

Dating out is intercultural: Experience and perceived parent disapproval by ethnicity and immigrant generation

Sharon Shenhav

Belinda Campos

Wendy A. Goldberg

University of California, Irvine, USA

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Abstract

Romantic relationships are situated within broader cultural and family contexts, and this may be particularly salient to those in intergroup relationships. This study examined variations in young adults' experiences with intercultural romantic relationships by ethnicity and immigrant generation. A sample of ethnically diverse young adults ($N = 628$; Asian, Latino, and European background) reported on self and parent attitudes toward dating outside of one's own culture, own current dating status, and disapproval and conflict with parents over current and past dating status. Analyses revealed three key findings. First, intercultural relationships were evenly distributed across ethnic and immigrant generation groups. Second, participants of Asian background perceived greater attitudinal discrepancies with their parents toward intercultural dating than did participants of Latino and European background and were more likely to report intercultural dating conflict with their parents than Latino participants. Third, first-generation and second-generation participants were more likely to report intercultural dating conflict with parents than third-generation participants. Altogether, the findings show the importance of (a) incorporating culture into the conceptualization of intergroup relationships, particularly for ethnic minority and recent immigrant groups, and (b) considering the family context of

Corresponding author:

Sharon Shenhav, Department of Psychology and Social Behavior, University of California, Irvine, 4201 Social and Behavioral Sciences Gateway, Irvine, CA 92697, USA.

Email: sshenhav@uci.edu

intercultural dating relationships. Implications for the study of intergroup romantic relationships are discussed.

Keywords

Ethnicity, immigrant families, intercultural, interracial, romantic relationships, young adult

Dating and marriage are a common source of disagreement for parents and their young adult children (Ahn, Kim, & Park, 2009). Parents and young adults differ on the appropriate age to begin dating (Stuart, Ward, Jose, & Narayanan, 2010), on the appropriate pool of potential partners (Morales, 2012; Nesteruk & Gramescu, 2012), and on the importance of particular traits in a romantic partner, such as a similar cultural or religious background (Dubbs & Buunk, 2010; Hynie, Lalonde, & Lee, 2006). Young adults from more culturally collectivistic ethnic groups and those of more recent U.S. immigrant groups tend to support and report parental influence on dating choices to a greater degree than young adults from individualistic cultures and later U.S. generations (Buunk, Park, & Duncan, 2010; Nesteruk & Gramescu, 2012; Uskul, Lalonde, & Konanur, 2011). At the same time, however, young adults from these collectivistic and more recent U.S. immigrant groups may hold differing beliefs and expectations about dating than their parents, including the acceptability of dating outside of one's own cultural group (Giguère, Lalonde, & Lou, 2010). The goal of the current study was to examine parent-child attitudes and conflict over dating outside of one's own cultural group across three U.S. ethnic groups that vary in the extent to which their members are likely to be recent immigrants from more collectivist societies where parental influence on dating choice is an established norm.

Attitudes toward intergroup romantic relationships tend to differ across generations, with older individuals approving at lower rates than younger individuals (Carroll, 2007; Wang, 2012). For example, recent survey results indicate that while 85% of 18- to 29-year olds said, "they would be fine if a family member were married to someone of a different race/ethnicity," only 55% of 50- to 64-year olds agreed, revealing an intergenerational gap (Wang, 2012). Previous studies indicate that some young adults expect their parents to disapprove of intergroup dating (Edmonds & Killen, 2009; Morales, 2012) and opt to not engage in intergroup romantic relationships for this reason (Harris & Kalbfleisch, 2000). At the same time, however, young adults are open to dating outside of their racial/ethnic groups (Uskul et al., 2011). Young adults are more likely than their parents to have increased contact with out-groups (Uskul et al., 2011), which in turn leads them to hold more inclusive attitudes toward other groups (Edmonds & Killen, 2009). This inclusion extends to young adults holding more positive attitudes than their parents toward intergroup dating relationships (Uskul et al., 2011). These differences in experiences and attitudes, particularly as they relate to young adults' romantic partner choices, may set the stage for parent-child conflict.

Ethnic minority and immigrant families

The potential for a generational gap regarding intergroup relations may be exacerbated within minority and immigrant families. Intergroup romantic relationships are often

cited as a major concern among ethnic minority and immigrant parents (Inman, Howard, Beaumont, & Walker, 2007; Maiter & George, 2003) who likely retain connections to their countries of origin and who may be particularly concerned about the loss of ethnic identity and cultural traditions such as family values, language retention, and religious identification. These concerns have been revealed in a limited number of qualitative studies. Immigrant mothers report that a main parenting priority is to pass down their culture to their children (Inman et al., 2007; Maiter & George, 2003), and they express worry over a lack of connection to grandchildren if their children were to intermarry (Inman et al., 2007). The potential for a decrease in cultural identification also leads immigrant parents to worry that intergroup relationships may additionally lead to a decrease in identification with the family in general (Stuart et al., 2010).

Qualitative studies addressing young adults' perspectives of parents' attitudes are also informative. Young adults from a variety of backgrounds report that their parents worry about intergroup relationships because of the concern that the family's cultural traditions will not continue (Inman, Altman, Kaduvettoor-Davidson, Carr, & Walker, 2011; Morales, 2012; Nesteruk & Gramescu, 2012; Yahya & Boag, 2014). Parental opposition to intergroup relationships has also been attributed to historical cultural tensions between the particular groups (e.g., Yahya & Boag, 2014). However, not all young adults perceive their parents' disapproval to stem from a cultural worry or a cultural clash; rather, some young adults attribute parents' disapproval to stem from prejudice (Morales, 2012; Yahya & Boag, 2014) or social status concerns (Inman et al., 2011).

Despite parental disapproval that might be expected or experienced, young adults tend to be open to intergroup dating relationships (Uskul et al., 2011; Wang, 2012). Young adults and their parents may have differing attitudes about intergroup romantic relationships, but young adults across cultures value family support of their romantic relationships (Jin & Oh, 2010). This pattern suggests that, at least implicitly, young adults understand that their individual decisions are affected by and affect other members in the family. For members of collectivistic cultures (e.g., Asian and Latino), where there is a strong emphasis on family input and preferences in regard to life decisions, including partner choice (Buunk et al., 2010; Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam, 1999), lack of familial support may be especially distressing. Therefore, a young adult's choice of a romantic partner who is outside of one's in-group may be seen as especially threatening to the core of the family unit in immigrant and minority families. At the same time, however, U.S. youth across ethnic backgrounds and generational statuses value the independence emphasized in mainstream U.S. culture. These values are often exemplified in a desire for autonomy in decision-making, such as which romantic partner to date (Giguère et al., 2010; Phinney, Kim-Jo, Osorio, & Vilhjálmsdóttir, 2005). Previous research has supported this notion. Across a number of racial/ethnic (European American, Mexican American, Armenian American, Korean American) groups and individuals, both U.S.-born and foreign-born, the majority of adolescents and young adults reported that they would respond in a self-assertive manner (e.g., "do what I want to do") if they disagreed with their parents over a hypothetical situation regarding intergroup dating disapproval (Phinney et al., 2005). These results suggest that even among adolescents and young adults who belong to collectivist cultural groups, dating situations may be a source of conflict with parents.

The combination of parent–child discrepant attitudes on dating in general and the direct nature of parental disapproval of intergroup dating (Edmonds & Killen, 2009) may create a context that triggers parent–child conflict. Indeed, there is some indication that among U.S. Asian families, greater gaps in expectations and values among parents and children are associated with increases in intensity of family conflict (Ahn et al., 2009; Choi, He, & Harachi, 2008), particularly surrounding dating and marriage (Ahn et al., 2009).

Gender differences

Previous research has found that young women often experience more restrictive parental standards for dating behavior (Madsen, 2008; Nesteruk & Gramescu, 2012) and report greater levels of conflict with their parents about dating than young men, in general (Chung, 2001; Stuart et al., 2010). In immigrant families, gender differences in cultural value gaps with parents appear to differ between young adult men and women. For example, Asian women have reported greater overall cultural value gaps with their parents than do Asian men (Park, Vo, & Tsong, 2009). These value gaps may translate into romantic relationships being experienced differently for young adult men and women, particularly in the family context. In terms of intergroup dating, in particular, gender differences emerge as well both in majority group and minority group families and immigrant and nonimmigrant families; however, the findings are mixed. White women report more parental disapproval than do White men (Miller, Olson, & Fazio, 2004). However, among Chinese Canadian young adults, men expressed less approval of interracial dating than women (Uskul, Lalonde, & Cheng, 2007). Still, other research has found similar proportions of men and women approving of intergroup dating (Field, Kimuna, & Straus, 2013) and engaging in intergroup dating (Martin, Bradford, Drzewiecka, & Chitgopekar, 2003). Given these disparate and inconclusive findings, the role of gender was explored in the current study.

Defining intergroup romantic relationships

Intergroup romantic relationships are often defined in terms of race/ethnicity (e.g., White, Black, Asian, Latino) and are commonly termed interracial or interethnic relationships. Racial and ethnic group boundary distinctions have a long history in the U.S. and continue to be reflected in the U.S. Census. Racial group distinctions often rely on distinct and fairly observable group differences that underlie the U.S.'s complex racial and structural hierarchies. This racial hierarchy can play a role in everyday interactions, including romantic partner choice (e.g., research using online dating sites has found consistent racial group dating preferences; e.g., Feliciano, Lee, & Robnett, 2011; Feliciano, Robnett, & Komaie, 2009). Additionally, young adults have reported that racial differences between themselves and their potential romantic partner would be sufficient to elicit parental disapproval (Harris & Kalbfleisch, 2000; Morales, 2012). Not surprisingly, researchers studying intergroup romantic relationships with North American samples have also tended to rely on these racial/ethnic distinctions to define

in-group/out-group boundaries (e.g., AhnAllen & Suyemoto, 2011; Levin, Taylor, & Caudle, 2007; Uskul et al., 2007).

Although racial group boundaries capture important social information, these categories may not always fully capture the ways in which individuals and their families identify themselves and their relationships (e.g., Levin et al., 2007; Sullivan & Cottone, 2006) nor are they sufficient to explain the reasons for why parents disapprove of intergroup romantic relationships. Best practices for identifying and categorizing people and their relationships remain a source of debate (Prewitt, 2013; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2009). One recurring theme in the critique of current census categories is that of being true to how people self-identify (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2009) and being careful not to mask nationality differences by, for example, “lumping millions of newcomers into ‘Hispanic’ and ‘Asian’ pan-ethnic categories” (Rumbaut & Komaie, 2010, p. 45). The rates of intergroup romantic relationships, both as reported in national statistics and within scholarly research, have been critiqued as discounting many relationships that cross group boundaries beyond the main racial/ethnic categories (Gaines, Gurung, Lin, & Pouli, 2005; Morgan, 2012; Prewitt, 2013). In sum, context matters for when and how we use these ethnic and racial categorizations (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2009).

Whereas a same-race couple’s cultural differences may not be easily recognizable to an outside observer, these distinctions are likely to be rapidly apparent within the family context. For example, variations in language or traditions may be easily evident within the family’s home, and these cultural differences sometimes serve as the basis for parents’ disapproval of their young adult children’s intergroup relationships (e.g., Inman et al., 2011; Nesteruk & Gramescu, 2012). Although a relationship between two individuals, one from a Korean background and another from Chinese background may not be considered an intergroup pairing using the interracial/interethnic categorization, it is important to remember that the two individuals and their respective families may speak different languages and have different customs. This may also be the case among families who fit into the majority classification (i.e., White in the U.S.). For example, among Whites there may be differences in religion, language, and a number of other cultural factors.

Although those that have resided in the U.S. for many generations might have come to identify with broad racial categorizations, recent immigrants to the U.S. may have a different experience. The emphasis on both racial and cultural similarities in a romantic partner may be particularly pronounced among immigrant families. For example, second-generation young adults reported that their parents “prefer and expect” them to be in a relationship with someone “within their culture, ethnicity, and religion” (Nesteruk & Gramescu, 2012, p. 47). With few exceptions (e.g., Bustamante, Nelson, Henriksen, & Monakes, 2011; Clark-Ibáñez & Felmler, 2004; Morgan, 2012), the literature typically does not account for differences in cultural background (e.g., relations between an individual of Mexican background and an individual of Puerto Rican background) that are lost when using broader racial/ethnic classifications (e.g., Latino) (e.g., Levin et al., 2007; Martin et al., 2003; Prewitt, 2013). However, there seems to be a fairly consistent call for using a more nuanced intercultural definition that moves beyond the commonly used interracial/interethnic categorization of intergroup romantic relationships (e.g., Gaines et al., 2005; Morgan, 2012). Scholars have emphasized that

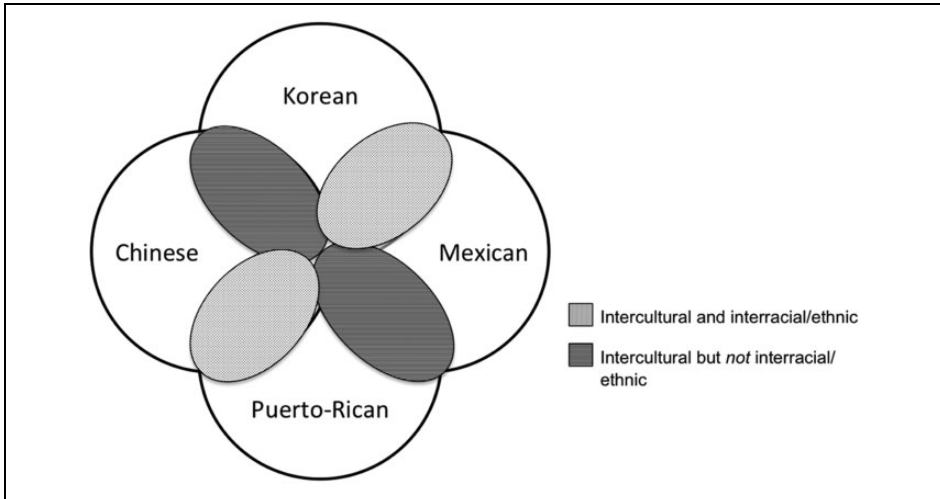


Figure 1. Examples of interracial/interethnic and intercultural relationship pairings.

the importance of both racial *and* cultural background as “important social boundaries for understanding mixed couples” (Morgan, 2012, p. 1423) and that romantic relationships which cross cultural boundaries “may have as much to tell us about where the nation is headed as the rate at which Whites intermarry” (Prewitt, 2013, para. 11). In the present study, with its focus on the family context, we utilized the term intercultural relationships to account for the cultural elements of dating out in addition to the racial elements of dating out.

The current study

The current study extends previous research on family disapproval and conflict over intergroup romantic relationships by focusing on intercultural romantic relationships, a categorization that captures the lesser studied cultural elements of intergroup dating (see Figure 1), and by examining ethnic and generational status variations in family disapproval and conflict in a diverse U.S. sample. Our work had three aims: (1) to examine ethnic and generational status variation in rates of out-group dating when culture is included; (2) to examine ethnic and generational status variation in perceived parent–child attitude discrepancies toward intercultural romantic relationships; and (3) to examine ethnic and generational status variation in perceived parent–child conflict and conflict resolution related to intercultural romantic relationships. Given previous research findings reporting parent–child cultural value gaps by gender within particular ethnic groups (e.g., Park et al., 2009) and gender differences in parent disapproval toward intergroup romantic relationships (e.g., Miller et al., 2004), we additionally examined overall gender differences and the possibility of interactions between gender and ethnic background for perceived parent–child intercultural dating attitude discrepancies.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the study sample.

	Asian (<i>n</i> = 377)	Latino (<i>n</i> = 144)	European (<i>n</i> = 107)	Overall sample (<i>N</i> = 628)	<i>F</i> (<i>df</i>) or χ^2 (<i>df</i>)
Mean age (<i>SD</i>)	20.32 (1.44)	20.03 (1.48)	20.47 (0.86)	20.3 (1.49)	2.96(2,625)
Gender (% women)	54.4	73.6	68.2	61.1	18.95(2)***
Mean SES ^a	2.96	2.53	3.27	2.91	22.93(2, 625)***
Generational status ^b					266.10(4)***
First ^c (%)	27.1	12.7	12.3	21.2	
Second (%)	68.4	75.4	18.9	61.3	
Third (%)	3.7	12.0	68.9	16.6	

^a5-Point scale: 1 = lower working class; 2 = upper working class; 3 = lower middle class; 4 = upper middle class; and 5 = upper upper class.

^bFirst-generation participants were born outside of the U.S.; second-generation participants were U.S.-born and had at least one foreign-born parent; and third-generation participants were U.S.-born and both parents were U.S.-born.

^cThe mean age at which first-generation individuals immigrated to the U.S. was 11 years of age, with a mode of 13 years of age and a median age of 11. The age range was 0–21 years.

****p* < .001.

Method

Participants

Participants in this study were 628 undergraduate students who met the criteria of being unmarried, self-identified as heterosexual, between the age of 18–25 years, and self-identified as being of Asian, Latino, or European background.¹ Table 1 presents sample demographic characteristics.

Procedure and measures

Participants were recruited through the university research participant pools of two large West Coast universities and received extra credit for their participation. All study material and procedures were approved by each university's Institutional Review Board. Participants completed a 1-hr online questionnaire using Qualtrics, an online survey platform. Informed consent was obtained via a study information sheet presented on the first page of the survey. Participants indicated their consent by continuing with the survey and responded to questions about the interracial/interethnic and intercultural status of their romantic relationships, perceptions of their parents' disapproval of their romantic relationships and intercultural relationships generally, reports of conflict with parents over previous intercultural relationships, and demographic characteristics.

Interracial/ethnic relationship status. The authors coded each participant as either currently *being* (1) or *not being* (0) in an interracial/interethnic romantic relationship based on participant report of own and partner's racial/ethnic group. As defined by U.S. national statistics (Wang, 2012), relationships between participants and their romantic partners that crossed major racial/ethnic boundaries—White/European American (*not* Hispanic/

Latino), Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, American Indian, and those who were identified as being multiracial—were categorized as interracial/interethnic. For ease of discussion, the term “interracial” is used in this study to refer to both interracial and interethnic relationships.

Intercultural relationship status. Participants assessed whether they deemed their romantic relationship to be intercultural (i.e., participant and partner were from different cultures, races, ethnicities, or religions). Per our operational definition, the intercultural category included the interracial category and allowed for variations in cultural background among individuals of the same race. Intercultural was defined for participants and examples were provided (e.g., Asian and Latino; Chinese and Korean; Jewish and Christian). Participants also were instructed that intercultural status was ultimately intended to “encompass any relationship which you or your family considers to be between two different cultures/ethnic groups/races.” Participants were coded as currently *being* (1) or *not being* (0) in an intercultural romantic relationship. Participants were additionally asked if they had *ever* been in an intercultural romantic relationship and responded by choosing one of four options (0 = *never*; 1 = *yes, once*; 2 = *yes, twice*; or 3 = *yes, three times or more*).

Perceived parental disapproval of current romantic relationship. A modified version of Sprecher and Felmlee’s (1992) *Network Support Index* was used to measure participants’ perceived level of parental disapproval of his/her current relationship (two items; e.g., “To what degree do you think your parents approve/disapprove of your relationship with your boyfriend/girlfriend?”). Participants responded to these items on a scale ranging from 1 = *very much disapprove/discouraged a great deal* to 5 = *very much approve/encouraged a great deal*. Items were reverse scored such that a higher score indicated greater parental disapproval; Cronbach’s α was .73.

Perceived parental and own attitudes toward intercultural romantic relationships. A 3-item scale assessed perceived parental attitudes toward intercultural dating. Items were “My parents approve of me dating outside of our own cultural/racial group,” “My parents want me to date someone from our own cultural/ethnic background,” and “My parents would rather me date a member of our cultural/ethnic background than someone who is not.” Participants responded on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. The first item was reverse scored such that for the scale as a whole, a higher score indicated more negative attitudes toward intercultural romantic relationships; Cronbach’s α was .83.

A 2-item scale assessed participants’ attitudes toward intercultural dating. The items read “I am open to dating outside of my cultural/ethnic group” and “I would rather date members of my own cultural/ethnic group than other groups.” Participants responded on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. The first item was reverse scored such that a higher score for the scale would indicate more negative attitudes toward intercultural dating; Cronbach’s α was .63.

A separate variable was created to assess the discrepancy between participant and perceived parental attitudes toward intercultural romantic relationships. Participant

attitude was subtracted from perceived parent attitude. Analyses were then conducted on the absolute value of the discrepancy.

Perceived parent–child conflict and conflict resolution over intercultural romantic relationship. A single item assessed whether participants had ever experienced conflict with their parents over a past intercultural romantic relationship. The item read, “Did you have conflict with one or both of your parents *specifically* because you were in an intercultural relationship? (*not* including your current relationship).” Participants responded by choosing either *yes* (1) or *no* (0). For participants who chose *yes*, a single item then assessed whether this past conflict with their parents had been resolved; participants responded by choosing either *yes* (1) or *no* (0).

Demographic variables. Questions assessing race/ethnicity of oneself and one’s parents, own and parents’ country of birth, gender, age, socioeconomic status (SES), length of current romantic relationship, and current living situation were included. Following conventions used by other researchers in the field (e.g., Phinney, Jacoby, & Silva, 2007), generational status was determined by birthplace of participant and parents. First-generation participants were those who were born outside of the U.S., second-generation participants were U.S.-born and had at least one foreign-born parent, and third-generation participants were U.S.-born and had both parents who were U.S.-born. Although first- and second-generation participants belong to immigrant families, research indicates that second-generation individuals’ experiences in developmental tasks are unique, including romantic partner selection, and that they have unique experiences in regard to intergroup romantic relationships (Giguère et al., 2010; Nesteruk & Gramescu, 2012; Rumbaut & Komaie, 2010; Uskul et al., 2011). Thus, we chose to have separate categorizations. SES was indicated by participants on a 1–5 scale: *lower working class* (1), *upper working class* (2), *lower middle class* (3), *upper middle class* (4), and *upper upper class* (5). Examples of professions were included with each category.

Plan of analysis

Following data screening, preliminary associations among the major study variables were examined (see Table 2). Age and SES were each significantly correlated with some major study variables, and thus analyses were run with and without including these variables as covariates when appropriate.

A series of analyses of covariance (ANCOVAs) and logistic regression analyses were used to investigate variations across ethnic and generational status groups and to explore the role of gender. Logistic regressions were run comparing each ethnic and generational group to one another to allow for a full exploration of distinctions between groups and not treat any specific group as normative. Due to the uneven distribution across cells, generational status was controlled for when examining variations by ethnicity and vice versa when examining variations by generational status. Table 3 presents the means and standard deviations of the main study variables.

Table 2. Correlations among demographic and major study variables.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Gender	—	.117**	.026	-.099	-.063	-.021	.010	-.096	-.061	.004	-.060	.021
2. Age		—	-.002	.137*	-.011	-.006	.107**	-.200**	-.011	-.036	.020	.035
3. SES			—	-.080	.017	-.014	.065	-.205	-.031	.062	-.087*	-.063
4. Relationship length				—	.017	-.042	-.130*	-.205**	-.075	-.063	-.016	-.171*
5. Current interracial					—	.480***	.203***	.016	-.205**	-.356**	.123*	-.075
6. Current intercultural						—	.253***	.132*	-.220**	-.467**	.199**	-.043
7. Ever intercultural							—	-.015	-.075	-.233*	.136**	.177**
8. Current relationship disapproval								—	.247**	-.067	.297**	.095
9. Parental intercultural attitudes									—	.401**	.593**	.408**
10. Own intercultural attitudes										—	.501**	-.066
11. Parent-child intercultural discrepancies											—	.448**
12. Ever intercultural conflict												—

Note. Pearson correlations were calculated for two continuous variables; point-biserial correlations were calculated for one continuous and one dichotomous variable, and the ϕ coefficient was calculated for two dichotomous variables.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p \leq .001$.

Table 3. Means and standard deviations of major study variables by ethnicity and generational status.

	Ethnicity			Generational status			Overall sample
	Asian	Latino	European	First	Second	Third	
Current parental relationship disapproval ^a	2.48 (0.89)	2.24 (0.90)	2.06 (0.89)	2.42 (0.85)	2.45 (0.91)	1.99 (0.88)	2.34 (0.91)
Parental intercultural attitudes ^a	3.48 (0.93)	2.88 (1.06)	3.00 (1.17)	3.36 (1.02)	3.38 (0.97)	2.67 (1.11)	3.26 (1.04)
Participant intercultural attitudes ^a	2.56 (0.92)	2.42 (0.97)	2.64 (1.11)	2.52 (0.94)	2.58 (0.96)	2.42 (1.00)	2.45 (0.97)
Parent-child intercultural discrepancies ^b	1.08 (0.90)	0.91 (0.74)	0.81 (0.79)	1.02 (0.84)	1.06 (0.88)	0.75 (0.88)	0.75 (0.73)

^aFive-point scale; higher numbers indicate greater disapproval.

^bPossible range is 0–4; higher numbers indicate greater attitudinal discrepancies.

Results

Descriptive statistics

The three ethnic groups studied differed in their U.S. generational status and SES. Generational status differed significantly among ethnic groups, $\chi^2(4, N = 622) = 266.10, p < .001$. The majority of Asian (69.0%) and Latino (75.4%) background students were second generation, whereas the majority of European background (68.9%) participants were third generation or above. SES differed significantly across both ethnicity, $\chi^2(8, N = 628) = 60.87, p < .001$, and generational status, $\chi^2(8, N = 622) = 54.04, p < .001$. The majority of Asian (48.8%) and Latino participants (45.8%) came from lower middle-class families, whereas the majority of European background (48.6%) participants came from upper middle-class families. Looking at generational differences by SES, the majority of first-generation (39.1%) and second-generation (50.4%) participants were lower middle class and the majority of third-generation (50.0%) participants were upper middle class. See Table 1 for group differences in demographic characteristics.

Nearly half (47.5%; $n = 298$) of all participants were currently in an exclusive, non-cohabitating (98.3%), heterosexual romantic relationship. The average relationship length was 20.80 months ($SD = 16.65, Mdn = 16.00$), and relationship length did not differ by whether the romantic relationship was intercultural or not, $t(292) = 0.719, p = .473$. In terms of past relationships, 46.2% ($n = 265$) of participants reported having ever been in at least one intercultural relationship (excluding their current relationship) and 41.1% ($n = 109$) of that subgroup reported having been in two or more intercultural romantic relationships.

Preliminary analyses

Utilizing the commonly used racial distinction of in-group/out-group romantic relationships, 31.2% ($n = 92$) of participant relationships were identified as interracial. As to be expected, by allowing participants to draw their own boundaries to define a relationship that they deemed was with a member of an out-group (termed “intercultural”), this percentage increased to approximately half (48.5%; $n = 143$). To further explore the interracial/intercultural distinction, perceived parental disapproval of interracial and intercultural relationships was compared to same-race and same-culture relationships. Analyses revealed no significant differences when comparing participants in interracial relationships ($M = 2.36, SD = 1.05$) to those in same-race relationships² ($M = 2.33, SD = 0.84$), $F(1, 288) = 0.72, p = .788, \eta_p^2 = .000$. However, a significant difference in perceived parental disapproval emerged when comparing intercultural relationships to same-culture relationships, such that participants in intercultural relationships reported greater levels of parental disapproval ($M = 2.46, SD = 0.97$) than those in same-culture relationships² ($M = 2.22, SD = 0.084$), $F(1, 288) = 5.11, p = .025, \eta_p^2 = .017$ (see Figure 2). In addition to the greater number of intergroup relationships observed with the intercultural definition, we also observed that those relationships that crossed cultures (but not race) led to conflict at roughly the same rates as relationships that only crossed race (15.6% and 16.3%, respectively).

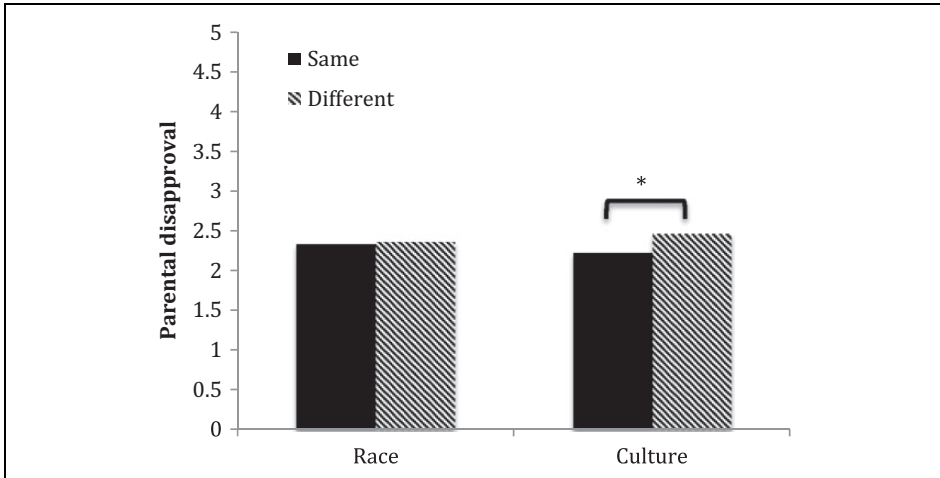


Figure 2. Means of perceived parental disapproval of interracial versus same-race and intercultural versus same-culture relationships. * $p < .05$.

For the sample as a whole, perceived parental attitudes toward interracial dating had a mean level of 3.26 ($SD = 1.04$) on a scale of 1 to 5, with higher scores indicating more negative attitudes. As expected, the mean participant attitude toward interracial dating was significantly less negative than their perceived parental attitudes with a mean of 2.54 ($SD = 0.97$), paired sample t -test, $t(619) = -16.15$, $p < .001$. The mean discrepancy between perceived parent and young adult interracial dating attitudes was 0.99 ($SD = 0.86$). In total, 45.2% ($n = 284$) of participants reported having at least one point of discrepancy with their parents in regard to interracial dating attitudes.³

Overall, 21.7% ($n = 70$) of participants who reported ever having been in an interracial romantic relationship reported that they had conflict with at least one of their parents specifically because their relationship was interracial. In terms of conflict resolution, 27.1% ($n = 19$) of participants reported that the conflict between them and their parent(s) remained unresolved.

Main analyses

Intergroup romantic relationships in an intercultural framework

Were there ethnic or generational differences in engaging in intergroup relationships? Ethnic and generational variations emerged for engaging in *interracial* romantic relationships. Individuals of European background were 2.37 times more likely to be in an interracial relationship than individuals of Asian background ($\beta = 0.863$, $p = .025$) and were marginally more likely to be in an interracial relationship than individuals of Latino background ($\beta = 5.116$, $p = .077$), controlling for generational status. Third-generation participants were 2.90 times more likely to be in an interracial relationship than second-generation participants ($\beta = 1.07$, $p = .001$) and 2.36 times more likely than first-generation participants ($\beta = 0.859$, $p = .029$), when controlling for ethnic

background. However, when examining *intercultural* relationships, no significant ethnic or generational differences emerged. Table 4 presents the percentages of current interracial, current intercultural, and past intercultural relationships by ethnicity and generational status. Whereas the percentages of interracial and intercultural relationships remained quite similar among European background and third-generation participants, at about 40–50%; for Asians, Latinos, first- and second-generation participants the number of intergroup relationships increased from approximately one-fourth using the interracial categorization to about 40–50% when using the more inclusive intercultural definition.

Perceived parent–child intercultural dating attitudes and discrepancies

Were there ethnic or generational differences in perceived parent–child intercultural dating attitude discrepancies? A one-way between-subjects ANCOVA controlling for generational status revealed a significant effect of ethnicity, $F(2, 610) = 3.12, p = .045, \eta_p^2 = .010$. Pairwise comparisons revealed significant differences between participants of Asian and Latino background ($p = .050$) and between participants of Asian and European background ($p = .040$). Asian participants ($M = 1.08, SD = 0.90$) reported significantly greater perceived discrepancies than Latino participants ($M = 0.90, SD = 0.74$) and European participants ($M = 0.81, SD = 0.79$).⁴ A one-way between-subjects ANCOVA controlling for ethnicity revealed a significant effect of generational status, $F(2, 610) = 4.00, p = .019, \eta_p^2 = .013$.⁵ Pairwise comparisons revealed that second-generation participants ($M = 1.06, SD = 0.88$) reported significantly greater perceived attitudinal discrepancies than third-generation participants ($M = 0.75, SD = 0.73; p = .005$) and that first-generation participants ($M = 1.02; SD = 0.84$) reported marginally higher levels of attitudinal discrepancies than third-generation participants ($p = .075$).

Perceived parent–child intercultural dating conflict and conflict resolution

A logistic regression analysis revealed that participants who reported greater perceived discrepancies with their parents in attitudes toward intercultural romantic relationships were more likely to experience conflict over intercultural romantic relationships, $\beta = 1.199, p < .001$. More specifically, as the attitudinal discrepancy increased by 1 point on the scale, participants were 3.32 times more likely to report conflict. This relationship was significant across all ethnic and generational status groups (p 's ranged from $<.001$ to $.018$).

Were there ethnic or generational differences in perceived parent–child intercultural dating conflict and conflict resolution? Controlling for generational status, Asians were significantly more likely to report conflict over their intercultural dating relationships than Latinos, $\beta = 0.810, p = .034$, such that Asians were 2.25 times more likely to report parent–child conflict than Latinos. There were no significant differences between Asians and Europeans in likelihood of reporting conflict over intercultural dating. No ethnic differences were found in resolving intercultural dating conflict.

Table 4. Percentages of current interracial, current intercultural, and past intercultural relationships within ethnic and generational status groups.

Relationship status	Ethnicity			Generational status				Overall sample
	Asian	Latino	European	First	Second	Third	Overall sample	
Current interracial	25.5% (n = 41)	29.1% (n = 23)	50.9% (n = 28)	28.8% (n = 17)	25.1% (n = 43)	50.0% (n = 31)	31.2% (n = 92)	
Current intercultural	54.0% (n = 87)	41.8% (n = 33)	41.8% (n = 23)	49.2% (n = 29)	48.5% (n = 83)	48.4% (n = 30)	48.5% (n = 143)	
Past intercultural	51.5% (n = 84)	36.7% (n = 29)	51.8% (n = 29)	55.0% (n = 33)	43.0% (n = 74)	54.0% (n = 34)	47.7% (n = 142)	

Controlling for ethnicity, a main effect of generational status was found such that first-generation ($\beta = 1.611, p = .010$) and second-generation participants ($\beta = 1.819, p = .003$) reported greater likelihood of conflict as compared to third-generation participants. First-generation participants were 5 times more likely, and second-generation were 6.2 times more likely, to report conflict over intercultural dating with their parents than third-generation participants. No generational status differences were found for resolving intercultural dating conflict.

Gender differences

No significant gender differences were found for involvement in either interracial or intercultural relationships ($\beta = -0.313, p = .244$ and $\beta = -0.084, p = .709$, respectively). Although the women in the study reported significantly greater levels of perceived parent-child attitudinal discrepancies over intercultural dating than did the men, $F(1, 618) = 6.17, p = .013$,⁶ no gender differences were found for reporting conflict over intercultural dating ($\beta = 0.103, p = .709$). However, gender differences were significant in regard to resolving intercultural dating conflict with one's parents ($\beta = -1.735, p = .011$), with young adult women reporting unresolved conflict more frequently than young adult men (39.5% vs. 10.3%, respectively).

A two-way ANCOVA controlling for generational status revealed no significant interaction between gender and ethnic background for perceived parent-child intercultural dating attitude discrepancies. However, pairwise comparisons showed that Asian women reported significantly greater perceived discrepancies than did Asian men ($p = .003$). In comparison, there were no significant gender differences within either European or Latino background participants. Further, Asian women reported significantly greater discrepancies with parents than Latina women ($p = .021$) and European women ($p = .011$).

Discussion

The goal of the current study was to examine the family context of young adults' intergroup romantic relationships in a diverse U.S. sample that included young adults from ethnic minority and immigrant families who remain understudied in this area of research. We examined ethnic and generational status variations in (1) rates of out-group dating when culture is included, (2) extent of perceived parent-child discrepancies of intercultural dating attitudes, and (3) levels of perceived parent-child conflict and conflict resolution regarding intercultural romantic relationships. Table 5 presents a summary of the major findings of this study.

Variations by ethnic group and immigrant generation were found across some, but not all, study variables. Intercultural relationships were reported at similar rates across all ethnic and generational status groups. Asian background participants perceived greater attitudinal discrepancies with parents than those of Latino background and European background and were more likely than Latino participants to report conflict with their parents over intercultural dating. Further, perceived parent-child intercultural dating conflict was reported at greater rates among the two immigrant generation groups

Table 5. Ethnic, generational, and gender differences among main study variables.

	Current interracial	Current intercultural	Parent-child attitudinal discrepancies	Intercultural dating conflict	Intercultural dating conflict resolution
Ethnicity	E > A* E > L [†]	No differences	A > L* A > E*	A > L*	No differences
Generational status	3rd > 1st* 3rd > 2nd***	No differences	2nd > 3rd** 1st > 3rd [†]	1st > 3rd** 2nd > 3rd**	No differences
Gender	No differences	No differences	Women > men*	No differences	Men > women*

Note. E = European; A = Asian; L = Latino.

Contrasts not listed were not significant at $p < .05$ nor trending at $p < .1$.

* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$; [†] $p < .1$

as compared to the third-generation group. Overall, our findings demonstrate the importance of incorporating culture into the conceptualization of intergroup romantic relationships. This conceptualization may be particularly meaningful in the context of young adults' experiences with intergroup romantic relationships within ethnic minority and more recent immigrant families.

By defining intergroup relationships beyond census-based interracial/interethnic categories to include relationships that crossed culture as well as race/ethnicity, we observed an increased number of relationships that would be considered to be intergroup. This more expansive and nuanced intercultural definition fits with a small, but growing number of studies that have examined out-group dating (e.g., Morgan, 2012) and responds to a call by Gaines and colleagues (2005) "to use the term 'intercultural' relationships" (p. 172) and to "bring the concept of ethnicity, and more broadly the issues of culture, to the forefront of close relationship research" (p. 173). This conceptualization may be particularly pertinent when examining the intergroup relationships of more recent immigrant groups, particularly individuals of Asian and Latino background, as compared to those of later generations and European background. In our work, there were significant ethnic and generational status differences in the number of interracial relationships (using a census-based definition), but no differences when using the more inclusive, intercultural definition. This pattern suggests that defining intergroup relationships with only racial/ethnic categories may overstate ethnic and generational status differences and is at best incomplete for at least certain segments of the population.

Consistent with national statistics indicating intergenerational differences in approval of intergroup relations (Carroll, 2007; Wang, 2012), this study found that almost half (45%) of participants reported intercultural dating attitudes that were perceived to be discrepant with their parents' attitudes. Participants of Asian background reported greater perceived discrepancies than those of Latino background and European background. The ethnic differences are noteworthy, as a difference was found between the majority group with only one of the minority groups, and perhaps more interestingly, a

difference was found between the Latino and Asian subsamples. These findings seem to be driven by perceived parental attitudes toward intercultural relationships; whereas there were no significant differences between self-reported intercultural attitudes among the young adult participants, differences were found for perceptions of parental attitudes toward intercultural relationships. Participants of Asian background reported the most negative attitudes for their parents as compared to participants of Latino ($p < .001$) and European background ($p = .007$). Future research should incorporate parent report to investigate what factors may be driving this difference, such as level and type of acculturation strategies or contact with out-group members.

Although previous studies have found that Whites, at the top of the racial hierarchy in the U.S., are least open to out-group dating (Robnett & Feliciano, 2011), this finding did not replicate in our study. We offer two possible explanations for this difference. It is possible that the cultural diversity of the U.S. west coast makes it likely that European background participants have extensive exposure to diverse ethnic groups, which may increase out-group acceptance and minimize intergroup attitude variations across ethnic groups. It is also possible that among our European background participants, cultural loss is less worrisome due to their U.S. majority group status and, instead, anxiety about being perceived as prejudiced (e.g., Richeson & Shelton, 2007) may be more salient and render it more socially undesirable to report negative attitudes toward other groups.

As for generational status variations in perceived parent-child discrepancies, second-generation participants reported significantly greater discrepant attitudes than third-generation participants. This finding is consistent with previous literature that reports parent-child value gaps among second-generation adolescents and young adults and particularly in realms of autonomy such as choice of a dating partner (Ahn et al., 2009; Giguère et al., 2010). Second-generation students are likely to have more contact than their parents to groups outside of their own (Uskul et al., 2011), particularly on multi-ethnic college campuses, which may lead them to developing a different set of perspectives in regard to intergroup relations.

The current study adds to the growing literature that indicates that value gaps between parents and their children are associated with greater likelihood of conflict (Ahn et al., 2009; Smokowski, Rose, & Bacallao, 2008). In our study, greater reported discrepancy with parents over intercultural dating attitudes predicted increased likelihood of conflict over intercultural dating relationships. Our findings confirmed that intercultural dating is a source of conflict between parents and their college-aged children; for the sample as a whole, conflict with one's parent(s) was reported by almost one-fourth (22%) of participants who had ever been involved in an intercultural romantic relationship.

Results indicated that likelihood of conflict varies depending on ethnicity and generational status. Specifically, Asian/Asian American participants reported greater instances of conflict than did Latino/Latino American participants. Although both Asian and Latino cultures emphasize interdependent values (i.e., values that underscore close family relations; Phinney et al., 2005), they differ in the way these interdependent values are managed. Interdependence in Latino culture places value on positive interpersonal interactions (Holloway, Waldrip, & Ickes, 2009), whereas in Asian cultures it often takes the form of respect for parent-child hierarchies (Phinney et al., 2005). Open communication of negative emotions may also be more common among those of Asian

background (Williamson et al., 2012). This cultural distinction may make instances of outright conflict more likely among Asian participants than Latino participants. Additional data were examined to lend empirical support for this explanation. In the current study, participants of Latino background reported marginally higher levels of seeking to avoid conflict with their parents than participants of Asian background ($p = .082$) and significantly higher levels than participants of European background ($p = .004$). This difference, along with Latino culture's emphasis on positive family interactions, may account for those of Latino background reporting fewer instances of outright conflict with their parents over their intercultural relationships. On the other hand, greater acceptance of negative communication and familial values of hierarchy may explain greater instances of intercultural dating conflict among Asian participants who engage in these relationships against one's parents' approval.

In terms of variations by generational status, significant differences were found when comparing first-generation and second-generation participants to third-generation participants. Both first- and second-generation participants reported more conflict with their parents over their previous intercultural relationships than third-generation participants. Opinions about dating and marriage tend to be particularly discrepant among parents and children in immigrant families, as this topic typically represents an emotionally laden situation that can elicit both individualistic values of autonomy in choosing one's partner and collectivistic values of incorporating family opinions in decision-making and retaining family ethnic identity (Giguère et al., 2010). Intercultural romantic relationships may be particularly contentious among immigrant parents and their young adult children, as the parents may view it as their children's assimilation into the majority culture and the loss of the native culture of the family (Nesteruk & Gramescu, 2012).

Overall, over one-fourth (27%) of participants reported that the intercultural dating conflict with their parents had remained unresolved. Although there were significant ethnic and generational status variations in instances of conflict over intercultural relationships, there were no reported differences in the amount of conflict *resolution* across ethnicity or generational status. Previous research has shown that across ethnic backgrounds, young adults report to "do what I want to do" when it comes to conflict with their parents, particularly in the area of dating/marriage (Phinney et al., 2005), which may make conflict resolution similarly challenging across ethnic and generational status backgrounds. In addition, dating conflicts are likely to evoke strong emotions, which could make conflict resolution equally difficult across groups and should not necessarily be related to one's ethnic background or generational status. Research on parent-child conflict resolution over young adults' dating relationships, and intercultural dating relationships in particular, is sparse; future research should systematically study conflict management strategies and relationship outcomes across ethnic and generational backgrounds. Future research might also examine the strength of the emotional ties in young adult's intergroup romantic relationships in relation to the likelihood of resolving conflicts with one's parents.

A lack of significant findings among first-generation participants as compared to second-generation participants may be explained by noting that length of time in the U.S. was quite varied. Some researchers have called for distinctions to be made within the first-generation to account for the different points in the life span when individuals arrive

in the U.S., which may affect acculturation to the host country (Rumbaut, 2004; Rumbaut & Komaie, 2010). First-generation participants who moved to the U.S. at a very young age are likely to hold values similar to second-generation participants, whereas those who have more recently moved to the U.S. are likely to have had similar cultural upbringings as their parents and hold cultural values from the home country. This possibility suggests the utility of examining 1.5-generation students in future studies with a sample that is large enough to support that categorization.

There were no significant gender differences in the likelihood of being in an interracial or intercultural romantic relationship or in rates of parent–child conflict over intercultural dating relationships. The lack of gender differences in reporting of conflict suggests that intercultural dating conflict is a phenomenon experienced by both men and women. However, young women reported more attitudinal discrepancies with their parents than did men. A closer look at gender variations within ethnicity found that among participants from Asian backgrounds only, women reported significantly greater levels of discrepancy than did men. Given that the study sample was predominantly second generation (61.3%), and of Asian background (60.0%), the gender differences in attitudinal discrepancies are in line with previous literature showing that Asian women report greater cultural gaps with parents than Asian men (Park et al., 2009).

Although participants' experiences of conflict did not vary by gender, men reported resolving conflict with their parents at higher rates than women. These higher rates of resolved conflict among men may be due to the more permissive attitudes parents tend to adopt with their sons than their daughters (Madsen, 2008; Nesteruk, & Gramescu, 2012). The increased level of unresolved conflict among the women in the sample suggests that researchers delve further in understanding the differing patterns in which young adult women and men communicate and manage conflict with their parents over intercultural relationships.

Implications

The results of the current study have implications for the conceptualization of culture in relationships research. Allowing for a self-defined interpretation of intergroup relationships, or at the very least a definition that includes culture, is important for future studies of intergroup romantic relationships. The significance of experiences among those in intercultural relationships is supported by the literature on counseling of intercultural couples. Sullivan and Cottone (2006) noted that “the greatest shortcoming of racially based analyses of intercultural relationships is that they have no application to many intercultural couples who are not racially different” (p. 222). Research with intergroup couples supports the importance of incorporating culture in addition to race; whereas race was noted as more relevant when talking about interactions with the larger society, when couples spoke of challenges in their relationships, cultural differences appeared to take the forefront (Seshadri & Knudson-Martin, 2013). The emphasis on cultural nuances in the counseling literature in particular (Bustamante et al., 2011; Sullivan & Cottone, 2006) suggests that these cultural distinctions may have real-world implications for the daily lives of intercultural couples. As such, it may be constructive for the study of close relationship experiences in social psychological research to more

wholly capture the lived experiences of individuals, as they relate to their intergroup romantic relationships from a more interdisciplinary mindset.

The subjective, culturally inclusive definition is also consequential for parent–adult child relationships. In this study, although parental disapproval of interracial as compared to same-race relationships was not significant, a significant difference emerged when comparing intercultural to same-culture relationships. Considering that family support of relationships is deemed important for young adults (Jin & Oh, 2010), it is likely that parental disapproval of one’s romantic relationship, particularly in cultures where family input is decision-making is the norm (Buunk et al., 2010; Fuligni et al., 1999), would be experienced as a challenge in the parent–child relationship. The variations found across ethnic and generational status groups suggest that the implications for the parent–child relationship may be varied as well. Thus, it would be valuable for researchers and clinicians to consider the larger cultural context surrounding beliefs about intergroup dating, as well as expectations for appropriate interaction between parents and children, within the family setting.

Limitations and future directions

The current study advances our understanding of how intercultural romantic relationships are distributed across different groups in the U.S. and how young adults experience their parents’ responses to intercultural relationships. Although effect sizes were small, small effect sizes can be very meaningful (e.g., Belsky, 2001), especially as they pertain to personally salient and increasingly common issues, such as those of intergroup experiences.

We recommend that future studies continue to provide, as we did, an opportunity for participants to use a broad definition of intercultural status. Given the subjectivity inherent in the measure, it is possible that participants included other factors that we did not specify in the examples of intercultural relationships that we provided. One such factor that has been previously studied includes SES differences between romantic partners. For example, in Kalmijn’s (1998) review of intermarriage and homogamy, he found that “people marry within rather than outside socioeconomic groups” and that “groups at the top and the bottom of the educational hierarchy are more closed than groups in the middle (Kalmijn, 1998, p. 409), suggesting that SES may play a role in defining in-group and out-group boundaries. Future research may benefit from explicitly examining the similarities and differences in how both subjective and objective SES variations between romantic partners are experienced in the family context.

Additionally, this study relied on young adult self-reports of intergroup experiences and did not obtain parent reports. This might be of particular importance for the measure of perceived parent attitude toward intercultural relationships. However, researchers have suggested that children’s perception of parental attitudes may be a particularly valuable report, as children tend to base their perceptions of their parents’ out-group attitudes on their observations of parents’ behaviors, which may be a more accurate assessment of attitudes (Degner & Dalege, 2013) and be less susceptible to socially desirable responding (Edmonds & Killen, 2009). Nonetheless, future research should pursue parent data to better understand parents’ roles in their children’s

experiences with dating out. We additionally note that the intercorrelation of the two items used for the participant intercultural attitude measure, which was used in calculating the parent–child attitudinal discrepancy score, was lower than ideal, with an α of .63. We note, however, that such intercorrelations for 2-item measures are not uncommon and do not preclude the validity of the measure (e.g., Jonason, Teicher, & Schmitt, 2011). Nonetheless, future research should examine this construct with additional items included. Further, for our attitudinal discrepancy measure, we note that although the items in the participant attitude measure and perceived parent attitude measure were not equivalent in literal phrasing, they were conceptually equivalent, appropriate for our sample, and useful for capturing perceived child–parent discrepancies regarding intercultural dating. Moreover, the correlation between the participant and perceived parent attitude measures was significant and positive, $r(618) = .401, p < .001$, and similar to moderate, positive correlations reported in other studies that examined the association between parent and adult children attitudes toward intermarriage (e.g., Huijnk & Liefbroer, 2012).

Given variations in how parent–child conflict is experienced over time and the many ways in which conflict can be resolved (e.g., the ending of the relationship, reaching a mutual understanding), it will be important to include multi-item measurements of conflict, as well as assess conflict and conflict resolution longitudinally and with other externally validated evaluations of conflict such as behavioral observation and/or physiological indicators. In addition, conducting mixed-methods studies including quantitative, qualitative, and behavioral data with both parents and their young adult children can answer questions about what factors drive disapproving attitudes and how conflict is experienced across parent–child dyads.

Our measure assessing intercultural dating attitudes used the word “dating” without specifying level of commitment. Our participants may have had varying interpretations of this construct, ranging from a more casual type of interaction to longer term partnership. Given the potential for multiple interpretations of the construct of dating, future research should ask about attitudes depending on the type and length of relationship (e.g., hook-ups, casual but not exclusive dating, long-term relationships) and examine how these differences influence parental disapproval and parent–child conflict. Additionally, it would be important to study how these processes unfold over time.

Lastly, our two recruitment sites were located in a region of the U.S. where many minority and immigrant populations, particularly individuals of Asian and Latino background, coexist with one another and with the majority population. Given the literature suggesting that interaction and exposure to out-groups make one more likely to have positive attitudes toward out-groups and intergroup interactions (Crystal, Killen, & Ruck, 2008; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008), this may mean that this specific sample may be overall more open to intergroup relationships than individuals in other parts of the country. It would be fruitful for future research to study such intergroup relationships, and in particular *intercultural* interactions, in other regions of the country to examine whether areas with different ethnic and generational status compositions experience disapproval and conflict similarly. Lastly, future research should attempt to recruit larger and more equal numbers of participants across generational statuses within ethnic groups, as well as more equal proportions of men and women within generational and

ethnic groups, so that three-way interactions can be explored, something that was not possible in the current study.

Conclusion

The findings of the current study provide compelling evidence for examining intergroup relationships through a lens that includes culture. Intercultural romantic relationships were found to be common and evenly distributed across the ethnic groups and generational statuses in this sample that included members of ethnic minority and immigrant groups. Intercultural relationships are also important to examine within the family context. Approximately half of the young adults in this sample perceived that they and their parents had differing attitudes toward intercultural dating relationships, increasing the likelihood of family conflict to develop over such relationships. Attitude discrepancies and likelihood of conflict varied by ethnic and generational status groups, suggesting that some groups may be more vulnerable to family disapproval and conflict over intercultural dating relationships.

Future exploration of the family context in which parent–child intercultural attitudinal discrepancies exist may prove a fruitful venue for gaining additional insight into the factors leading to disapproval and the ways in which conflict over intergroup relationships is managed across ethnicity, generational status, and gender over time.

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Notes

1. Participants constituted 82% of the initial sample ($N = 766$), which included individuals who self-identified as being of Asian (50.3%), Latino (19.5%), European (14.6%), Middle Eastern (4.8%), Black/African American (1.3%), and mixed ethnicity (9%) background. The current study focused on the three largest ethnic groups in the sample, which represent three of the major ethnic groups in the state (U.S. Census, 2015).
2. Significant findings remained significant and nonsignificant findings remained nonsignificant when age was entered as a covariate.
3. Fifty-five percent of participants reported little to no discrepancy between their own and their parents' attitudes toward intercultural relationships (less than a 1-point difference), 29% reported a 1- to 2-point difference, 20.5% reported a 2- to 3-point difference, and 4% reported a 3- to 4-point difference.
4. When SES was entered as a covariate, the difference between participants of Asian background and Latino background remained significant and the difference between participants of Asian background and European background was marginal.
5. When SES was entered as a covariate, the generational effect was marginal.
6. This significant finding remained significant when SES was entered as a covariate.

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