



“Yes-men” and “yes-women”:
how gender informs men’s
and women’s strategies in
college heterosexual
relationships

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April 22, 2019

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Introduction

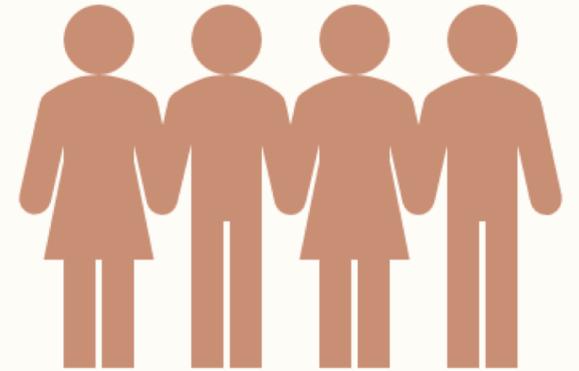
Introduction

- This study was done with the support of the Charles Phelps Taft Research Center
- Current study was an extension of a project I did in a Research Methods course
- What is known about gender and relationships?

Background

Background

- *What is generally known about adolescent dating?*
 - “Publicly expressed practice taken on by romantically interested partners for the purpose of getting to know each other better” (Eaton & Rose, 2011)
 - Dating is viewed as a process for narrowing the field for suitable marriage partners (Whyte 1990)
- *What is generally known about dating culture on a college campus?*
 - In the past 20-25 years there has been a significant amount of research identifying a shift to a “hook-up” culture on college campuses (Bogle 2008, Garcia et al. 2012, & Currier 2013)
 - However, other research has shown that expectations about dating are similar to how they were 35 years ago, showing that the dating scene follows very traditional patterns (Eaton & Rose, 2011)



Background

- Key Terms
 - Gender Ideologies: beliefs about gender that people hold, and how it is expected to be presented in society
 - Gender Strategies: using ideologies about gender to inform how people should act in different settings (Hoschchild 2012)
 - “Hook-up” culture: refers to a norm of one-time sexual encounters in place of traditional dating
- Why is this research important?

Objectives

Objectives

– Main Research Questions:

1. How does the way men and women think about gender (ideologies) influence how they think about and act (strategies) in heterosexual relationships
2. What type of relationships are expected in a college setting?
3. How is the dating/hook up culture in college connected to ideas about gender

Expectations:

Men and Women will use egalitarian ideologies, but traditional strategies.

Methods

Methods

- Participants
 - 21 participants in total (11 women, 10 men)
 - Ranged in age from 18-21, (average age=19)
 - Heterosexual, Attending the University of Cincinnati
 - 28% of the sample were People of Color
- Materials
 - Survey
 - Interview
- Procedure
 - Participants were given the survey to complete by themselves
 - They then completed an interview

Findings

Interview Findings

- How did the participants think about gender in today's society? (Ideologies)
- Participants gave similar responses, regardless of gender
 - Expectations for men
 - *Financial Support*
 - *Lack of emotion*
 - *Leadership/dominance*
 - *Strength/power*
 - Expectations for women
 - *“Yes-men” – people who go along with what men say*
 - *Emotional*
 - *Physically fit/attractive*
 - *Submissive and passive*

Interview Findings

- Strategies
 - “If you were interested in someone, what steps would you take to make a relationship with them happen?”
 - *Men*
 - Initiating
 - Majority of them (70%) said they would initiate a relationship by directly asking women to do things together, and asking the women if they liked them
 - *Women*
 - Waiting
 - Many women said man should initiate a relationship, others said that they would wait for the man to do this by being friends with them, flirting, and hinting at a relationship
 - Only two women mentioned initiating a relationship

Interview Findings

- Types of Relationships
 - *Hook-up*: One time event including sexual activity
 - *Dating*: Casually seeing someone and hooking up with them, no expectation of exclusivity
 - *Committed*: Labels for partner, exclusivity, and hooking up
- “What type of Relationship do most people prefer?”
 - Men
 - *Dating/Uncommitted and Hook up*
 - Women
 - *Combination > Dating/Uncommitted > Hook-up*
- Hook up culture as unsustainable
 - Comes to an end with age, and graduation from college
 - “It’d be weird if you were doing that [just hooking up] in your thirties”

Survey Findings

- Almost everyone in the study had been in a committed relationship over the past year (**18 out of 21**, or **85%**)
 - Majority of the relationships had been lasting 7 months or more so they were relatively long term
- When asked whether they have dated someone without hooking up with them first the majority of people said yes (**18 out of 21**, or **85%**)
- Hooking up was seen as more egalitarian
 - **60%** of participants said that both men and women should initiate a hook up
 - When asked about dating during the interview this was more traditional

Survey Findings

- **The majority** of the participants had not participated in the hook-up culture in the last year
 - **17 out of 21** people indicated they had 0 one-time hook ups
- However when asked if they had hooked-up with one person multiple times in the last year **8 people (38%)** indicated that they had
 - Increased amount of people had partners. Showing that one-time hookups aren't really consistent with experience
- **About half** of the people who said that they had wanted their hook-up to turn into a relationship were women
 - Men and women seemed to want more than just physical connection from their relationships

Discussion

Discussion

- *Question:* How does the way men and women think about gender (ideologies) influence how they think about and act (strategies) in heterosexual relationships
- **People might have wanted egalitarian relationships for themselves but still identified traditional roles where men is the doer in the relationship and women are the reactor**
- **Participants description of how they would act in a relationship and the beliefs they had about gender support traditional ideas**

Discussion

- *Question:* What type of relationships are expected in a college setting?
 - **Although clearly hook-ups take place on college campuses, the prevalence of this may be overestimated by the students since most of them did not. They expected this out of others.**
- *Question:* How is the dating/hook up culture in college connected to ideas about gender
 - **It is sort of surprising that we see these traditional beliefs and actions on a college campus because of it typically being considered progressive, with an overabundance of hook-ups**
 - **College is such a short period of time that it makes sense that these norms about gender persist more than the idea of hook-up culture since this will eventually end according to the participants**

Discussion

- Significance
 - This study and related work have important implications since college age is a critical time of development in peoples interpersonal relationships
 - When trying to understand where expectations about relationships come from it is important to look at how we think about gender
 - This could potentially inform us as to some of the reasons why relationships go wrong
- Future
 - Look at queer relationships, does gender persist?
 - Where are some of the messages about gender coming from?

Special Thanks

- Thank you to my advisor and mentor, Dr. Erynn Masi de Casanova
- Thank you to the TAFT Center for your support
- Thank you to my parents

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Questions
