. This has an advantage in producing simple structure solutions (e.g., ones that are more interpretable and stable over successive samples). Oblique rotations are more complex in that more parameters must be estimated and while this can yield a better fit to the specific data under analysis, it tends to produce factors that replicate less well (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989; Thompson, 2004).
parents, and the value and regulation of female virginity, with a model of change and adaptation that is part of the acculturation process. Factor 2, Romantic Care, explained 11% of the variance. This factor links ideals of appropriate male behavior toward females as distinct from behavior with male friends to models of caring acts, idealized committed relationships, the drama and romance of high-intensity emotional courtships, serial flings, and the concept that true love takes time to develop. Factor 3, Serious Exchanges, explained 8% of the variance and shows an association between models of claimed serious relationships and negotiating terms in relationships. Models of status and prestige among peers and respect load

### TABLE 4
Factors Based on Cultural Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Model</th>
<th>1 Cultural Mores</th>
<th>2 Romantic Care</th>
<th>3 Serious Exchanges</th>
<th>4 Multiple Partners</th>
<th>5 Gaming</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation</td>
<td>.762</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans-Generational Family Model</td>
<td>.745</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory of Voice-in-the-Mind</td>
<td>.653</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation for Parental Role</td>
<td>.625</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morality of Sex</td>
<td>.542</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextualized Male Behavior</td>
<td>.745</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care</td>
<td>.706</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romanticized Relationship</td>
<td>.598</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romanticized Courtship</td>
<td>.581</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow Love</td>
<td>.476</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serial Flings</td>
<td>.437</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious Relationship</td>
<td>.761</td>
<td>.569</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs Portfolio</td>
<td>.569</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestige</td>
<td>–.517</td>
<td>–.404</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>–.404</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>.670</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impression Management</td>
<td>–.572</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fidelity Management</td>
<td>.475</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Relationship</td>
<td>.468</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Baggage</td>
<td>.603</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Game</td>
<td>.595</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking To</td>
<td>.465</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Italics highlight negative factor loadings.

*Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy = .66.*

CULTURAL MODELS OF ROMANCE 333
negatively on this factor. Factor 4, Multiple Partners, explained 7% of the variance. This factor connects two models of multiple partner relationships, *work*, a sex-only relationship typically kept hidden, and open relationships, those that are ostensibly claimed but which allow partners to candidly explore other relationships, with concepts of fidelity and managing the fidelity of partners; the model of impression management related to potential partners loads negatively. The final factor, Gaming, explained 7% of the variance and links models of *game* or social skills aimed at “sweet-talking” and manipulating potential partners and information gathering during courtship of multiple partners with *baggage*, the negative emotional relationship history that adolescents can accrue and bring to subsequent relationships.

**Race/Ethnicity and Gender Differences on Factor Scores**

Given unequal distributions of race/ethnicity at the two school sites and the result of one school site effect in initial analyses, the MANOVA on factor scores for race/ethnicity was performed sequentially, first adjusting the sums of squares for school site before evaluating race/ethnicity effects. As expected when using an orthogonal factor solution, the Bartlett test of sphericity indicated that factors scores were uncorrelated. All standard follow-up univariate *F* tests were evaluated using a Bonferroni correction for inflated Type I error of *p* = .01. School site had a significant overall effect on factor scores, Pillais Trace *F*(5, 119) = 4.31, *p* = .001, *η*² = .15. However, only Factor 1, Cultural Mores, *F*(1, 123) = 9.83, *p* = .002, *η*² = .07, showed a significant univariate *F* test value. Factor 1 scores were higher at High School B, the school in which Asian Americans dominated and African Americans and Hispanics were a minority.

Race/ethnicity had an overall significant effect, Pillais Trace *F*(5, 119) = 9.75, *p* < .001, *η*² = .29. Univariate *F* test evaluation for the effects of race/ethnicity on individual factors showed significant effects for Factor 1, Cultural Mores, *F*(1, 123) = 14.58, *p* < .001, *η*² = .11, Factor 3, Serious Exchanges, *F*(1, 123) = 12.87, *p* < .001, *η*² = .09, and Factor 5, Gaming, *F*(1, 123) = 8.06, *p* = .005, *η*² = .06. Factor 2, Romantic Care, approached significance, *F*(1, 123) = 3.72, *p* = .056, *η*² = .03. Figure 1 shows the relative factor score values for the two race/ethnicity groups. Factors 1 and 2 are most closely associated with the Mexican American adolescents whereas Factors 3 and 5 describe the models presented by the African American adolescents. A significant overall effect for the interaction of site and race/ethnicity was also found, Pillais Trace *F*(5, 119) = 3.44, *p* = .006, *η*² = .13, but only Factor 4, Multiple Partners, showed a significant univ-
ariate $F, F(1, 123) = 10.63, p = .001, \eta^2 = .08$. African American adolescents at High School A, the site that was almost 50% Hispanic, had the highest factor scores ($M = 0.52, SD = 1.26$), followed by Mexican American adolescents at High School B ($M = 0.16, SD = 0.76$). African American adolescents at High School B ($M = -0.14, SD = 0.97$) and Mexican American adolescents at High School A ($M = -0.25, SD = 0.80$) had mean factor scores below zero.

MANOVAs on the factor scores for the effect of gender showed no significant overall effects, Pillais $F(5, 121) = 0.76, p = .58$, and no individual tests were significant.

**DISCUSSION**

Researchers have often used race/ethnicity as a proxy for culture, reducing culture to a background demographic variable that belies the integration of culture and cognition (Hutchins, 2002). In this study, we examined the cultural models of romantic relationships shared by specific sociocultural groups by directly linking the categorical proxy of race/ethnicity to the shared knowledge structures and meaning systems constitutive of a culture. Clear differences in interrelated sets of cultural models were found between African American and Mexican American adolescents despite the fact that these two sociocultural groups were in school together on a daily basis. Obtained differences cannot be attributable to disparities in the amount of dating experience or to differences in age because both
sociocultural groups reported similar dating histories and did not differ in age. Although fluency in English was not equivalent, obtained differences are not likely a function of expressive abilities since what was differentially expressed was qualitatively distinct and not simply a matter of degree.

The adolescents that participated in this study were similar in dating and sexual experience to other reports of 17-year-old African American and Latino adolescents (Carver et al. 2003). Almost two thirds of the Mexican American and three quarters of the African American adolescents had had at least one relationship lasting 6 months or more and some three quarters reported a current relationship with a partner who was almost a year younger for males and a year and half older for females. Similar to other reports of sexual activity, twice the number of African American youth reported ever having had sex than their Mexican American peers (Halpern, Waller, Spriggs & Hallfors, 2006; Santelli, Lindberg, Abma, McNeely, & Resnick, 2000).

Recent results from two adolescent dating behavior surveys suggest differences in reports of relationship commitment and infidelity for adolescents of different race/ethnicity but otherwise remarkable similarities in reports of emotional engagement and future expectations (Giordano, Manning, & Longmore, 2006; Manlove, Franzetta, Ryan, & Moore, 2006). The results from our study support the race/ethnicity distinctions and, in addition, our combined qualitative and quantitative analytic techniques provide deeper insight into the cultural bases for the different mental models that guide romantic relationships. A principal components analysis revealed five interrelated sets of cultural models that described remarkably distinct cognitive referents for romance and sexuality; three of these differentiated the race/ethnicity of the adolescents while a fourth showed a strong trend and the fifth differentiated the race/ethnicity of adolescents at one of the high school sites.

The first two factors, Cultural Mores and Romantic Care, were most closely associated with the Mexican American youth, modeling the sociocultural context and quality of their romantic relationships. The first, Cultural Mores, describes an interrelated set of models representing sociocultural attitudes and values in which relationships are realized. This factor characterized the Mexican American adolescents as adhering to traditional values of *familismo*, *respeto*, *marianismo*, and *machismo* described in other studies of Latino culture (Alvirez et al., 1981; Asencio, 2002; Marin & Gamba, 2003; Medrano, 1994; Mirande, 1988; Pavich, 1986; Villarruel, 1998). *Familismo*, with emphasis on the value of family and having children, was captured by this study’s Trans-Generational Family model. One 17-year-old Mexican American male expressed the core of this model, growing up to reproduce a family as “the whole point of life. . . . You grow,
you go to school, then you go to school to make money. An’ why you wanna make money? Cuz you wanna have a family…that’s like a cycle of life.” Respeto was embedded in the related cultural model of Appreciation for Parental Role, which embodies the high regard these adolescents have for their parents’ voice. This is particularly true as it relates to the associated models of Morality of Sex and Theory of Voice-in-the-Mind, which bear the hallmarks of the traditional Mexican concept of marianismo with a strong stress on sexual regulation of females and female chastity. An 18-year-old Mexican American female described these interrelated sets of cognitions in reference to sexual comportment:

…your parents, how they tell you to respect yourself. They don’t want you to get a bad reputation … They don’t want other people saying, “Oh, like her daughter is … this” and “Her daughter let’s the guys do … this and that to her,” … don’t do anything that you feel is like degrading to yourself … you know, parents always want the best for their kids.

As this suggests, for Mexican Americans, the honor of the family is intimately tied to the sexual reputation of the daughters (Asencio, 2002; Gil & Vazquez, 1996; Medrano, 1994).

Inclusion of the Acculturation model in this factor lends emphasis to the struggle Mexican American youth face as traditional values are transformed to adapt to the dominant culture. A little over half of the Mexican American adolescents in this study were born in Mexico and most described themselves as using English and Spanish equally in their thinking and in conversation with friends and family. Studies of southwest American Chicano culture have documented the acculturation dilemma posed by the pressures for premarital sexuality and found these adolescents often use a solution by which girls trade sexual concessions for a boy’s serious commitment of love (Foley, 1990; Horowitz, 1983). There were strongly felt expressions of this conflict by the Mexican American adolescents in our study as well. One 17-year-old Mexican American female explained,

… something in your head’s telling you, “it’s not right, it’s not right,” but the other side of you, it’s, it’s, … telling you that it’s not so bad, that it’s gonna be OK, that maybe you should do it, you’re gonna have fun an’ stuff.

Ironically, she reconciles the dilemma of preserving one’s virginity until marriage in favor of having “fun” by weighing it against the Catholic prescript opposing divorce, reasoning that couples should, “share
ev’rything first an’ have known how you feel in every way before you get marry....’cause...once you get married...it’s not good to get a divorce or stuff ’cause of religion.” At the same time, adherence to traditional core cultural values such as *familismo*, *mairianismo*, and *machismo* has been observed to serve as a protective factor contributing to resilience and better health and educational outcomes among second-generation Mexican American adolescents (Holleran & Waller, 2003; Ong, Phinney, & Dennis, 2006).

Although the statistical association only approached significance, the qualitative analysis established that the individual models associated with the second factor, Romantic Care, characterized the quality of and expectations concerning Mexican American adolescents’ romantic relationships (Eyre et al., 2006); central were idealized models of romance and courtship, and directives for appropriate male behavior. Like Latina girls in a study by O’Sullivan and Meyer-Bahlberg (2003), the Mexican American adolescents in our study described both courtship and committed relationships in highly idealized romantic terms that included romantic acts of care males should perform. One 18-year-old Mexican American girl summed up these features when she stated,

... girls are more into the fairytale kin’ a love, you know. An’ the happy endings and ... ROSES! They want rose once-in-a-while, too. I mean ... a red rose, one red rose, it wouldn’t hurt. And to make it like a surprise. You know, like to leave it in their locker.... an’ the girl opens it up an’ like, “Oh My God!”

As implied, idealization is coupled with an expressed need for emotional intensity, included in a related model of Romanticized Courtships by descriptions of *chemistry* (i.e., “tha’ tingly feeling tha’ chu get in your stomach or your chest when you see the person ... your heart starts pounding faster an’... it feels like your blood is getting hot”) and use of flirtation and nonverbal, emotionally charged, and culturally understood signals (“the look in the eye thing”) to indicate interest to potential partners. Pavich (1986) has suggested that in Chicano culture the intensity and sexual innuendo associated with courtship acts as a substitute for sexual contact forbidden by values of chastity and virginity.

Beyond acts demonstrative of care, models of male behavior related to the factor Romantic Care were described as regulated by their context. The model of Contextualized Male Behavior incorporates traditional Mexican Americans male concepts of *machismo* (Alvirez et al., 1981; Mirande, 1988; Pavich, 1986) as normative male behavior when with one’s male friends and as distinct from the softer and more feminized actions appropriate
when alone with romantic partners. As put by one 17-year-old Mexican American male,

... you could be all macho, when you are wi’ your boys, ... Buh, when you widch your girl, you’re like being all sentimental n all tha’ stuff ... tryin’ to look good in fron’ a the boys! ... he be like, “Whatever, man.” ... mistrea’ his girlfrien’ in fron’a his boys. An’ like when he wid her, he be like, “Oh, come here ... you know, I love you” ... wid your girl you show her your love.

The demand for hyper masculine behavior among Hispanic males has its sociocultural roots in a social system based on race, gender, valor, and honor inherited from New World Spanish colonizers (Asencio, 2002). One unfortunate consequence of such a system has been that females are obliged to adhere to male power and authority and accept traditional cultural standards for sexual conduct (Pavich, 1986). Females are expected to accept that males will define and control their sexuality, impeding their own abilities for self-definition and control over the impact of male sexual behavior (Medrano, 1994). On the contrary, negotiating condom use implies an egalitarian relationship between sexual partners. Risks associated with gender power differentials are salient particularly in first sexual encounters, occasions for which surveys indicate Latino youth are the least likely to use condoms (Cavanagh, 2004; Villarruel, 1998).

In sharp contrast, the two factors associated with African American adolescents, Serious Exchanges and Gaming, exemplify a pragmatic view of relationships, placing a high value on what can be negotiated with one’s partners and mastery of a complex set of courtship rules. The first of these factors, Serious Exchanges, consists of a set of models characterizing the terms and expectations surrounding committed relationships, including Serious Relationship, a committed relationship model that may imply sexual exclusivity, and Needs Portfolio, a model of negotiated expectations based on knowing what one wants in a relationship. Many adolescents remarked that asking another for a commitment carried certain implied provisos; a 16-year-old African American female is clear about her expectations,

So when you say ... “Will you be my girlfriend?” That’s like axkin’, okay, I’m gonna do this for you. I’m gonna buy this on your birthday, I’ll take you out for dinner all these times. ... the word means a lot. Like, “Will you marry me?” That means you won’t be goin’ over other ladies’ house, you’re not havin’ sex wit’ no one else, so the same thing.
In the ideal contract both partners give and receive equally as exemplified in this interview of an African American male, age 17,

Well, ev’thing has ta be vice versa. It can’t jus’ be li’ one person, . . . like the girl jus’ hella like bossin’ ’imaroun’, . . . “do this, . . . I nee’, I nee,” . . . an’ then li’ if the guy comes, comes at ’er like, . . . “I need something’,” then, you know, she jus’ like blows it off, . . . it’s vice versa, . . . I’s gotta be, you’re both bending an’ bof giving an’ bof taking. . . . a mutual give an’ take. Can’ jus’ be like one take-take-take . . . an’ hella give an’ shit. Naw. . . . that will never work.

A pragmatic stance on romance in African American adolescents has been described by a number of researchers (Anderson, 1990; Coates, 1999; O’Sullivan and Meyer-Bahlberg, 2003; Stevens, 2002). Based on the work of Ogbu (1994), Coates (1999) interprets romantic pragmatism as a minority status cultural adaptation, which is part of an oppositional cultural frame of reference that serves a defensive function against a racist society. She argues that initially young African American adolescent females attempt to adopt the prevailing idealized romantic European relationship script, but as they mature, adoption of an oppositional framework to survive assaults on their self-worth changes their views and expectations toward expediency. While Coates appears to conclude that the devaluation of romance by African American females is part of a broader defensive attitude toward racism in the dominant culture, one could also consider that it is the adoption of an oppositional framework by the African American males that further facilitates a burgeoning pragmatism in females. Studies of African Americans mothers and daughters indicate that what is frequently communicated by mothers, often based on their own experience, is just such a practical view, emphasizing limited expectations from male partners and loss of resources if a girl becomes pregnant (Carothers, 1990; O’Sullivan, Meyer-Bahlburg, & Watkins, 2001; Taylor et al., 1995). This discourse may find fertile soil when coupled with a corresponding gender system that confers prestige on males for sexual prowess while stigmatizing females (Eyre, Auerswald, et al., 1998; Manning, Giordano, & Longmore, 2006; Orenstein, 2000) and sexual practices that favor an early debut and several partners (Durbin et al., 1993; Eyre, Hoffman, et al., 1998; Feldman & Cauffman, 1999). Anderson (1990) has proposed that African American males use competition in the sexual relationship arena to build self-esteem and status because other avenues in the dominant culture are closed. It is significant in this regard that Models of Prestige loaded negatively on this factor, suggesting that strategies to maintain one’s reputation and enhance status were inversely associated.
with accounts of serious committed relationships. Respect, a model that includes self-respect, was also negatively associated with this factor. The tolerance and even expectation of multiple sexual partners in serious relationships (e.g., Feldman & Cauffman, 1999) may have a significant bearing on female self-esteem and self-respect. The example discussed below exemplifying the model of *Game* illustrates female forbearance and how the skilled male player achieves the maneuver.

Much has been written about the uniquely African American practice of verbal sparring known in the vernacular as the *dozens*. According to Garner (1983), this represents a *game* of social mastery that has developed as a veiled protective response to an untenable social and economic position. Eyre, Hoffman, et al. (1998) found that adolescent African American males exhibited a similar cultural form of verbal gamesmanship around obtaining sex from females and Anderson (1989) observed *game* as the view taken by inner-city African American youth toward romance. The Gaming factor found in this study included concepts similar to those described previously in the Eyre and colleagues’ study under *Game*. The associated social mastery and verbal skills necessary to maintain one’s *player* status in *game* are spelled out by a 16-year-old African American female in this study:

> Well, he has . . . to tell her how much he care about her an’ how much he doesn’t want to hurt her an’ how he doesn’t care about them, an’ how he’ll lie to them, an’, “I’m telling’ you this an’ I’m tryin’ to let chyou know that I’m gonna cheat on you becuz I care about chyou an’ I don’t wanna lie to you.” . . . he has to have a lot of *game*.

However, it is significant that in the Giordano et al. (2006) study of urban African American adolescents in the Toledo area, even though many youth knew about the *player* as a social type, most did not ascribe to a belief that their own relationships were an example. Another component of the Gaming factor was the model *Talking To* which portrays a courtship period of intense information exchange before defining a relationship; as one 17-year-old African American male stated, “like a step down from a girlfriend.” This privileged phase of a relationship is marked by self-disclosure, partner assessment, and a ritualized romantic banter labeled in the adolescents’ vernacular as *talk talking*. Often *Talking To* is conducted with several potential partners at the same time and can include sex as acknowledged by this 17-year-old African American female, “Cuz a dude might not wanna be in a relationship wi’ chu, but y’all talk. Sotha’ kinda . . . it makes it OK to have sex sometimes, too.”
Related as well is Relationship Baggage, a model of the individual as wounded by past relationships. This legacy is often understood to be associated with previous partner infidelities and is seen as needing to be remedied through some sort of therapeutic work on the part of a couple. Males often understand and empathize with this state of affairs, as this 18-year-old African American male indicates:

... if you know ... she had her heart broken before, you know, when you first get together, she would not be like acceptin’, you know, open willing tha’ much, ... she be scared of havin’ her heart broke again. So therefore, I mean gradually as you guys move on as a couple an’ she know, ... hey, he’s really honest with me an’ everything he says is true ... she becomes more open wit’ chyou ... more acceptin’ of wha’, you know, you givin’ her an’ she gives back.

Relationship Baggage also alludes to a very real experiential cause of cynicism regarding romanticism, potentially putting an end to female romantic fantasies early in adolescence (Eyre et al., 2006).

A final complex of models, Multiple Partners, describes several types of multiple partner relationships, Work and Open relationship, as well as strategies for managing a partner’s fidelity. This factor was not associated with race/ethnicity except at a particular school site. Differences between the two sociocultural groups were found only at High School A, where almost half the students were Hispanic and a little less than one third were African American. African American adolescents at this high school were the most likely to communicate these models. This suggests that when Hispanic students were predominant (High School A), African Americans more clearly differentiated themselves from this group through elaboration of a distinct set of cultural models around sexuality. At the second high school, B, where Asian Americans made up over half the students and African Americans and Hispanic students were both minorities, differences were slight. In this case, when the two sociocultural groups held relative minority positions, the elaboration of these models was much less frequent and not associated with a particular group. The fact that in this study a more equal racial/ethnic mix of the school lessened an apparent need for identification with sexual models that pose a serious health risk for adolescents (Rosenberg, Gurvey, Adler, Dunlop, & Ellen, 1999) indicates an encouraging degree of flexibility and sensitivity to contextual determinants that belies strictly reifying any group of cultural models as stereotypic of a race/ethnicity. Moreover, this finding suggests that strategies for promoting positive social outcomes can come from local
contextual influences. Certainly the Add Health data on interracial relationships reported by Carver et al. (2003) indicate that the racial/ethnic mix of a school influences race/ethnicity of partner selection. Our study suggests that this could also be the case for the types of sexual models adolescents develop and/or adopt.

Based on the literature, we hypothesized that females and males would differ in expression of cultural models. Gender role expectations are particularly striking in literature on Mexican American culture and appeared in our qualitative analysis as expectations of appropriate male and female behavior associated with different models (e.g., Contextualized Male Behavior). Nevertheless, none of our gender comparisons of individual cultural models or of the five factors were significant. Both males and females capably communicated all of the models that seemed, from qualitative analysis, to be prescriptive of male or of female behavior. For example, the Mexican American model of Morality of Sex encodes the sexual morality of chastity for females, yet both sexes articulated the components of this model. The African American model of Game, although less gendered, fundamentally embodies male strategies and actions directed at seducing a partner. One explanation for the absence of gender differences in articulation of these models that carry embedded gender roles and scripts may be related to the observations of Feiring (1999a) that, with age, both sexes become more familiar with and open to accepting opposite-sex-related characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors. It is equally possibly that as adolescents become more experienced with opposite-sex relationships, they learn gender stereotypic models even when these reinforce culturally prescribed gender roles with which they do not agree or accept. One Mexican American female sums up her feelings about the double standard for male and female sexual behavior:

I also don’t like it that one can think that simply because they are men they can sleep with whoever they want, or any times they want. But if it’s a girl, it’s a whole different story. I don’t think that’s right, but it’s just like that (emphasis added).

Some of the Mexican American females expressed stronger resistance to these traditional gender roles. This female describes a previous relationship she left with a machista:

He always use say, why do you go to school, you’re not goin’a get anything good from it, and I was only 16 years old. But, uh, I never got him like really get into me, so I said, you know what, it’s my life, and I’m gonna do whatever I want with my life babe. He
actually, uh, he was a machista guy, he, he wanted me to be able to do whatever he wanned to.

African American females more typically presented themselves as assertive and self-reliant. Their knowledge of opposite-sex relationship models stemmed not only from experience but also in some cases from adopting male models. One example is this female’s discussion of game:

You git up on game . . . by learning from otha people . . . . Like if I’m in the relationship wi’ dis dude or whatever an’ he always doin’ me wrong an’ my frien’ will look like, “yeah, he, he pu’ing game on her, you know, he, he tellin’ her ev’rything she wanna hear . . . he ain’ even tellin’ the truth,” that’s game right there . . . That’s how you git game, you know.

Literature on African Americans indicates as well that gender roles are more egalitarian (e.g., Fordham, 1993). Adolescent females appear to display greater gender role equality in activity and influence within same-race mixed sexed groups than Whites even before high school (Filardo, 1996), and although adolescent males express physically and psychologically tough gender models that emphasize sexual prowess, females assert economically independent but nurturing models of the “strong Black woman” (Kerrigan et al., 2007) that do not necessarily compliment the male adolescent role (Kalof, 1995). Nevertheless, exposure to foundational images of African American women that have their roots in a shared historical reality (Stephens & Phillips, 2005), and current media images that project utilization of interpersonal relationships for prestige and material gain leave adolescent African American females at risk of being defined by male desires (Stephens & Few, 2007).

We express certain cautions in the interpretation of our results. The students sampled in our study were all from the same urban school district and, while there was little evidence of a specific school culture in our results, the cultural models we found could well be more characteristic of the urban area in which we conducted the study than of the larger cultural groups. It is also true that other research indicates further discretion in interpreting the influence cultural knowledge has on adolescent behavior. The models described by our students might well be representative of their cultural knowledge but not specifically characteristic of the relationships in which these adolescents are engaging (e.g., Giordano et al., 2006). Our interview deliberately sought to elicit cultural knowledge and discouraged personal accounts. Although adolescents clearly have this cultural knowledge, it may not resonate with their own individual
relationships. Nonetheless, the cultural models these youth described are consonant with descriptions in the literature of the cultural values and practices of these two sociocultural groups. The very real need for more effective adolescent interventions indicates taking a sociocultural approach to working with adolescent health could provide a productive avenue.

Cultural roots are rarely revealed by brief adolescent surveys. The striking differences in cultural models found in this study provide a sound basis for an in-depth understanding of survey data on adolescent sexuality, pregnancy rates, and STDs. Studies of adolescent sexual behavior and health outcomes indicate that as a group adolescents are at particularly high risk for STDs (Crosby et al., 2004). A minority but significant number of adolescents are having sexual encounters outside of dating relationships, potentially putting themselves at risk for emotional as well as health consequences (Manning et al., 2006). When race/ethnicity is added in, it proves to be one of the strongest predictors of STI infection, with African American adolescents disproportionately affected (CDC, 2006; Harawa, Greenland, Cochran, Cunningham, & Visscher, 2003). Race/ethnicity is also a risk factor for adolescent pregnancy, with pregnancy rates currently increasing among the fastest in Mexican American adolescents (CDC, 2006). Adolescents frequently report inconsistent use of birth control pills and condoms (Manlove et al., 2006). Research suggests further that when adolescents and young adults are making these types of decisions, social considerations commonly override health concerns. For example, adolescents’ social representations have been found to underlie commitments to safer sex at the general level but also to override specific intentions to use condoms prospectively (Breakwell, Millward, & Fife-Schaw, 1994); use of condoms is often interpreted as a lack of trust in ongoing relationships (Williams et al., 1992).

Most studies of adolescents that relate culture to sexuality have been concerned primarily with attitudes and beliefs about STD transmission and prevention (e.g., Belgrave, Van Oss Marin, & Chambers, 2000), adolescent perception of risk (e.g., Clark, Miller, Harrison, & Kay, 1996), or the effectiveness of education and prevention programs (e.g., Kirby et al., 2004). Although these studies appear to implicate cultural and/or social factors in adolescent sexual behavior, they fall short of describing the sociocultural models that guide adolescent behaviors. When sociocultural concepts of sexuality and romance are studied, the focus is on building models of social reality instead of on the cognitions held by specific adolescent groups (e.g., Harper et al., 2004; Manning et al., 2006; O’Sullivan & Meyer-Bahlberg, 2003). Although we acknowledge our results need replication before generalizing, our research methodology, with its blend
of qualitative and quantitative analytic strategies designed specifically to identify cultural models, has the potential to critically inform culturally specific interventions aimed at changing sexual and relationship behavior in high-risk target groups. We propose that additional research is needed first, to validate the cultural models identified by this study and determine which features of the cultural systems identified in our study are more widely shared by these same cultural groups in other geographic regions. Second, we propose that research needs to be undertaken to test the utility of using cultural models to inform interventions both as content-based interactive strategies and as portals for transforming concepts of sexuality and romance. Intervention efforts would be well served by recognizing that although situations and peers significantly influence relationship behavior, cultural models are potent and socially determined motivators, particularly, and as we believe this study demonstrates, when they are elaborated in a process of coconstruction within a sociocultural group.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We wish to thank Nico Potterat, Andrew Herring, and Kelley Williams along with the second author for conducting the wonderfully rich and thorough study interviews, and Julia Bernd, Cassie Crawford, Kelly Koo, and Katherine Young for their considerable expertise as analytic coders. We especially thank as well the two high schools in Northern California that generously allowed us to interview their students. Final thanks to Diana Baumrind and Shirley Feldman, who made valuable comments on an earlier draft of this paper and to the four anonymous reviewers whose thoughtful comments helped shape the final paper. This paper is based on research supported by a grant from the National Institute of Child Health and Development to the third author (NICHD R01 HD40217).

REFERENCES


