The Social Construction of

Adolescents' Representations of Romantic Relationships

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Most of us would consider our romantic relationships to be an integral, even essential, facet or our lives and identities. Like those with parents and close friends, relationships with romantic partners are among the most important and enduring bonds we develop in our lives.   Comfortable in the seeming maturity and sophistication of our hard-earned wisdom about these relationships, we may fail to remember the awkwardness of those early years, when much time was spent trying out unfamiliar, yet seemingly expected behaviors, experimenting with new ways of interacting, and endlessly thinking or talking about our boyfriends or girlfriends. However, a retrospective look at our romantic lives - from first date to first love to long-term commitment - should quickly remind us of the many changes that have unfolded in our romantic lives.

Early sorties, although important, were likely superficial and awkward, often because we lacked the skills and sophistication afforded by experience. Over time, not only did we gain increased skill and confidence, but we developed patterned sets of thoughts, beliefs, expectations, and feelings about ourselves and romantic partners in these relationships. For example, we formed expectations about whether to seek comfort and guidance from partners, what kind of care we should provide, the meaning or function of sexual intimacy, the nature of building a relationship, and so on.

These patterns of expectations, thoughts, beliefs, and feelings about romantic relationships have been conceptualized by attachment researchers as internal working models. According to attachment theory, individuals form internal working models of attachment relationships with parents and long-term romantic partners over the course of repeated interactions with particular

attachment figures. Such representations, which vary among individuals include sets of rules for the organization and accessibility of information relevant to attachment and serve as a basis for predicting and interpreting others' behavior as well as for guiding one's own attachment behavior (Main et. al., 1985).

The development of working models of parent-child attachment has received much theoretical and empirical attention (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Bowlby, 1969; Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985; Sroufe, 1988; Sroufe & Collins, in press). In contrast, the developmental origins of romantic representations have only recently become a topic of scientific inquiry. That is, we have much to learn about adolescents' romantic experiences as well as their implications for both adolescent functioning and the development of adult romantic attachment. Little is known, for example, about how individuals come to represent their romantic relationships, which begin to emerge during adolescence.

In this chapter, we address the development of romantic relationship representations by examining factors that should be influential during adolescence, the period during which these representations begin to be articulated. Parent-child relationships, for instance, should certainly play an important role. However, other types of intimate relationships, such as those with close friends and romantic partners, would also be expected to shape how individuals come to view and behave in their romantic relationships. Additionally, relationships within the broader family context, such as parents' marriage, as well as norms and expectations emanating from the larger socio-cultural context should also be important.

We open this chapter with our behavioral systems conceptualization of romantic views, which emanates from attachment theory, but is somewhat broader in scope. In particular, we

propose that adolescents have representations of their romantic relationships, which reflect the functioning of the features that are salient in these relationships – i.e., affiliation, sexuality, and, in some instances, attachment and caregiving. We refer to these representations as relational views rather views of attachment per se as we think these representations entail more than representations of attachment processes (Furman & Simon, in press; Furman & Wehner, 1994). For similar reasons, we use the terms models of relationships and relational styles (vs. working models of attachment and attachment style).

This conceptualization of relationship representations underscores an implicit theme of this chapter: emerging relationships build upon but do not necessarily duplicate prior experiences in close relationships. In the case of adolescents' developing romantic representations, previous relationship experiences with parents and peers, ongoing experiences with romantic partners, models of others' romantic relationships (e.g., parents' marriage), and cultural expectations will each make a significant and unique contribution. The remainder of the chapter is devoted to examining how such factors might shape adolescents' developing romantic representations, within the context of adolescent development. Most of the general points presented here are expected to be applicable to adolescents of all sexual orientations, but some important differences are discussed in the text.

A Hierarchical Model of Relational Views

In our conceptualization, individuals' form representations of various types of close relationships (e.g., parents, friends, and romantic partners) as well as for particular relationships. We call such representations relational views rather than views of attachment because they reflect functioning of all of the behavioral systems salient in a given relationship at a given point in

development (see Furman & Wehner, 1994, 1998). For example, representations of the attachment system should be central to views of parent-child relationships, at least until early adulthood, whereas representations of affiliation and mutual caregiving would be featured in views of friendship (Furman, in press). Adult romantic views ultimately involve the integration of representations of attachment, affiliation, mutual caregiving, and sexuality (Furman & Simon, in press; Furman & Wehner, 1994). Yet during adolescence, representations of affiliation and sexuality should be more central to romantic views.

Our concept of relational views stems from attachment theory (Bowlby, 1973; Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985), but is intended to be more general in application. Just as individuals have sets of rules for the organization and accessibility of information relevant to attachment (Main et al., 1985), they also have sets of rules and expectations for other relational experiences. Thus relational views are representations of relationships, and not just the attachment processes in these relationships. Within the concept of views, we distinguish between working models—internal, partially unconscious representations—and relational styles—overt, conscious representations (Furman & Wehner, 1994). Most of our ideas in this paper are applicable to both models and styles, and thus we usually discuss views in general; when the point is particularly relevant to one, we use the particular term.

We believe individual differences in relational views can be captured by the same categorical system utilized by attachment researchers - secure, anxious-avoidant (dismissing), anxious-ambivalent (preoccupied), and disorganized/unresolved. However, in our conceptualization, these categories capture differences not only in representations of attachment but in representations of the various behavioral systems operating in a given relationship.

Support for this position can be found in the adult attachment literature, where researchers have documented differences among romantic attachment styles in attachment, caretaking, sexuality, and affiliation. Studies of <u>attachment</u> behavior suggest that individuals with secure romantic attachment styles cope with stress by seeking social support (Mikulincer, Florain, & Weller, 1993), whereas those with avoidant styles withdraw from their partners when stressed (Simpson, Rholes, & Nelligan, 1992). Those with anxious-ambivalent styles are preoccupied with their partners' responsiveness (Collins & Read, 1990; Feeny & Noller, 1990). With respect to <u>caregiving</u>, securely attached men display more emotional support, reassurance, and concern for their partner's well-being than avoidant men, who show an opposite pattern (Simpson, Rholes, & Nelligan 1992). Anxious-ambivalents report over-involvement and insensitive caretaking (Kunce & Shaver 1994). In terms of <u>sexuality</u>, avoidant individuals are prone to engaging in uncommitted sexual relations (Simpson & Gangstead, 1991). As to <u>affiliation</u>, those with secure styles tend to have romantic relationships characterized by trust, friendship, enjoyment, mutuality, self-disclosure, and compromise (Collins & Reed, 1990; Feeney & Noller, 1991; Keelan, Dion, & Dion, 1994). Avoidant individuals are relatively uninvested, distant, and non-disclosing in romantic relationships (Shaver & Brennan, 1992; Tidwell, Reis, & Shaver, 1996; Mikulincer & Nachshon, 1991), whereas preoccupied individuals tend to be over-controlling, overly-disclosing, and self-focused (Kunce & Shaver, 1994). Taken together, these findings suggest that individual differences in cognitive representations incorporate the multiple behavioral systems operating in romantic relationships.

Thus far we have argued that individuals possess relational views for different close relationships, and that each view reflects the functioning of the behavioral systems featured in that relationship. We also believe that these relationship views are <u>hierarchically organized</u> (see Furman

& Simon, in press). As shown in Figure 1, individuals have views of particular relationships, types

of relationships, and close relationships in general. These different layers of the hierarchy are seen

as interdependent. That is, general views of close relationships, while based on an integration of

representations and experiences in different relationships, also influence views of particular

relationships. Views of particular relationships types (e.g., parent-child, friend, and romantic

relationships) also affect each other. Finally, specific relationship views (e.g., my friendship with

Sarah) both influence and are influenced by views of that type of relationship.

Insert Figure 1 Here

One implication of this multi-layered organization is that views of different relationships are

often, but not necessarily, concordant. This point is particularly relevant to the present chapter, in

which we posit that adolescents' romantic relationship views are influenced by a variety of factors,

thereby allowing for lawful continuities and discontinuities across different relational views. With

respect to continuity, an adolescent with a secure attachment history to a primary caretaker may be

more likely to approach romantic relationships expecting closeness and intimacy, and thus engage

in affiliative, caretaking, sexual, and attachment behaviors that promote closeness and intimacy,

which in turn shape romantic views. An adolescent with a dismissing view of parent-child

attachment may not expect romantic partners to be responsive and available and thus, might behave

in a manner that results in some distance in romantic relationships. An adolescent with a

preoccupied view of parent-child relationships may be disappointed and frustrated with the degree

of intimacy obtained and may approach romantic relationships expecting similar experiences.

The idea that the quality of earlier parent-child relationships impacts later close relationships is certainly not new. Early attachment relationships have been linked to friendships in childhood and adolescence (see Collins & Sroufe, in press), and representations of parent-child relationships have been linked to views of romantic relationships among college students (Furman & Wehner, 1997). However, in our hierarchical organization, other types of relationships should influence romantic views, creating the opportunity for discontinuity between parent-child and romantic relationships. Experiences in and views of friendship, for example, should affect views about close relationships in general, particularly with regard to expectations about reciprocity, mutuality, and other affiliation-related features. Views of friendships and close relationships in general should also influence views of romantic relationships. These points highlight the multi-determined nature of romantic views, a theme of this chapter, and the potential for lawful concordance and discordance among different relational views.

In sum, this organization of views allows for any type of relational view to be influenced by experiences and views of other relationships, both directly and indirectly via general views of close relationships. With this framework in mind, we now examine in greater detail the unique impact that adolescents' relationships with parents and peers exert on their romantic experiences and views.

Parent-Child Relationships

Parent-child relationships and the corresponding views of them would be expected to exert significant influence on the development of romantic relationship views. According to attachment theory, such continuity would stem from similarity in functions served by parent-child and romantic relationships (Shaver & Hazan, 1988) as well as from the persistence of attachment representations

throughout the lifespan (Bowlby, 1973). As to similarities, both parent-child and romantic

relationships can be conceptualized as attachment relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Shaver &

Hazan, 1988). For example, each relationship provides a secure base from which to approach the

world and a safe haven during times of distress. Children and adults also seek proximity to their

respective relationship partner and display protest or distress when separated from them. Finally,

the loss of either a parent or romantic partner is grieved.

Although we lack direct evidence of links between childhood attachment and later romantic

attachment, researchers have examined associations between adults' representations of parents and

romantic partners. Consistent with theoretical predictions of persistence in childhood attachment

representations (Bowlby, 1973), secure-insecure classifications for working models of each

relationship were significantly related in a sample of college students (Treboux, Crowell, Owens, &

Pan, 1994). In a similar interview-based study with engaged couples, men's attachment

classification with parents and romantic partners were significantly related whereas females'

classifications tended to be (Owens, 1994; Owens, Crowell, Treboux, O'Connor & Pan, 1995).

Moreover, men's ratings of parental love and rejection experienced during childhood were related

to ratings of love and rejection from current romantic partners. Interestingly, the weaker ties for

women may hypothesized to be partially due to their greater likelihood of having experienced

intimate friendships, relationships which may have influenced their views of romantic relationships.

How then do parent-child relationships influence the development of adolescents' romantic

views? After all, most adolescent romantic relationships are not yet attachments - at least not full-

blown ones. Nevertheless, we expect parent-child relationships to have some influence on

adolescents' romantic views via their impact on adolescents' general views of close relationships.

Such views contain generalized expectations about the self and others with respect to intimacy and closeness, expectations which guide encounters in close relationships and interpretations of relational experiences (see Collins, Hennighausen, Schmit, & Sroufe, 1998; Collins & Sroufe, in press for a similar conceptualization).

In short, experiences in parent-child relationships will affect general views of close relationships, which, in turn, influence views of romantic relationships. During adolescence, when the romantic arena is new, these general views may provide a template for guiding one's own expectations and behavior with romantic partners as they are enacted in the new ways and in unfamiliar contexts. Similarly, general views may also provide a template for making sense of partners' behavior in these same unfamiliar domains, which, as previously noted, are unlikely to involve the attachment system during adolescence.

Understanding the influence of parent-child relationships on the development of romantic views thus appears to involve more than the continuity of attachment representations. This observation is underscored by the fact that most adolescent romances are not attachment relationships. Although some features of an attachment relationship, such as safe haven or proximity-seeking, may be present, other features, such as separation protest and secure base phenomena are not characteristic of most adolescent relationships (Hazan & Zeifman, 1994). Typically, parents continue to serve as primary attachment and caregiving figures until at least late adolescence. Romantic partners are not expected to serve as principal attachment figures or primary recipients of care until long-term relationships are developed (Furman & Wehner, 1994, 1997).

Instead, sexual and affiliative processes are likely to be most central for adolescents (Furman & Wehner, 1994). Sexuality is common to most, if not all, romantic relationships, as the emergence figures importantly in the developmental shift from intimate friendship to intimate romance. Affiliative processes are also central to adolescent romantic relationships (Furman, in press). In fact, fifteen-year-olds describe the companionship and intimacy provided by dating partners as key benefits of romantic relationships (Feiring, 1996). Spending time participating in shared activities or simply "hanging out" is commonplace.

In summary, we maintain that parent-child relationships will exert a significant influence on the development of adolescents' romantic views, despite the dissimilarities in the behavioral systems that are salient in relationships with parents and romantic partners. The most likely mode of influence, at least during adolescence, may be through the general expectations of intimacy and closeness that children develop in earlier experiences with parents, expectations which may be subsequently expressed in predictable ways in adolescents' romantic relationships via the affiliative and sexual behavioral systems. Later, when romantic partners become attachment figures and recipients of caregiving, expectations of closeness and intimacy are enacted in terms of caretaking and attachment as well.

Peer Relationships

In addition to parent-child relationships, the peer context is also expected to influence the development of romantic views. More specifically, experiences with peers, as well as views of close friendships, may play an important role in the development of romantic relationships and their associated cognitive representations.

The peer context serves several important functions for romantic development. Perhaps most significantly, it is an important setting for the initiation of romantic relationships. Dunphy's (1963) findings support a developmental model for the emergence of romantic relationships in which interactions between members of male and female cliques eventually lead to the "pairing off" of heterosexual couples. More recent evidence demonstrates that an individual's status in the peer network and the ways particular romantic partners may affect that status are also important factors that influence adolescent dating choices and behavior (Brown, in press). For instance, an adolescent may be strongly inclined to pick dating partners who are "approved of" by his/her peers, and who will likely increase the individual's social status within the peer group. Potential dating partners who do not "make the cut" in terms of peer approval are less likely to be selected.

The gender make-up of adolescents' peer groups may also affect the nature of developing romantic relationships. More specifically, friendships with members of the opposite sex may be important for heterosexual romantic relationships both because they may develop from these friendships, and because individuals may meet eligible romantic partners who are acquaintances of opposite sex friends. As preliminary evidence supporting such an association, Connolly and her colleagues have reported that adolescents who are involved in romantic relationships also have more opposite-sex friends than adolescents who do not have romantic partners (Connolly, Furman, & Konarski, under review; Connolly & Johnson, 1996).

For sexual minority youth, passionate same-sex friendships—intense yet non-sexual relationships—may assist in the determination of sexual identity (Diamond, Savin-Williams, & Dube, in press). Such relationships may fulfill needs traditionally met by romantic relationships without involving undesired sexual behavior with the other sex. As few sexual minority youth have

the opportunity to be part of a group of adolescents with the same sexual orientation, experiences in passionate same-sex friendships may play an important role in the emergence of subsequent gay or lesbian romantic relationships.

In addition to the importance of the peer context in initiating romantic relationships, as well as the gender composition of peer groups, peer relationships share overt features with romantic relationships. In particular, friendships and romantic relationships both involve affiliative characteristics such as mutual co-construction of the relationship, companionship, and intimacy (Furman, in press; Furman & Wehner, 1994). As individuals continue to engage in affiliative processes within their close friendships, they generalize these skills to other relationships, such as those with romantic partners (Sullivan, 1953). Moreover, differences in one's affiliative competencies are predictive of one's attractiveness as a romantic partner, as well as the security of one's romantic relationship (Feeney & Noller, 1991; Graziano, Jensen-Campbell, Todd, & Finch, in press). Affiliative features may be particularly salient in adolescence, as romantic partners are not usually expected to serve as primary attachment figures until late adolescence or adulthood (Furman & Wehner, 1994, 1997). Thus, during adolescence, the parallels between friendships and romantic relationships, each of which feature affiliative processes, are greater than those between relationships with parents and romantic partners.

Friendships and peer relations also operate within a system of egalitarian interactions, in which individuals possess relatively equal power regarding communication and decisions in the relationship. These interactions are quite different from parent-child relationships, but are similar to the dyadic processes that occur with romantic partners. Learning how to negotiate relationships in which partners are on relatively equal footing, as occurs in friendships, is a skill that will be useful

in subsequent egalitarian relationships, such as romantic partnerships. Although it is certainly not the case that all romantic relationships demonstrate an equal distribution of power between partners, romantic relationships are far more similar to friendships in this domain than to parent-child relationships, which by nature exhibit an imbalance in authority (Youniss & Smollar, 1985).

Just as the overt affiliative and egalitarian skills learned in peer relationships carry over to romantic relationships, views of close friendships may provide a similar influence in the development of romantic views (Furman, in press). Accordingly, individuals' views of friendships are likely to be highly influential in the formation of romantic views. In fact, during adolescence, views of friendships and romantic relationships demonstrate greater correspondence than do views of parent-child and romantic relationships. For instance, adolescents' perceptions of support from friends and romantic partners are quite similar, while perceived support in each of these relationships is different from perceived support from parents (Furman, 1997).

Moreover, links between perceptions of support and negativity in friendships and romantic relationships have also been demonstrated longitudinally. Connolly et al. (1997) found that social support and negative interactions in adolescent close friendships predicted similar quality in romantic relationships one year later. However, characteristics of romantic relationships did not predict subsequent friendship quality. These findings suggest that close friendships provide a basis of intimacy and expectations for egalitarian relationship quality that are carried forward to romantic relationships. In addition, high school students' relational styles with friends (i.e., secure, dismissing, or preoccupied) are consistently related to styles with romantic partners, but less related to styles for relationships with parents (Furman & Wehner, 1994).

The preceding findings suggest that cognitive representations of friendships and romantic relationships are connected. However, further research is needed to clarify the specific nature of these relations, as most studies have focused on conscious relational styles or self-reported relationship quality. Similar findings regarding <u>unconscious</u> internal processes would further strengthen the argument for similarities in representations between friendships and romantic relationships. Some limited work has been done in this area. For instance, results from a Q-sort study assessing representations of different relationships found that both security and deactivation in friendships were related to the same constructs in romantic relationships (Furman, in press).

To summarize, adolescents' peer relationships are important to romantic development in several ways.   Not only do they provide a context for establishing romantic relationships, but many of the relational skills learned in close friendships are critical to the development of romantic relationships. In addition, adolescents' views of friendships also influence the development of romantic views. Although adolescents' interactions with peers and friends play an important role in the development of romantic relationship representations, their experiences with <u>particular</u> romantic partners are also influential. We turn to this topic next.

<u>Experiences in Romantic Relationships During Adolescence</u>

Adolescents' actual experiences with romantic partners should also be formative in the development of romantic views (Furman & Wehner, 1994). After all, attachment theorists have emphasized the role of repeated interaction patterns in the development of representations. Certainly, adolescents enter these new relationships with expectations that influence the subsequent nature of that relationship; when their experiences are congruent with these expectations, their views are reinforced and strengthened. However, if one's experiences in a new romantic

relationship differ quite dramatically from initial expectations, and the individual remains in the relationship, the individual's views regarding romantic relationships might change. In support of this idea, some avoidant individuals become secure when they establish a new relationship with a secure partner, and some secure individuals develop insecure styles after a difficult break-up (Kirkpatrick & Hazan, 1994).

Just as one's romantic experiences may lead to alterations in romantic views, the exploratory nature of adolescents' romantic experiences may increase their chances of developing romantic views that are discordant with views of other relationships. In other words, the experimentation and exploration that may characterize adolescents' romance, may augment their chances of having experiences that conflict with existing views.

First consider the nature of adolescents' romantic experiences. Especially early on, these relationships commonly serve functions other than attachment, caretaking, affiliation or sex, such as status grading and status achievement (Brown, in press; Skipper & Nass, 1966). In addition, the romantic arena is new to adolescents, and exploring the various facets of romantic life may be a normative developmental phenomena, as adolescents strive to develop their identities as romantic partners. Their exploration of "possible selves" (Markus & Nurius, 1986) may encourage role experimentation in dating relationships, which may manifest as experimentation with different types of romantic partners or with different ways of behaving in a relationship (Furman & Simon, in press).

Just as romantic relationships are new to adolescents, so are their corresponding views. Although adolescents enter into romantic relationships with existing expectations, their romantic views are less articulated than those of adults, who have acquired the first-hand experience

necessary to clarify their specific belief systems. The less-developed status of adolescents' views may render them especially open to new information as they experiment with a variety of partners and new ways of relating to them. Greater variety in romantic experiences may, in turn, increase opportunities to disconfirm existing views. That is, in the course of experimentation and exploration, adolescents may be more likely to find themselves in relationships providing experiences that challenge their existing expectations.   Accordingly, different patterns of relational behavior may be needed, and accommodating these experiences with existing views may sometimes result in the development of belief systems that are different from those held about other types of relationships.

Although adolescence may provide a greater window for discontinuity between views of romantic and other relationships, the longevity of the discordance remains an open question. On the one hand, developing an incongruous romantic view may lead to other relationship experiences which confirm and thereby strengthen this view. However, it is also possible that experiences that challenge one's romantic view may also challenge the longevity of the relationship itself. That is, in the course of navigating a more intimate relationship, the complementarity of partners' relational views may become increasingly important to maintaining the relationship. Non-complementary expectations concerning conflict, communication, and other dimensions of romantic intimacy may decrease the likelihood of establishing a longer-term, more committed relationship. Over time these shorter, less intimate relationships may ultimately exert less influence on romantic views than lengthier, more committed relationship experiences. In this way, continuity in romantic views may persist, even in the face of the challenges of assimilating and/or accommodating view-questioning experiences.

A related point concerns the fact that both partners come into the relationship with sets of expectations and ideas about how romantic relationships operate. Yet we know little about the impact one's partner's views has one's own view or the process by which partners' views are adjusted or integrated with one another. For instance, why would partners with differing expectations necessarily remain together long enough to evidence change in each other's views? Alternatively, do partners engage in some sort of mutual accommodate of expectations or do they maintain independent opinions of what the relationship is and should be like? Investigating these questions within adolescent romantic relationships would provide important information about the role of romantic partners in the development of both romantic relationships and views.

Parents' Marital Functioning

While adolescents' experiences in dyadic relationships with parents, friends, and romantic partners are clearly important to their romantic development, broader social influences, such as parents' marriage, should not be overlooked. The idea that parent's marital functioning can impact children is not new. Journals are replete with studies linking marital functioning to child adjustment (see Cummings & Davies, 1994 for a thorough review). However, the notion that parents' marriage may influence children's social development, including the quality of their relationships with friends and romantic partners has only recently received empirical interest.

Parents' marital functioning may serve as an important source of information to adolescents about specific and general aspects of romantic relationships. That is, from parents' marriage, adolescents may not only learn behaviors for negotiating conflict, caregiving, careseeking, affiliation, and physical intimacy with romantic partners, but they may also internalize expectations about how the self and romantic partners are likely to approach, respond, and make sense of these

experiences. The empirical basis for these hypotheses stems from recent studies demonstrating that parents' marital functioning is associated with the quality of children's peer interactions (Gottman and Katz 1989; Katz & Gottman 1991) as well young adult children's interpersonal problems and romantic behavior (Long 1986, 1987; Seitel, 1992). In a study of premarital couples, Liu (1996) found that young adults' perceptions of parents' caregiving and careseeking toward each other were associated with both their parents' perceptions of the marital relationships and with their own perceptions of their premarital relationship.

There are several reasons why older children might be sensitive to the state of their parents' marriage. First, for better or worse, parents' marital relationship is usually the first, most immediate, and, oftentimes, the most long-standing model of a romantic bond witnessed by children. Older children will have also experienced the current effects of parents' marriage in the context of longer, cumulative effects. Family models of intimate, egalitarian relationships (e.g., parents' marriage) may become especially salient given the developmental tasks of establishing more intimate and mutually reciprocating relationships with friends and romantic partners (Collins & Sroufe, in press; Furman, in press; Gray & Steinberg, in press).

Research is needed to specify the links between particular dimensions of parents' marriage and adolescents' romantic relationship functioning. For example, because caregiving and attachment processes are less central to adolescents' romantic relationships, the influence of these elements of parents' marriage may become more salient when individuals begin to develop longer-term, more committed relationships. However, we might expect to see associations between processes relating to intimacy that are relevant to the romantic relationships of both parents and adolescents, such as communication, self-disclosure, support, conflict, and physical affection.

There are likely to be multiple paths and mechanisms by which parents' marriage influences the development adolescents' romantic relationship views. One pathway involves the observational learning of specific behavioral patterns that adolescents then enact with romantic partners. These patterns would influence the nature of adolescents' romantic experiences as well as of their corresponding views. By this logic, we should expect to see some direct correspondence between behaviors that are relevant to both parents' marriage and adolescent romantic relationships. However, recent studies concerning the cross-generational transmission of romantic relationship aggression do not lend credence to claims that adolescents learn specific romantic relationship behaviors (or at least relational aggression) by modeling parents' marital aggression (Capaldi , Rushe, Clark, & Crosby, 1998).

Another way in which parents' marriage might influence adolescents' romantic relationship functioning is via its impact on children's interpretations of parents' marital behavior and its perceived meaning for their own emotional security.   Such an approach is consistent with theoretical analyses of the effects of stressful events on children, which emphasize children's active role in interpreting and responding to their environment (Compas, 1987). Cummings and Davies (Cummings & Davies, 1994; Davies and Cummings, 1994) propose that children's representations of their parents' marriage, which includes representations of marital interactions as well as interpretations of such behavior, are the mechanism by which parental marital behavior exerts an influence on children's extra-familial relationships. In this model, children generalize their interpretive framework for parents' marital behavior to extra-familial relationships providing similar situations and/or requiring parallel types of behaviors (e.g., support-seeking, caretaking, intimate communication, conflict resolution). This particular pathway from parents' marriage to

adolescents' romantic relationships allows for coherency in both the continuity and discontinuity in the romantic relationship behavior and views of parents and their adolescent children. That is, the impact of parents' marital functioning is mediated by children's internal processing of marital behavior and their representations of the marital relationship.

To summarize, parents' marital relationship provide adolescents with an ongoing source of information about various dimensions of romantic relationships. The particular dimensions of parents' marriage most likely to impact adolescents' romantic behavior are those that are salient to both relationships, such as support, conflict, communication, and physical intimacy. There may be multiple paths and mechanisms by which parents' marriage influences the development of adolescents' romantic views. However, any of these paths may be at least partially mediated through the impact of parents' marriage on the parent-child relationship, another influential factor in the development of romantic views.

Finally, the potential for parents' marriage to impact adolescents' romantic experiences and corresponding views suggests that factors other than dyadic relationship experiences and their corresponding views may be important to the development of adolescents' romantic representations. That is, adolescents are impacted by multiple levels of relationship systems, which include experiences in dyads, families (e.g., with parents' marriage), peers groups, and cultures. Each of these levels is interrelated but exerts a unique influence on adolescents' expanding social world. The impact of adolescents' dyadic experiences with parents, friends, and romantic partners on their developing romantic views illustrates how successive interpersonal functioning builds upon both previous and concurrent relationship functioning. However, these experiences are afforded and constrained by larger social climates, including one's family and culture.

Cultural Influences on the Development of Romantic Views

Broadly defined, cultural influences on romantic relationships might include numerous factors ranging from cultural norms about dating, sexuality, and marriage to media portrayals of romantic relationships and culturally prescribed gender roles. In this section, we are primarily concerned with how culture effects individuals' romantic experiences and how these experiences might, in turn, influence the development of romantic relationship views, as enacted through the four behavioral systems (e.g., attachment, caregiving, affiliation, and sexuality).

Expanding the work of Shaver, Hazan, and Bradshaw (1988), we previously argued that romantic love eventually involves the integration of all four behavioral systems, and that adults represent their romantic relationships in terms of these and other salient features. However, there may be cultural variations in the experiences afforded to individuals which may, in turn, affect the developmental course of romantic views and the associations between romantic and other relationship views.

The socialization of cross-sex interactions and romantic relationships varies by culture. In some cultures, including Western societies, individuals typically begin dating during adolescence, often with great freedom in choosing their romantic partners and little pressure to develop committed relationships (see Hatfield & Rapson, 1996). In fact, the adolescent dating experience is somewhat revered in Western societies as an expression of individual autonomy and a period of romantic experimentation. When considered through this particular cultural lens, our assertion that affiliative and sexual processes are more central than caregiving and attachment processes in these

adolescent romantic relationships seems quite reasonable. Likewise, our argument that adolescents' romantic views will be shaped by their experiences with friends and romantic partners is also quite logical.

However, these assertions may not be universal. Cultures vary in the extent to which they encourage or constrain dating relationships at different ages. In some cultures, dating, and even cross-sex socialization, are discouraged (Hatfield & Rapson, 1996; Mullatti, 1995; Vaidyanathan and Naidoo, 1990). In fact, Vaidyanathan and Naidoo, 1990) report that only 27% first generation Indian-Canadians, believe dating is a "healthy practice that should be encouraged" while 81% of second generation Indian-Canadians endorse this position.

Cultures also vary in the means by which romantic partnerships are formed. Free-choice of romantic partners, while common in Western culture is by no means a universal practice. In a survey of 40 societies, Stephens (1963) found only five which permitted individuals to freely select their mates. On the other hand, 16 allowed only arranged marriages, and others involved a mix of unions that were typically subject to parental or elder approval. Since Stephens study, arranged marriages, while declining somewhat in frequency, continue to be common practice in India, Japan, Muslim countries, sub-Saharan Africa, and in cultural enclaves throughout the remainder of the world (Buruma, 1984; Prakasa & Rao 1979; Rosenblatt & Anderson, 1981; Sprecher & Chandak, 1992). Moreover, marriages have historically been arranged during partners' childhood or adolescence, although some evidence suggests that the age of partners in arranged marriages is increasing, at least in India (Caldwell, Reddy, & Caldwell, 1984; Mulatti, 1995).

Such cultural variations in the timing, onset, and course of adolescents' romantic relationships, have numerous implications for the development of romantic views. First, the factors

that shape the development of romantic views at a given time are likely to vary according to cultural practices. Where spouses are chosen by parents or families, interactions in mixed sex groups and/or dating are frequently not culturally ordained steps in romantic development. Under these circumstances, affiliative processes may not be central to developing views of romantic relationships, at least among heterosexual youth. The influence of one's actual experiences with romantic partners on emergent romantic views will not only be limited to one partner, but this influence will be absent prior to marriage. Other relationships, such as parent-child relationships and parents' marriage, may then have a greater impact on adolescents' romantic views.

Cross-cultural differences in the factors influencing adolescents' relationship views should also be reflected in the cognitive hierarchy of views. While the overall hierarchical organization of views may be the same, the patterns of connections between the various relationship views may be different. In our hierarchy of relational views, we speculated that the connections between friendship views and romantic views and between general views and romantic views might be particularly strong during adolescence. Over time, with the establishment of long-term relationships and the initiation of romantic attachment processes, connections between parent-child relationships and romantic relationships might become stronger. However, this pattern of connections between views should be dependent upon one's relationship experiences, which, to some extent, are culturally prescribed. In the case of arranged marriages, cognitive connections between views of friendships and romantic relationships are not likely to be as strong. In fact, ties between views of parent-child relationships and romantic relationships or between general views and romantic views may be most salient under these circumstances.

Differences in the romantic experiences provided in different cultures also highlights the potential for cultural variation in the developmental course of romantic views. That is, the developmental progression we have proposed - from an initial highlighting of affiliation and sexuality to a later integration of attachment and caregiving - might only be applicable to Western cultures. Other progressions and constellations of behavioral systems may also exist. For example, entering into an arranged marriage may prompt a more immediate press to integrate all four behavioral systems. Perhaps more likely is the possibility that the integration of behavioral systems in romantic views follows a different sequence. In arranged marriages, where there is often a strong emphasis on preserving heritage (e.g., bloodline, social status, culture) (Hatfield & Rapson, 1996; Mullatti, 1995; Vaidyanathan and Naidoo, 1990), sexual processes may initially be centrally featured in romantic views. The emergence of affilitative processes is likely to be much later, when or if partners fall in love. The influence of romantic experience on romantic views will also emerge later for these individuals in the development of their romantic views.

In summary, where adolescent dating is constrained and marriages are arranged, individuals may enter romantic relationships with a level of articulation in romantic views that differs from that of individuals whose culture encourages dating, romantic experimentation, and individual mate selection. In the case of the former, romantic views may be more heavily influenced by general views, parent-child relationships, and/or parents' marriage, whereas in the latter friendships and experiences with romantic partners will also be important. Of course, such differences in adolescents' romantic views would not reflect developmental failures, nor would they necessarily have negative developmental implications. In fact, according to a Chinese proverb "Love matches start out hot and grow cold, while arranged marriages start out cold and grow hot." Consistent with

this saying, Gupta and Singh (1982) found that after five to ten years of marriage, Indians in arranged marriages reported greater romantic love than those who married for love.

Nonetheless, cross-cultural differences in the articulation of the adolescents' romantic views does raise the possibility that there may be multiple pathways in the development of romantic views. In addition, the outcomes of these pathways may be similar or different. When arranged partnerships evolve into marriages of love, views of these relationships, like those of individuals who marry for love, may ultimately involve integrated representations of all four behavioral systems. However, arranged marriages may not always evolve into love relationships, and even when strong affectional bonds are developed, affiliative intimacy, as expressed by self-disclosure and shared recreational activities, may not be the cultural norm (Devos, 1985; Dion & Dion, 1993; Kumar, 1991). These situations raises the important question of whether all four behavioral systems are necessarily entailed in adults' romantic views. Alternatively, each of the four behavioral systems may eventually be involved, but their relative importance as well as their mode and range of expression may vary by culture.

Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, we argued that cognitive representations of close relationships reflect, in part, the functioning of their unique configuration of behavioral systems (e.g., attachment, caregiving, affiliative, and sexual). In addition, we proposed a hierarchical and interdependent organization for these representations, in which general views of relationships, views about types of relationships, and those for particular relationships mutually influence each other. This multi-layered organization allows for both continuities and discontinuities across views of different relationships.

This conceptualization of relational views provided a framework from which we examined the development of romantic views. Our focus was on the articulation of romantic views during adolescence, as it is during this time when individuals develop many of the romantic skills that are carried forth into adult relationships. Although most of our discussion centered around heterosexual relationships, we believe that many of the general themes will also apply to sexual minority youth. At the same time, it is important that the assumption that some processes are similar be tested, as seemingly similar behaviors may not be analogous (Diamond, Savin-Williams, & Dube, in press).

Adolescents' own relationship experiences should obviously exert a significant influence on the development of romantic views. For example, parent-child relationships may influence adolescents' romantic views through their impact on general views of close relationships. Because adolescent romantic relationships do not typically involve attachment processes, parent-child relationships can be regarded as offering a foundation for intimacy that is carried forward into subsequent relationships. Over time, parent-child views, which feature attachment processes, may, however, become increasingly salient to romantic views, as individuals gain experience in the romantic realm, and develop longer-term, more committed relationships in which partners become attachment and caregiving figures.

Adolescents' views of close friendship may be especially salient in the development of romantic views, given the egalitarian nature of both relationships and their shared emphasis on affiliative processes. The egalitarian skills learned within friendships are expected to be applied to subsequent romantic relationships. The peer group itself also provides a context for initiating romantic involvement, at least among Western adolescents. Although previous relationship experiences should certainly shape romantic expectations, one's actual experiences with romantic

partners should also be highly influential. Understanding how dyadic processes reinforce and/or challenge existing representational systems and behaviors certainly merits further examination. Issues concerning how partners' views and behaviors shape and are shaped by one another are relevant to both short-term and longer-term relationships.

In addition to adolescents' experiences in dyadic relationships, broader social influences, such as parental marital functioning and cultural practices in dating and marriage were also proposed to influence the development of romantic views. Although few studies have examined the relevance of these factors to adolescent romantic relationships, their study during both adolescence and adulthood will contribute to a coherent theory of the development of romantic views. In our own research on adolescent romantic relationships, for example, we are currently gathering questionnaire and observational data from adolescent and parent couples in order to examine associations between parents' marriage and adolescents' romantic relationship functioning. Similarly, we believe a broader cultural perspective on romantic views offers opportunities to examine important theoretical issues often overlooked by romantic attachment researchers. While we are, by no means, experts in cross-cultural psychology, our speculations on this topic are intended to stimulate future research in this area - including cross-cultural work within the U.S., which houses a diverse array of ethnic groups.

Our discussion of broader societal influences on romantic views was obviously not all-inclusive. Intra-cultural factors, such as gender roles and media, while not examined in this chapter, represent other important areas in need of further consideration. For instance, what effect does the media and its portrayal of romantic love have on individuals' expectations of and behavior in romantic relationships? Are particular age groups, such as adolescents, influenced more strongly by

media messages? Finally, what are the intervening individual <u>processes</u> by which larger societal

attitudes or values impact romantic views?

Generally speaking, the field of romantic relationships represents a relatively new research

endeavor, and empirical studies with adolescents have only scratched the surface of this relationship

domain. Subsequent work should strive to enhance our understanding of both romantic relationship

experiences and their corresponding representations. In the preceding sections, we have not

addressed implications of our proposed framework for early, middle, and late adolescence.

However, given the multiple cognitive and social developments that unfold over the course of

adolescence, we might also expect differences in the romantic representations of early, middle, and

late adolescents (see Furman & Simon, in press). More research is needed to elucidate the course of

romantic relationships and their representations throughout adolescence. Studies of romantic views

in <u>early</u> adolescence should be especially revealing. Even though larger societal values tend to

promote the fleeting and tenuous nature of such early romantic forays—as denoted by common

phrases like "puppy love"—these initial romantic experiences may turn out to figure importantly in

later romantic development.

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