

Views on interracial dating among Chinese and European Canadians: The roles of culture, gender, and mainstream cultural identity

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ABSTRACT

The present study examines cross-cultural and gender differences in the norms regarding interracial dating among Chinese and European Canadians. In response to a scenario describing an interracial dating conflict between a young adult and his/her parents, Chinese Canadians gave greater support to parents than did European Canadians, who in turn gave greater support to the young adult than did Chinese Canadians. With regard to self-report measures of views on interracial dating, Chinese Canadian males showed less favorable attitudes towards interracial dating than all other groups and showed less openness to interracial dating than did European Canadian males. Among Chinese Canadians only, endorsement of Canadian identity made a contribution above and beyond family allocentrism to the prediction of all measures assessing views on interracial dating.

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KEY WORDS: Chinese Canadians • culture • interracial dating relationships • mainstream cultural identity

A potential for cultural conflict exists between immigrants to the western world and their adolescent or adult children, particularly when these immigrants come from Asian countries such as China and South Asian countries such as India (see review by Kwak, 2003). First-generation immigrants have presumably developed their core cultural ideas, customs, and norms within the distinct political, legal, and educational systems of their heritage culture, as well as through its language, media, and caretaking practices (Fiske, Kitayama, Markus, & Nisbett, 1998). In contrast, second-generation immigrants, whose social systems and peers are predominantly western, access their heritage culture primarily through their families. As a result, these bicultural immigrants (Sung, 1985) have access to two potentially distinct sets of cultural values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors (Baumeister, Shapiro, & Tice, 1985). It is not surprising, therefore, to find that second generation immigrants experience culturally based intergenerational conflict and internal conflict (e.g., LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993; Tsai, Ying, & Lee, 2000).

Researchers have identified interpersonal relationships as a common locus for cultural conflict among second-generation immigrants and their families, along with education and career matters (e.g., Chung, 2001; Kwak & Berry, 2001; Sung, 1985). Dating, particularly dating a member of another culture, is rife with the potential for intergenerational and internal cultural conflict because it can be seen as jeopardizing heritage culture continuity. Mok (1999), for example, reports that one of the biggest obstacles facing young East Asian Americans who wish to pursue an interracial relationship is the objection of their parents. The current study explores some of the attitudinal dimensions of this type of cultural conflict. A hypothetical intergenerational conflict regarding interracial dating was used as a sounding board for comparing the views of Chinese and European Canadians.

The aim of the present study was to find out how second-generation immigrants' dating norms compare with those of their majority peers. While the norms of the children of immigrants with regard to dating are often assumed to differ from those of their majority peers, we know of no studies that have empirically established this difference. To correct for the paucity of research in this area, we compared second-generation Chinese Canadian immigrants' views on interracial dating to those of their European Canadian peers. We use the term "interracial" to refer to intimate relationships between individuals from different cultures. Although there is no evidence of clear biological distinctions between "racial" groups (e.g., Yee, Fairchild, Weizmann, & Wyatt, 1993), people still identify themselves and others by "race" and/or color. Moreover, prior research comparing groups of East Asian and of West European origin has typically employed the term "interracial" in describing the relationship between the members of these two groups (e.g., Mok, 1999; Sung, 1990).

Conflicting norms in bicultural individuals

Cultural conflict is probably not an omnipresent reality for bicultural individuals, because different cultural groups often share similar norms (Schwartz & Bardi, 2001). Moreover, since an individual's cultural identity is frequently context driven (Clément & Noels, 1992), only one culture of the bicultural individual is typically salient within any given context (e.g., home vs. school). A conflict between the two sets of a bicultural individual's cultural norms, therefore, is presumably more likely to occur when these norms are in opposition to one another and when both social identities are salient. These conditions are often jointly met in the realm of interpersonal relationships, particularly when the dating norms of the two cultures put differential emphasis on individual versus ingroup needs or goals. For example, Dion and Dion (1993) report that while marriage is closely associated in western cultures with romantic love, it is often construed in some East and South Asian cultures primarily as an alliance between two families. Individuals who have access to both of these discourses, such as South and East Asian immigrants in North America and their bicultural children, may therefore be expected to experience intergenerational and internal cultural conflict surrounding discrepancies between the two discourses.

Intergenerational conflict around issues of family and relationships

It should be noted that generational parent-child differences in views on dating are common regardless of cultural background. In their study of Norwegians, Pakistanis, and Vietnamese living in Norway and Swedes, Turks, and Vietnamese living in Sweden, Sam and Virta (2003) found significant value discrepancies between adolescents and their parents regarding children's rights (e.g., the right for the child to date whomever they want), with adolescents espousing more liberal views than their parents. Moreover, these generational value discrepancies were for the most part just as large for the immigrant groups as for the native groups. Phinney, Ong, and Madden (2000) similarly found intergenerational discrepancies in a measure of family obligations for immigrant (Armenian, Mexican, and Vietnamese) and nonimmigrant (European American and African American) samples, with children expressing less support for family obligations than their parents. However, even though generational differences in dating norms seem to characterize numerous cultures, these differences may assume a unique character among bicultural individuals, since their negotiation of different types of dating norms adds new cultural dimensions to the phenomenon of intergenerational norm conflict.

Bicultural individuals' negotiation of local and heritage cultural norms is notably shaped by their family relationships by virtue of the family's connection to the heritage culture. More specifically, to the extent that

parents are central socialization agents of cultural norms, the degree to which bicultural individuals esteem their parents' heritage cultural norms may affect how they reconcile these norms with local ones. This deference to parental views may be captured by the term *family allocentrism*, a form of collectivism denoting the extent to which individuals feel closely connected to their families and emphasize the needs and wishes of their families over their own. Lay et al. (1998) developed a measure of family allocentrism to assess individual differences in familial idiocentrism–allocentrism (e.g., “I respect my parents’ wishes even if they are not my own”). Applying Lay et al.’s measure to interpersonal relationships, Lalonde, Hynie, Pannu, and Tatla (2004) found that family allocentrism significantly predicted a preference for traditional attributes in a mate (e.g., chastity, family reputation) for young South Asian Canadians and mediated the relationship between cultural identity and preferred mate attributes. Hynie, Lalonde, and Lee (2006) similarly found a positive relationship between family allocentrism and a preference for traditional attributes in a mate for second-generation Chinese immigrants in North America. They also found that parental endorsement of these traditional attributes was significantly related to the child’s endorsement of the attributes and that family allocentrism partially mediated the relationship between parental and child views. The role of family allocentrism in predicting views on interracial relationships was further explored in the current study.

The relative importance of cultural identities

Heritage and mainstream cultural identities have been found to be relatively independent of each other in samples of Chinese Canadians (Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000) and Chinese Americans (Tsai et al., 2000) in their influence on the acculturation process. Ryder et al. (2000), for example, found that identification with the mainstream culture was a significant positive predictor of psychosocial adjustment for Chinese Canadians, while heritage culture identification was unrelated to adjustment. Moreover, Lalonde et al. (2004) found that preference for traditional attributes in a mate was positively related to South Asian Canadians’ heritage culture identity, but unrelated to their mainstream cultural identity. Heritage and local cultural norms and identities, therefore, may play different roles in the acculturation process, a phenomenon possibly attributable to the dominant salience of one cultural identity (heritage or local) over another within any particular situation.

Gender: Another cultural layer in the personal relationships of Asian immigrants

A growing body of literature has highlighted gender differences in the acculturation experiences of East and South Asian immigrants in western cultures

(e.g., Dion & Dion, 2004). One difference in particular concerns the endorsement of traditional family values. Tang and Dion (1999) and Rosenthal, Ranieri, and Klimidis (1996), for example, found that Chinese Canadian and Vietnamese Australian students, respectively, perceived greater traditionalism (e.g., familial collectivism, traditional gender roles) in their parents than in themselves, but that this discrepancy was larger for women than for men. These gender differences in traditionalism seem particularly pronounced in the realm of intimate relationships. For instance, Chung (2001) found that female Asian American students reported greater intergenerational conflict about issues of dating and marriage than did males. Moreover, Huang and Uba (1992) found that Chinese American women were more sexually experienced and more likely to be currently involved in a relationship than were Chinese American men of the same age. Given that sexual restraint and modesty are often viewed as characteristic to a degree of East Asian cultures (see Okazaki, 2002), greater sexual experience among bicultural female Chinese Americans may be seen as an indicator of low traditionalism. Suggested reasons for these findings of lower traditionalism among female East Asian immigrants include faster acculturation among females than males (Mok, 1999) and female immigrants' rebellion against social pressure to conform to heritage ideals of femininity (e.g., Dion & Dion, 2004).

Overview of the present study and hypotheses

The present study was designed to investigate whether Chinese Canadians would espouse different norms with regard to interracial dating than those held by their European Canadian peers. Norms in the context of this study were operationalized in terms of the perceived appropriateness of the behaviors of an adult child engaged in a conflict with his or her parents over interracial dating. Participants read about a conflict situation in which a male or female university-aged Chinese Canadian was dating a White Canadian despite strong parental objections. They then reported the extent to which they supported the positions of the young adult and the parents. Attitudes towards interracial dating were also assessed using measures of personal openness towards and general views on interracial dating.

The specific hypotheses tested in the present study were as follows:

- *Cultural hypothesis*: The norms of Chinese Canadians would be more traditional than the norms of their European Canadian peers regarding issues of interracial dating. This would be observed in both responses to the conflict scenario and in attitudes toward interracial dating.
- *Gender moderation hypothesis*: The hypothesized culture effect on views on interracial dating would be moderated by gender, such that Chinese Canadian men would be more traditional in their responses than would Chinese Canadian women.
- *Identity hypothesis*: Mainstream cultural identity (rather than heritage

identity) would drive the views of Chinese Canadians about interracial dating. The assumption is that while ingroup identification may drive preferences for endogamy (i.e., marrying or dating within one's heritage ethnic group), identification with the majority culture may drive greater openness to exogamy (dating or marrying outside one's ethnic group) and to dating norms prescribed in that culture. Stronger endorsement of Canadian identity was therefore expected to be associated with more favorable attitudes towards interracial dating. Furthermore, this association was still expected to hold after controlling for family allocentrism, which refers to the strength of ties with an important ingroup, family, which is likely to prefer endogamy.

Method

Participants

Sixty-one Chinese Canadian (31 men, 30 women) and 59 European Canadian (29 men, 30 women) students at a large multicultural university in Toronto participated in the study. They were recruited through poster advertising on campus (80.8%) or a psychology research participant pool in exchange for course credit (19.2%). The mean age of the sample was 22.2 ($SD = 2.94$). All European Canadians self-identified as White and all Chinese Canadians as Asian. Most European Canadians were born in Canada (79.7%). The percentage of Canadian-born Chinese was 39.3%; the rest were born in Hong Kong or China (44.3%), or another East-Asian country such as Vietnam (16.3%).¹ The mean age of arrival to Canada for those born elsewhere was 11.5 years for the European Canadians and 12.6 years for the Chinese Canadians. Fifty-one per cent of the European Canadians (13 men, 17 women) reported a current or past interracial dating relationship, in comparison to 28% of the Chinese Canadians (6 men, 11 women), $\chi^2(1) = 6.65, p = .01$.

Procedure and measures

After responding to a series of demographic questions, all participants read a scenario depicting a conflict between a young Chinese adult and his (or her) parents with regard to interracial dating. Following this scenario, participants completed scales measuring support for the young adult and his (her) parents, as well as a series of measures examining social identification, family allocentrism, and interracial dating attitudes.² All scale items were measured on 7-point (1: "strongly disagree" and 7: "strongly agree") Likert scales. Descriptive statistics for each of the following measures are presented in Table 1 for each cultural group. All participants completed the measures in English.

Conflict scenarios. A one-page scenario described a conflict between a Chinese Canadian university student, Ben or Christy, and his or her parents, who immigrated to Canada when Ben (Christy) was 3 years old. The conflict

TABLE 1
Descriptive statistics and scale characteristics by cultural group

Scale	Number of items	European Canadians (<i>n</i> = 59)			Chinese Canadians (<i>n</i> = 61)		
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α
Support for young adult	8	5.86	.71	.60	5.42	.71	.63
Support for parents	8	2.34	.83	.76	2.92	.91	.77
General attitudes towards interracial dating	9	6.62	.60	.88	6.05	1.04	.88
Personal openness to interracial dating	6	5.86	1.21	.93	5.31	1.48	.94
Canadian identity	12	5.60	.90	.87	5.10	.89	.82
Heritage culture identity	12	5.56	1.01	.90	5.54	.87	.83
Family allocentrism	21	4.07	.78	.85	4.35	.77	.85

concerned Ben's (Christy's) involvement with an opposite-sex Canadian of European descent, Joanne (Tim), despite his (her) parents' disapproval. Ben (Christy) was described as enjoying both the Canadian culture and his (her) heritage culture. The parents were described as having strong ties to the Chinese community in Toronto, thus hoping that their children would marry a person of Chinese descent. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two versions of the scenario (Ben dating Joanne or Christy dating Tim). The number of participants in each condition per cultural group and gender was balanced (*n* for each cell ranged from 14 to 16). Because there were no differences observed as a function of gender of the young adult as a main effect or in interaction with other variables, the analyses reported later were conducted using cultural group and gender of the participant as the independent variables.

Measures of support for the young adult and parents. After reading the story, participants completed two 8-item scales (along with filler items regarding the story), measuring support for Ben (Christy) and for his (her) parents. These items were developed for the present study and inspired by two factors measured in the Asian Values Scale (Kim, Atkinson, & Yang, 1999): Conformity to norms (e.g., conforming to family norms) and collectivism (e.g., considering the needs of others before one's own). The first set of 8 items involved actions that the child should take (e.g. "Ben should put his parents' wishes before his own when it comes to dating", reverse-coded), as well as evaluations of his (her) position (e.g. "Christy is being reasonable about her relationship with Tim"). The second set of 8 parallel items addressed the actions and position of the parents (e.g. "Christy's parents should put their daughter's wishes before their own when it comes to her dating choices"). The mean of each set of items provided an index of support for the young adult and for the parents.

Social identifications. Cameron's (2004) measure of social identity was used to measure the strength of both Canadian and heritage culture identifications. This 12-item scale is adaptable for the measurement of the strength of both identities (e.g. "In general, I'm glad to be Canadian" and "In general, I'm glad to be a member of my heritage culture"). Participants were asked to reiterate their ethnic identity before completing items relating to their heritage culture.

Family allocentrism. This 21-item measure (Lay et al., 1998) taps into relationships within the social context of family and reflects connectedness specific to family (e.g. "If a family member fails, I feel responsible"). The measure can be construed as assessing family identification, with higher scores indicating a stronger sense of connectedness to family.

Interracial dating items. Fifteen items were used to examine attitudes towards interracial dating between Chinese and European Canadian people. These items were previously used in a study on interracial dating between European Canadian and Black Canadians (Lalonde, Giguère, Fontaine, & Smith, 2007). They assess two distinct components: One taps general attitudes towards interracial dating (9 items, e.g., "It does not bother me if Chinese (White) people date White (Chinese) people") and the other assesses personal openness to interracial dating (6 items, e.g., "I would date a Chinese (White) person"). Items were adjusted such that the European Canadians were asked about dating Chinese, and the Chinese were asked about dating Whites. The 15 items were factor-analyzed using principal axis factoring. The screen plot called for a two-factor solution and the obliquely rotated solution indicated that all items designed to measure the general attitude towards interracial dating loaded on one factor, while items designed to measure personal openness to interracial dating loaded on the second factor.

Results

Descriptive statistics and group differences

As seen in Table 1, the reliabilities of study measures were within the acceptable range. Two cultural group differences that were not qualified by interactions with gender were observed. European Canadians scored higher on Canadian identity than did Chinese Canadians ($t(118) = 3.09$, $p = .003$), while Chinese Canadians scored higher than European Canadians on the family allocentrism measure, $t(117) = 1.97$, $p = .05$.

Support for the young adult and parents in the conflict scenario

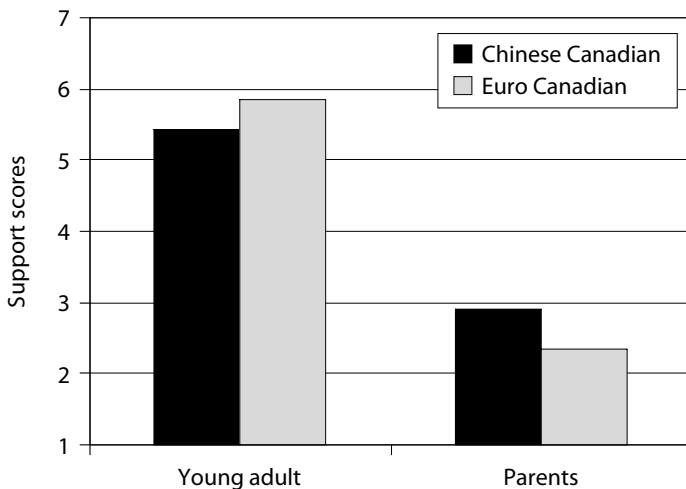
To test the *cultural and gender moderation hypotheses* that Chinese Canadians would have more traditional normative expectations regarding interracial dating than their European Canadians peers and that this cultural group difference would be moderated by gender, a Group (Chinese

Canadian vs. European Canadian) \times Gender (female vs. male) \times Target of Support (young adult vs. parents) mixed model ANOVA was conducted. There was a significant main effect of Target of Support ($F(1, 116) = 573.62, p = .001$) such that participants gave greater support to young adult ($M = 5.64$) than to parents, $M = 2.63$. This main effect was qualified by the predicted significant interaction with cultural group ($F(1, 116) = 16.46, p = .001$) which is presented in Figure 1. Simple main effects analyses revealed that Chinese Canadian participants ($M = 2.92$) scored significantly higher than did European Canadian participants ($M = 2.34$) on the parent support items ($p = .001$), whereas European Canadian participants ($M = 5.86$) scored significantly higher than Chinese Canadian participants ($M = 5.42$) on the young adult support items, $p = .001$. No other main effects or interactions were significant, and thus no support was found for the moderating role of gender in the degree of support for the parent or young adult involved in the generational conflict.

Interracial dating measures

To further test the *cultural and gender moderation hypotheses*, a Group \times Gender ANOVA was conducted for each interracial dating attitude measure. The general attitude towards interracial dating measure was associated with significant main effects for Group ($F(1, 116) = 15.55, p = .001$) and Gender ($F(1, 116) = 12.80, p = .001$), as well as a Group \times Gender interaction, $F(1, 116) = 8.34, p = .005$. The personal openness to interracial dating measure was associated with a significant Group effect ($F(1, 116) = 5.16, p = .025$), as well as a significant Group \times Gender interaction, $F(1, 116) = 5.33, p = .023$.

FIGURE 1
Mean scores of support for child and support for parents for each cultural group



The Group \times Gender interactions are presented in Figure 2, which shows that the responses of male Chinese Canadians appear to be driving the interaction effects. In their general attitudes toward interracial dating, Chinese Canadian females ($M = 6.52$) were very similar to European Canadian females ($M = 6.67$) and European Canadian males ($M = 6.26$). In their personal openness to interracial dating, Chinese Canadian females ($M = 5.48$) were again similar to European Canadian females ($M = 5.51$), both of whom were less personally open to interracial dating than were European Canadian males, $M = 6.19$. Chinese Canadian males, however, were less favorable than European Canadian males both in their general attitudes towards interracial dating ($M_s = 5.60$ and $6.58, p < .001$) and in their personal openness to interracial dating, $M_s = 5.08$ and $6.20, p = .002$. Chinese Canadian males also had significantly less favorable general attitudes towards interracial dating than did Chinese Canadian females ($p < .001$).

Individual difference effects of cultural variables

The third hypothesis of this study was that mainstream cultural identity, rather than heritage identity, would drive the views of Chinese Canadians with regard to interracial dating and that these relationships would be more pronounced for Chinese Canadians than for European Canadians. In order to provide a preliminary test of this hypothesis, correlations between the four indices of views on interracial dating and the three identity measures were computed. These correlations, which are reported in Table 2, appear to provide clear support for the third hypothesis. Heritage culture identity did not significantly correlate with any of the measures of interracial dating, while Canadian cultural identity was a significant correlate of all four measures, but only for Chinese Canadians. The more Chinese Canadians

FIGURE 2
Gender and culture differences in general attitudes towards and personal openness to interracial dating

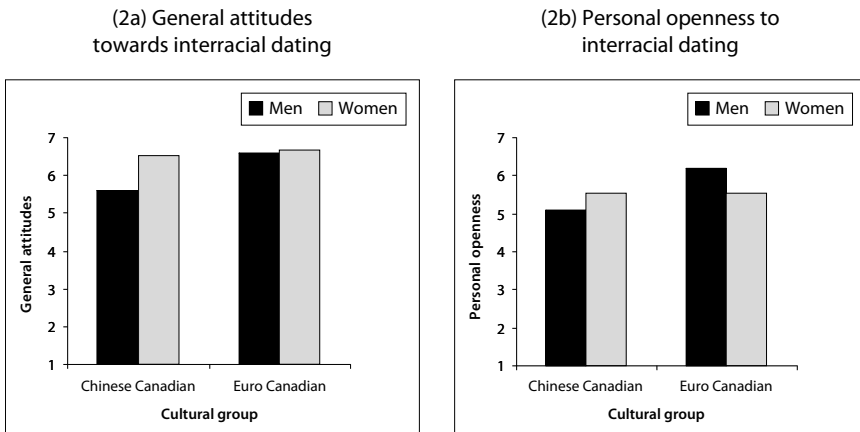


TABLE 2
Correlations between cultural identity variables and primary measures

		Cultural identity variables		
		Family allocentrism	Heritage identity	Canadian identity
Support for parents	Chinese Canadians	.37	.03	-.27
	European Canadians	.46	-.06	-.02
Support for child	Chinese Canadians	-.34	.13	.29
	European Canadians	-.33	.03	-.03
General attitude – interracial dating	Chinese Canadians	-.19	.13	.33
	European Canadians	-.04	-.05	.18
Personal openness – interracial dating	Chinese Canadians	-.26*	-.01	.44
	European Canadians	-.32*	-.15	.12

identified themselves as Canadian the less likely they were to support the parents in the conflict scenario, and the more likely they were to support the child, to have a positive attitude towards interracial dating, and to be open to interracial dating.

In order to more rigorously test the hypothesis that mainstream cultural identity would be a better predictor of the views of Chinese Canadians on interracial dating compared to heritage identity, one-tailed comparisons of correlation coefficients representing these associations were conducted (i.e., correlations in Columns 2 and 3 from Table 2 for Chinese Canadians) following the method proposed by Meng, Rosenthal, and Rubin (1992). All of these comparisons proved to be significant or marginally significant. Compared to Chinese identity, Canadian identity was a stronger predictor of the degree of support expressed for the parents ($z = -1.52, p = .06$) and the child ($z = 1.31, p = .09$) in the conflict scenario, as well as attitude toward interracial dating ($z = 1.35, p < .09$) and personal openness to interracial dating, $z = 2.50, p = .006$.

To further test the hypothesis that Canadian identity would be a better predictor of views on interracial dating for Chinese Canadians compared to European Canadians, these pairs of independent correlations (Column 3 of Table 2) were contrasted. Most of these comparisons proved to be significant or marginally significant. Compared to the European Canadians correlations, the correlations between Canadian identity and interracial views were stronger for the Chinese Canadians when examining support for the parents in the conflict scenario ($z = 1.36, p = .09$), support for the child in the conflict scenario ($z = 1.79, p = .04$) and personal openness to interracial dating, $z = 1.91, p = .03$. There was no significant difference between the correlations for the samples when it came to the general attitude towards interracial dating ($z = .86, ns$). It should be added that the only variable for which restriction of range may have posed a slight problem for the above tests was for the general attitude measure in the

European Canadian sample. The range for this variable was 2.67 and all scores fell above the mid-point of the scale. For all other measures and for both samples, the ranges were 3.38 and above with scores falling on both sides of the mid-point of the measures.

Table 2 also reveals family allocentrism as a significant correlate of participants' degree of support for the parents and the child, both for Chinese Canadians and European Canadians. Respondents who identified more strongly with their family were more supportive of the parents in the conflict scenario and the less supportive of the child. They were also less personally willing to engage in an interracial relationship. One aspect of the identity hypothesis was that mainstream cultural identity would still be predictive of views related to interracial dating after controlling for this predictive effect of family allocentrism. The hypothesis was tested using a series of hierarchical regressions with the four measures surrounding views regarding interracial dating as the criterion variables. These analyses were conducted only for the Chinese Canadians because mainstream cultural identity was not a significant predictor for European Canadians. The predictors were family allocentrism entered in Step 1, followed by Canadian identity entered in Step 2. A summary of these analyses can be found in Table 3. Clear evidence for the independent effects of Canadian identity was found for the Chinese Canadian sample. Canadian identity was still a significant predictor of interracial dating views after controlling for the predictive effects of family allocentrism, and this was found for all four variables.³

Additional analyses: The role of interracial dating experience

Exploratory analyses revealed that interracial dating experience (no, yes) had an effect on the support expressed for individuals in the conflict scenario. Significantly more support was given to the young adult and less support was given to parents by those who have been in an interracial relationship ($M_{\text{young adult}} = 5.95$, $SD = .60$; $M_{\text{parents}} = 2.43$, $SD = .77$) compared to those who have never been in an interracial dating relationship ($M_{\text{young adult}} = 5.43$, $SD = .75$; $M_{\text{parents}} = 2.77$, $SD = .98$), $t(118) = 4.02$, $p < .001$ and $t(118) = 2.02$, $p = .046$, respectively. These effects of interracial dating experience were independent of cultural group and gender.

Both interracial dating attitude measures were also influenced by participants' interracial dating experience, but *only* for Chinese Canadians. Group by Dating History ANOVAs revealed significant interaction effects for general attitude, $F(1,116) = 7.36$, $p = .008$, and for personal openness, $F(1, 116) = 15.34$, $p = .001$. Simple effects analyses indicated that interracial dating history made no difference for European Canadians. Chinese Canadians with interracial dating experience, however, reported significantly more positive general attitudes ($M = 6.56$) and higher levels of personal openness to interracial dating ($M = 6.46$) in comparison to those with no history ($M = 5.72$, $M = 4.75$, respectively). This effect was independent of gender. It is worth noting that Chinese Canadians with interracial dating experience reported significantly higher Canadian identity scores ($M = 5.46$) than those with no such experience ($M = 4.96$), $t(59) = 2.00$, $p = .05$.

TABLE 3
Regression outcomes for the effects of Canadian identity for Chinese Canadians when controlling for family allocentrism

Predictors	Support for parents			Support for young adult			General attitude			Personal openness		
	β	t	p	β	t	p	β	t	p	β	t	p
Step 1 Family allocentrism	.36	3.02	.004	-.34	-2.78	.007	-.20	-1.52	.13	-.24	-1.91	.061
	$F\Delta(1, 59) = 9.13, p = .004$			$F\Delta(1, 59) = 7.71, p = .007$			$F\Delta(1, 59) = 2.32, p = .13$			$F\Delta(1, 59) = 3.65, p = .061$		
Step 2 Canadian identity	-.27	-2.34	.023	.30	2.92	.005	.36	3.01	.004	.46	3.92	.001
	$F\Delta(1, 58) = 5.46, p = .023$			$F\Delta(1, 58) = 6.36, p = .014$			$F\Delta(1, 58) = 9.06, p = .004$			$F\Delta(1, 58) = 16.32, p = .001$		
Overall F	$R^2 = .20, F(2, 58) = 7.63, p = .001$			$R^2 = .20, F(2, 58) = 7.38, p = .001$			$R^2 = .14, F(2, 58) = 5.85, p = .005$			$R^2 = .26, F(2, 58) = 10.46, p = .001$		

Discussion

The present study examined cross-cultural differences in norms regarding interracial dating in a group of European Canadians and Chinese Canadians, testing three sets of hypotheses regarding the role of culture, gender, and mainstream cultural identity in views on interracial dating.

Cultural differences in views on interracial dating

The *cultural hypothesis* predicted stronger traditional normative expectations regarding interracial dating among Chinese Canadians than among European Canadians. This hypothesis was supported. Although both European and Chinese Canadians expressed greater support for the young adult than for the parents, Chinese Canadians were more supportive of parents than were European Canadians, who in turn were more supportive of the young adult than were the Chinese Canadians. The same pattern was observed with responses to self-report measures assessing personal openness to and general attitudes towards interracial dating; Chinese Canadians scored lower than European Canadians on both of these measures.

These findings suggest that although Chinese Canadians are similar to their European Canadian peers, they are more likely to support the stance of parents who expect their child to marry someone from their own ethnic group. The stronger support given to the young adult relative to the support given to parents among Chinese Canadians is consistent with previous research pointing to a discrepancy between the views of younger children and those of their parents (e.g., Kwak & Berry, 2001; Sam & Virta, 2003). Although we did not compare the views of Chinese Canadian children and their parents on interracial dating, our findings provide further suggestive evidence of generational discrepancies.

The moderating role of gender

It was hypothesized that cultural effects on views regarding interracial dating would be moderated by gender, such that Chinese Canadian men would be more traditional in their responses than Chinese Canadian women. The *gender moderation hypothesis* was supported by results from the two attitude measures on interracial dating, but not by responses to the scenario-based measures of support for the young adult and parents who were in conflict regarding interracial dating. Past research (e.g., Chung, 2001; Tang & Dion, 1999) has reported that compared to Chinese males, Chinese females in immigrant societies such as the US and Canada perceive greater conflict between themselves and their parents regarding dating and marriage. Based on these findings, we had hypothesized that Chinese Canadian females would be less supportive of parents in the conflict scenario than would Chinese Canadian males, but we found no support for this hypothesis. Although female children of Asian immigrants may experience greater conflicting views with their parents, they may not necessarily be less supportive of their parents' decisions and wishes as a result of being socialized to value parental authority and filial piety (see Kim et al., 1999).

As expected, Chinese Canadian males scored lower than all groups on general attitudes towards interracial dating and lower than European Canadian males on personal openness to interracial dating. Indeed, Chinese Canadian males appear to have been the source of the cultural differences observed in the two self-report measures of views on interracial dating. Chinese Canadian females did not differ from European Canadian females on either of the attitude measures and differed from European Canadian males only on personal openness towards interracial dating. These findings converge with previous literature suggesting weaker traditionalism both in general (e.g., Tang & Dion, 1999; Rosenthal et al., 1996) and in the realm of close relationships (e.g., Chung, 2001; Huang & Uba, 1992) among female children of Asian immigrants in comparison to their male counterparts. The more favorable views on interracial dating among Chinese Canadian females relative to Chinese Canadian males are also consistent with findings that Asian American females marry outside of their “racial” group at higher rates than do Asian American males (Fujino, 2000). Mok (1999) suggested that greater tolerance to interracial dating among daughters of Chinese immigrants may be due to faster acculturation of this group compared to their male counterparts. Several researchers have claimed that the faster acculturation rate observed among immigrant women compared to immigrant men could be due to minority women posing a smaller threat, relative to minority men, to the majority society by virtue of their gender-driven lower earning capacities (e.g., Sue & Morishima, 1982). Another reason suggested by Dion and Dion (2004) is that the high levels of stress that immigrant women experience in negotiating their simultaneous familial responsibilities (e.g., Lee & Cochran, 1988) might alienate them from their own ethnic groups and draw them to the norms and values of the mainstream culture – especially if the mainstream culture allows greater freedom to women. A final reason for higher favorability towards interracial dating found among Chinese Canadian women than men may be the high pressure on Asian American males rather than females to marry within their own ethnic group and carry on the family name, which may contribute to their lower openness to dating interracially.

Contribution of mainstream cultural identity to views on interracial dating

The *identity hypothesis* predicted that Canadian identity, rather than heritage identity, would drive the views of Chinese Canadians with regard to interracial dating, and that this association would still hold after controlling for family allocentrism. Among Chinese Canadians, Canadian identity, but not heritage identity, contributed above and beyond the influence of family allocentrism in predicting our various measures on views regarding interracial dating. Higher endorsement of mainstream cultural identity by Chinese Canadians was associated with greater support for the young adult and weaker support for parents in the conflict scenario, coupled with more favorable attitudes towards and greater personal openness to interracial dating. This finding replicates previous research findings that

provide evidence for the different roles played by the mainstream and heritage culture identities in the acculturation process (Lalonde et al., 2004; Remennick, 2005; Ryder et al., 2000). This finding is also in line with Mok's (1999) finding that among Asian American students, higher acculturation to an American/western way of living is associated with greater likelihood of dating White Americans. Our contention is that mainstream (i.e., Canadian) cultural identity, rather than heritage culture identity, plays a contributing role in interracial dating attitudes because from a Chinese Canadian perspective, such views are more outgroup focused than ingroup focused. The same argument applies to why Canadian identity predicted positive attitudes towards interracial dating above and beyond family allocentrism; the latter is ingroup focused compared to the former which is outgroup focused. Identification with the mainstream culture facilitates interpersonal openness to members of that culture. A stronger Canadian identity, moreover, has been specifically associated with greater acceptance and encouragement of ethnic diversity (Lalonde, 2002).

The lack of association between the endorsement of heritage identity and less favorable views on interracial dating among Chinese Canadians is somewhat inconsistent with previous findings by Mok (1999), who found a negative correlation between ethnic identification and the likelihood of dating a White American. This disparity may be due in part to the fact that participants in the current study were measured on their general attitude towards and personal openness to date a European Canadian, whereas Mok studied rates of interracial dating among her participants. The comparison of interracial daters to nondaters among Chinese Canadians in the current study revealed that interracial daters had a stronger Canadian identification than nondaters, thus indicating once again a more powerful role for mainstream identification. These findings, when interpreted from the perspective of acculturation literature (e.g., Berry, 1980), suggest that an assimilationist rather than an integrationist attitude – as evidenced by the lack of contribution of the interaction term between heritage and Canadian identities – contributes to having positive views about interracial dating.

In addition to the importance of Canadian identification in interracial dating views for Chinese Canadians, it was found that family allocentrism was significantly related to these views, for both Chinese Canadians and European Canadians. Although Lay et al. (1998) construed family allocentrism as the expression of collectivism at the family level, it can also be viewed as a form of identification with the family. Viewed this way, it is possible to see why family allocentrism was positively associated in both samples with support of the parents in the conflict scenario and negatively associated with support for the child and personal openness to interracial dating. Given that parental views are likely to be in line with endogamy in the service of cultural continuity, it follows that identification with the family will lead to less open interracial dating views. In short, family allocentric individuals are more likely to take into account what their parents would expect of them, regardless of culture. In terms of cultural differences, however, it should be added that Chinese Canadians did score higher than

European Canadians on the measure of family allocentrism, thereby replicating the results of cross-cultural research conducted internationally (Li, 2002) and within Canada (Lay et al., 1998).

Interracial dating history

Our findings showed that having experienced a previous interracial dating relationship made a difference in the level of support given to young adult and parents in the conflict scenario, as well as in the self-report measures of views on interracial dating. This experience was associated with greater support for the young adult and reduced support for the parents, thereby suggesting that interracial dating experience may have led to sympathetic or possibly empathic responses to the young adult in the scenario. With regard to personal openness to and general attitude towards interracial dating, the effect of dating history depended on cultural background. For Chinese Canadians, interracial dating history was associated with greater personal openness to and more favorable general attitude towards interracial dating. For European Canadians, interracial dating history did not make a difference in their views on interracial dating. This differential effect of interracial dating history on the two cultural groups may suggest that having dated someone of a different racial background may help immigrants get introduced into the norms of the mainstream culture, in this case the Canadian culture that encourages ethnic diversity. These findings also suggest that in a sample with a greater number of Chinese Canadians who have an interracial dating history, observed differences between Chinese Canadians and European Canadians with regard to attitudes towards interracial dating would be expected to decrease.

Limitations and future directions

In the present study we examined interracial, rather than interethnic, dating relationships. It is important to ask whether similar patterns of findings might be observed if we had narrowed our focus on interethnic dating (for example, dating among different groups of Asian descent). Future research is also needed to examine the generational differences in views on interracial dating between children and parents in immigrant groups, given that interracial relationships in multicultural countries such as Canada are increasing in frequency (Milan & Hamm, 2004). It would also be of interest to see the responses of European Canadians and Chinese Canadians to a conflict that was centered within a European Canadian family where a son or daughter was dating interracially. A bigger sample size would allow more refined analyses and the investigation of a bigger set of variables in relation to attitudes towards interracial dating.

In addition to focusing on a certain kind of dating relationship, we chose to investigate the explanatory power or moderating role of a subset of variables that can potentially shape views related to interracial dating among a minority and a majority ethnic group. Future research is needed to examine the role of other social-psychological variables such as acculturation orientation, fluency in the mainstream culture language, stereotypes

about men and women from different ethnic backgrounds, and self- and other-perceptions concerning the physical appearance of different ethnic/racial groups.

Conclusion

The present study fills an important gap in the literature by examining how the norms of the children of immigrants compare to those of their majority peers in the domain of interracial dating. A scenario approach was used to the study of attitudes towards interracial dating which is recommended as a useful method in the study of interpersonal conflicts (e.g., Suzuki & Greenfield, 2002). The findings first showed that bicultural Chinese Canadians, although being similar to their European Canadian peers, were still influenced by traditional views of their heritage culture on interracial dating, as evidenced by their weaker support of the interracially dating young adult and greater support of disapproving parents, compared to European Canadians. Second, Chinese Canadian males, compared to their female peers, were more traditional in their views on interracial dating. Third, family allocentrism was a significant predictor of views on interracial dating for both European and Chinese Canadians, although endorsement of mainstream cultural identity contributed to views on interracial dating above and beyond family allocentrism among the Chinese Canadians respondents. These findings contribute to the literature on personal relationship in general and to the growing literature on cultural variation in views on interracial dating in particular. In a world that increasingly brings individuals from different racial backgrounds into contact with one another, learning how people view interracial intimate relationships has important implications for understanding larger societal normative processes and can be used as an indicator of relations among differing racial groups.

NOTES

1. This demographic split for Chinese Canadians permitted us to examine differences in the views on interracial dating between first- and second-generation (or greater) immigrants (i.e., those born outside and inside Canada, respectively). Previous studies (e.g., Tang & Dion, 1999) have shown that this can be an important factor in predicting attitudes surrounding interpersonal relationships. Chinese Canadians who were born in Canada reported lower support to parents ($M = 2.60, SD = .98$) and tended to be more personally open to interracial dating ($M = 5.70, SD = 1.42$) than Chinese Canadians who were born in Asia ($M = 3.11, SD = .82, t(59) = -2.17, p = .03, (M = 4.95, SD = 1.36), t(59) = 2.04, p = .045$, respectively. Second-generation Chinese Canadians also endorsed a stronger Canadian identity ($M = 5.70, SD = .68$) than first-generation respondents ($M = 4.76, SD = .83, t(59) = 4.39, p < .001$). These two groups did not differ, however, in levels of heritage culture identity, $t < 1$. These results suggest that as Chinese Canadians spend more time in the receiving society, they are more likely to be open to the norms of that society and less traditional with regard to interracial dating, while maintaining stable levels of identification with their heritage culture.

2. A measure of Social Dominance Orientation (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994) was also included, but it is not central to the study. The only finding of note is that higher social dominance orientation scores for the European Canadians was associated with a less favorable attitude towards interracial dating ($r = -.29, p = .028$), while no relationships was found for Chinese Canadians ($r = -.09$). These results support the ideological asymmetry hypothesis that has been found in previous research focusing on interracial relationships (Fang, Sidanius, & Pratto, 1998).
3. We also considered the possibility that an interaction between heritage identity and Canadian identity might contribute to the explanation of views related to interracial dating among Chinese Canadians. We specifically asked whether being high on both kinds of identities would make a difference in views towards interracial dating in this group. We ran regression analyses for all four criterion variables where we entered the two centered identity variables in Step 1, followed by the interaction term between these two predictor variables in Step 2. In all of the analyses the interaction term failed to contribute significantly to the explanation of the variance. These findings further suggest that it is the endorsement of the mainstream identity that predicts views on interracial dating, rather than the endorsement of both heritage and Canadian identities.

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