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THE SEXUAL DOUBLE STANDARD AND ADOLESCENT PEER ACCEPTANCE*

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Abstract

The belief that women and men are held to different standards of sexual conduct is pervasive in contemporary American society. According to the sexual double standard, boys and men are rewarded and praised for heterosexual sexual contacts, whereas girls and women are derogated and stigmatized for similar behaviors. Although widely held by the general public, research findings on the sexual double standard remain equivocal, with qualitative studies and early attitudinal surveys generally finding evidence of the double standard and more recent experimental vignette designs often failing to find similar results. In this study, we extend prior research by directly measuring the social status of sexually permissive youth. We use data collected from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health to relate adolescents' self-reported numbers of sexual partners to a network measure of peer acceptance. Results suggest that the association between lifetime sexual partnerships and peer status varies significantly by gender, such that greater numbers of sexual partners are *positively* correlated with boys' peer acceptance, but *negatively* correlated with girls' peer acceptance. Moreover, the relationship between boys' sexual behaviors and peer acceptance is moderated by socioeconomic origins; sexually permissive boys from disadvantaged backgrounds are predicted to have more friendships than permissive boys from more advantaged backgrounds. Our results thus support the existence of an adolescent sexual double standard and suggest that sexual norms vary by both gender and socioeconomic origins.

In contemporary American society, it is a commonly held belief that sexual behaviors are judged differently depending on the gender of a sexual actor (Milhausen and Herold 2001). Boys and men are thought to receive praise and positive attributions from others for non-marital sexual contacts, while girls and women are believed to be derogated and stigmatized for similar behaviors. The relevance of this double standard for sexual development and gender inequality has prompted substantial research on the topic (see Crawford and Popp

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2003 for a review) along with the publication of several popular trade books with titles such as Slut!, Fast Girls, and Promiscuities (Tanenbaum 1999; White 2002; Wolf 1997). Although public perceptions generally support the sexual double standard, scientific evidence remains equivocal and contested. Ethnographies of secondary schools and early attitudinal studies found evidence of the double standard (Eder, Evans, and Parker 1995; Oliver and Sedikides 1992; Sprecher, McKinney, and Orbuch 1987), whereas more recent experimental vignette studies generally fail to find similar results (Gentry 1998; Milhausen and Herold 1999; Marks and Fraley 2005; 2006). The existence of a modern sexual double standard thus remains in doubt, opening the door for further research and innovative study designs.

Quantitative tests of the sexual double standard typically rely on survey instruments to directly measure respondents' judgments of men's and women's sexual conduct (Crawford and Popp 2003). These studies correctly locate the roots of the double standard in individuals' beliefs and attitudes about "gender appropriate" sexual behaviors. However, studies in this vein have primarily relied on undergraduate convenience samples that may not generalize to adolescent populations. Moreover, the attitudes captured in survey designs may not translate to the enactment of gendered behaviors in social situations, leading to a disjuncture between motives and outcomes (Reskin 2002). School-based ethnographies and individual case studies address this issue by focusing on the expression and consequences of gendered sexual attitudes in specific social contexts. Through participant observation, communication analyses, and retrospective interviews (Eder, Evans, and Parker 1995; Tanenbaum 1999), qualitative studies are able to document the application of deleterious labels for sexual norm violations and individuals' responses to discredited sexual identities (Goffman 1963). These studies therefore link psychological concepts with their socially constructed meanings and outcomes, bringing us closer to understanding *how* sexuality is regulated in a given social context and *who* potentially benefits or is stigmatized by these processes. Such studies are not without their own limitations, however. The small scale and relatively homogenous samples of most qualitative studies limit their generalizability and ability to make statistical comparisons.

In this study, we build on the strengths of both survey and ethnographic research by quantitatively measuring the expected social consequences of sexual behavior in a national sample of adolescent youth. Specifically, we rely on network data collected from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) to test whether the association between adolescent peer acceptance and the number of self-reported sexual partners varies significantly by gender. Our use of peer-network data allows us to statistically compare the peer status levels of sexually permissive boys and girls and their non-permissive peers. In addition, Add Health's detailed questionnaires of a nationally representative youth sample allows us to generalize our findings beyond local contexts and explore potential moderating factors, such as socioeconomic origins and peer characteristics, on the link between peer status and sexual behavior.

SEX AND ADOLESCENT PEER ACCEPTANCE

The importance of peer status for adolescent development and informal school organization has prompted generations of researchers to identify the criteria underlying teenage popularity. Coleman (1961), in his seminal work *Adolescent Society*, found that social class background, athletics, physical attractiveness, and material possessions (e.g., cars, expensive clothes) were important symbols for teenage peer acceptance, providing their possessors with valued access to the leading crowds. Developmental research also suggests that prosocial behaviors and individual characteristics – such as cooperativeness, kindness, honesty, leadership, intelligence, and self-confidence – are positively associated with children's popularity across a wide variety of social settings (Coie, Dodge and Kupersmidt 1990; Newcomb, Bukowski, and Pattee 1993).

For the most part, the criteria for adolescent popularity operate in the same directions for both girls and boys, even if some characteristics or activities – such as attractiveness, athletics, or physical aggression – may have stronger associations with peer status for one gender than the other (Coleman 1961; LaFontana and Cillessen 2002; Steffensmeier and Allan 1996). Sexual behaviors may provide an exception to this pattern. According to the sexual double standard, the social consequences of early romantic and sexual experiences differ substantially by gender, with gender-specific norms governing the appropriate number of sex partners; the conditions under which it is acceptable to engage in sexual activity (e.g., on a "first-date", prior to marriage, in a non-committal relationship, etc.); and the appropriate motives for sexual behavior (e.g., a man may have sex without affection, whereas a women can only have sex when she is in love). If women and men are evaluated differently for engaging in the same sexual behaviors, then male sexual permissiveness would be tolerated, or even praised, while female permissiveness would lead to damaged reputations and "spoiled" identities (Goffman 1963).

Although gendered norms of appropriate sexual conduct have existed for centuries (e.g., the harsh penalties historically associated with female infidelity [see Wolf 1997]), it is a debatable claim that strong sexual double standards persist in contemporary, post-sexual revolution, U.S. society (Risman and Schwartz 2002). Shifts in sexual norms may result in a single standard of sexual conduct that is applied to both men and women (Marks and Fraley 2005). Accordingly, negative perceptions of sexual permissiveness may lower the social desirability of a sexual actor regardless of his or her gender.

Tests of a modern sexual double standard remain inconclusive and contested. We first review this research, paying particular attention to modern adolescent peer contexts and potential gender differences in sexual norm enforcement. We also consider sociodemographic variations in the double standard, such that gender and socioeconomic background may combine non-additively with sexual experiences to affect adolescent peer acceptance. Finally, we discuss those individual and social characteristics that may moderate or make spurious any link between sexual behavior and peer status.

DOCUMENTING THE SEXUAL DOUBLE STANDARD

Attitudinal surveys and ethnographic studies have generally found evidence of contemporary sexual double standards. In perhaps the earliest study of sexual attitudes, Reiss (1964) asked student respondents to directly comment on normative sexual behavior, finding that a majority of the respondents who did not endorse sexual abstinence agreed that it was acceptable for a male, but not a female, to have premarital intercourse. Similarly, more recent survey research suggests that respondents perceive women to be judged significantly more harshly than men for having higher numbers of sex partners (Milhausen and Herold 1999; Sheeran et al. 1996). These findings are commonly confirmed in school-based ethnographies. Coleman (1961) found that for girls, it was "crucial for her status personally and for the maintenance of the system itself for her to be selective and dispense favors with extreme care. If not, the culture is threatened by her philanthropy, and punishes her by ruining her reputation and taking away her status." For boys, however, "sexual exploits are conquests, and thus actions that gain [them] status rather than lose it" (p. 122). Similarly, Eder, Evans, and Parker (1995) found that "what was considered acceptable behavior in boys—making sexual passes at other boy's girlfriends as well as at their own girlfriends—was definitely not considered acceptable in girls. Those girls who did initiate sexual actions were labeled 'bitches' and 'sluts'" (p. 130). By contrast, "boys tend to perceive girls as objects for sexual conquest as they compete with other boys for sexual achievements" (p. 128). Additional qualitative studies by Orenstein (1994), Moffat (1989), and Tolman (2002) also suggest that young women's fears of the "slut" label curbs their sexual expressions, while young men are encouraged to demonstrate their masculinity through sexually permissive behavior.

Results from experimental vignette designs have been much less consistent. In these studies, subjects are provided with sexual information (e.g., number of intercourse partners, age at first coitus, etc.) for a hypothetical actor and asked to evaluate his or her desirability or popularity. The sexual information and gender of the target are then randomly varied to test for the existence of a double standard. An important benefit of this method, as compared to traditional attitudinal surveys, is that the random assignment to a single gendered vignette reduces response bias resulting from subjects' providing socially desirable answers (Sprecher et al. 1987).

Although early studies with this method tended to find evidence of the double standard, recent studies fail to find similar results. As an example of the latter, Marks and Fraley (2005) asked a sample of undergraduates and internet-based respondents to evaluate whether a target was popular and likeable based upon the target's gender and number of sexual partners. They found that respondents generally evaluated male *and* female targets with higher numbers of sexual partners as unpopular and unlikable, suggesting that sexual permissiveness holds a negative connotation regardless of a sexual actor's gender. To reconcile these null results with pervasive beliefs in the double standard and results from earlier attitudinal studies and ethnographic research, Marks and Fraley (2006) suggested that the double standard is a cultural fiction reified by individuals who selectively attend to confirming evidence presented to them in the media or in conversations, but not personally endorsed by them. This interpretation is consistent with earlier findings of Gentry (1998),

Milhausen and Herold (1999), and O'Sullivan (1995) and raises strong doubts about the existence of a contemporary double standard.

A NETWORK APPROACH

In this study, we extend prior research by testing the sexual double standard using a measure of peer status derived from social network data (see also Newcomer, Udry, and Cameron 1983). A social network consists of a set of interdependent nodes (e.g., individuals, firms, countries, etc.) and ties (e.g., friendships, communications, treaties, etc.) that combine to form a social structure. When applied to the study of school-based peer relations, a social network is created by asking each adolescent to nominate a specified number of friends from a school's attendance roster. These ties are then mapped or tallied in an n × n matrix to provide an overhead view of the school's friendship system. At the level of the individual (i.e. ego), the total number of ties *received* from other students captures the extent to which that individual is socially accepted, or well-liked, within the informal organization of the school. Incoming friendship nominations thus provide a measure of peer status for each individual in the network. To test the sexual double standard, we may relate this ego-centric measure of peer status with students' self-reported sexual partnerships. If a "strong" double standard exists, then increased numbers of sexual partners should be positively associated with male peer status and negatively associated with female peer status.

A network approach shares the advantages of experimental vignette and ethnographic designs. Similar to experimental designs, our approach overcomes much of the response bias arising from self-reported measures of sexual attitudes (Paulhus 2002). For example, subjects may consciously or unconsciously desire to avoid gender bias when evaluating a target's sexual behavior. Our method eliminates this problem by directly measuring the presumed outcome of the sexual double standard (e.g., increased or decreased peer status) rather than individuals' self-reported attitudes.[1] Similar to ethnographic studies, our approach also embeds sexual behaviors within the contexts of adolescent peer relationships, thereby connecting private sexual behaviors with the social environments in which these behaviors are discussed, negotiated, and evaluated (Bearman, Moody, and Stovel 2006).

Variations by Gender of the Evaluator

Another advantage of a network approach is that it allows us to examine the characteristics of the peers who provide status to sexual actors (Newcomer et al. 1983). A critical question regarding the sexual double standard is whether the gender of an evaluator matters for the sanctioning or support of sexual behaviors. Previous ethnographic and interview research suggests that girls are the arbiters of female sexual conduct (Coleman 1961; Eder et al. 1995; see also White 2002; Wolf 1997). Coleman (1961), for instance, noted that "in all schools, having a good reputation was extremely important for the girls' elite groups…the

[1]It should be noted, however, that our self-reported measure of sexual partnerships remains subject to social desirability effects. Studies have shown that boys tend to over report the amount of sex they have, whereas girls tend to underreport the same behaviors (Newcomer and Udry 1988; Siegel, Aten, and Roghmann 1998). Although these response patterns potentially bias our model estimates, their very existence suggests a sexual double standard because male respondents realize that over-reporting sexual partners increases their social desirability, while girls come to the opposite conclusion and may seek to conceal their sexual partnerships (Catania 1999).

importance of a good reputation is not as consistent among the boys" (p. 120). Similarly, Eder and colleagues (1995) noted that by the 8th grade, most of girls in their study "had started to monitor each other's sexual thoughts and behaviors to a much greater degree" and "would critically refer to those friends who failed to show any discretion in their sexual interests as sluts" (p. 131). The authors speculated that the increase in female sexual insulting of other girls during adolescence might result from an increasing awareness of sexual double standards, jealousy, or the lack of alternative discourses regarding adolescent female sexuality. If sexual standards do differ by gender, then sexually permissive women may not be accepted by female peers, but be well liked by male peers. Similarly, permissive men may be accepted by other men, but be disfavored by women. Assessing whether the gender of the evaluator conditions the association between sexual partnerships and adolescent peer status is an advantage of a network approach over prior research in the area.

Variations by Socioeconomic Background

The large-scaled Add Health survey also allows us to examine whether variables beyond gender, such as socioeconomic background, potentially moderate the link between peer status and sexual behavior. Socioeconomic differences in the sexual double standard have received relatively little research attention, with several authors arguing that female sexual permissiveness results in reduced peer acceptance regardless of social origins. Coleman (1961), for example, noted that "the girl who is too free with herself, whatever her social background, is excluded—evidently first by the girls, with the boys concurring" (p. 121) (see also Wolf 1998). Recent research, however, suggests considerable heterogeneity in norms regarding "appropriate" sexual conduct among disadvantaged youth (Anderson 1999; Harding 2007; Thompson 1995). Youth in disadvantaged neighborhoods may thus draw upon multiple frames and sexual scripts regarding teenage pregnancy and ideal romantic relationships. In such settings, teenage pregnancy may not be considered universally "bad," and normative courtship scripts may favor both early intercourse and chastity. This suggests that definitions of "good" and "bad" reputations may also vary substantially by a student's socioeconomic background, necessistating the examination of SES as a moderator in the assocation between sexual partnerships and adolescent peer acceptance.

Alternative Explanations

A final benefit of our study is that it allows us to control for variables that may attenuate any association between sexual permissiveness and peer acceptance. Thus far, we have presented hypotheses stating that sexual behaviors affect peer status and that this association may be conditioned by gender and socioeconomic origins. However, other scholars have argued that these correlations are explained by stable individual traits or characteristics of the sexual contacts. For example, Risman and Schwartz (2002) assert that the sexual revolution of the 1960's and 1970's altered young women's attitudes toward premarital sex, such that premarital coitus is now normative behavior for young women *as long as it takes place in socially defined "steady relationships"* (see also Reiss's [1960] discussion of "transitional" double standards). Girls and women who have sex in exclusive relationships may then avoid the "slut" label and maintain high-status positions in the peer structure regardless of their number of sexual partnerships. Likewise, girls and women who have sex in an uncommitted relationship may lose peer status. If this argument is accurate, then relationship exclusivity

should attenuate any association between number of sexual partnerships and adolescent peer acceptance. However, as Moore and Rosenthal (2007) point out, the meaning of a "committed" or "exclusive" romance is likely very different in adolescent versus adult contexts. Teenage romances often fall into patterns of serial monogamy, where individuals participate in single-partner relationships of short duration and even shorter between-partner periods. Within these settings, young women may desire and be encouraged by their partners to define a relationship as "exclusive," while their partners and same-age peers simultaneously view the relationship as casual and transitory (Rosenthal, Moore, and Brumen 1990). Girls who have intercourse within serially monogamous relationships may thus damage their reputations even while they believe that they are abiding by current norms of appropriate sexual conduct.

Gender scholars also note that perceived promiscuity may be an unnecessary condition for young women to gain the "slut" label. Sexually suggestive clothing or early sexual development may be enough for females to be sexually stigmatized and rejected by peers (Eder et al. 1996). Indeed, White (2002) asserts that the association between the "slut" label and female intercourse is entirely a myth. Based on her interviews of adult women who were labeled as promiscuous in adolescence, she states that the term "slut" is typically applied by females to other females whose bodies or behaviors deviate from group norms. Exotic beauty or premature physical development may then be enough to threaten the status quo and result in a girl's exclusion from female peer groups. As in the case of relationship context, addressing issues of physical appearance and development are essential for accurately testing the permissiveness-status link.

Yet another view holds that sexually permissive behavior reflects a constellation of unconventional or "antisocial" attitudes and behaviors that lead to peer alienation and school withdrawal (Donovan and Jessor, 1985; Jessor and Jessor 1977; Rodgers and Rowe 1990). Research shows that early sexual initiation is associated with a number of problem behaviors, such as illicit drug use, heavy drinking, delinquency, aggression, poor achievement, and school dropout (Capaldi, Crosby, and Stoolmiller 1996; Costa, Jessor, Donovan, and Fortenberry, 1995; Elliott and Morse, 1989). These risky behaviors may represent underlying social incapacities that limit connections to peers (e.g., Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990) and explain the correlation between sexual partnerships and peer status. Indeed, research of children's peer networks shows that antisocial children tend to have low sociometric status (for reviews, see Gifford-Smith and Brownell 2003; Newcomb et al. 1993). Controlling for violence and drug behaviors is thus an important aspect of testing the link between sexual permissiveness and peer acceptance.

DATA

We test our hypotheses using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health). Add Health is a nationally representative longitudinal study of adolescents in grades 7 to 12. From 1994 to 2001, the study collected four waves of student data, with additional surveys administered to parents, siblings, and school administrators. In the current analyses, we rely on data from the first two student surveys (e.g. the in-school

and first in-home interviews), collected in 1994 and 1995 (see Harris [2007] for an overview of the survey design).

In one class period during the fall of 1994, Add Health administered in-school surveys to all available students in each of 145 sampled schools. Approximately 80 percent of enrolled students (N=90,118) were surveyed. The questionnaire asked respondents about basic demographic and behavioral characteristics. Students also nominated their five best male and five best female friends. Sixteen schools had less than 50% of their enrolled students complete the in-school survey. Schools with incomplete data may provide misleading images of the school's social structure, so they were not included in the analyses, leaving 75,871 students in 129 schools with valid network information (National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health 2001).

Approximately six months after the in-school survey, Add Health selected a stratified sub-sample of students to complete a more extensive in-home interview. 14,396 students completed both the in-school and first in-home surveys and have sampling weights to adjust for sample attrition, stratification, and non-response (Chantala and Tabor 1999). To ensure confidentiality, sensitive questions (including questions regarding sexual activity) were administered using portable laptops and headphones. Of the 14,396 students who completed both surveys, approximately 7 percent of students attended a school that did not complete the network portion of the interview and 5 percent were missing information regarding their socioeconomic origins. Less than 10 percent of the remaining 12,773 respondents were missing information on any of our predictor variables (e.g., lifetime sexual partners, attractiveness and physical maturity, body mass index, extracurricular activities, school performance, standardized test scores, fighting, alcohol use, race and ethnicity, or family structure). Upon list-wise deletion, our dataset includes 5,944 girls and 5,530 boys who ranged in age from 12 to 20 during the first wave of data collection.

To address potential bias resulting from missing data, we used multiple imputation techniques in the statistical package Stata (the ICE procedure) to regain a nationally representative sample (Royston 2005). In unlisted analyses, we imputed values into five datasets, with all independent and dependent measures included in the imputation procedure (Rubin 1996). The ICE procedure uses an iterative multivariable regression algorithm that detects the distributions of model variables and applies the appropriate regression technique (e.g. OLS, logistic, or ordered logistic) in calculating imputed values. After imputation, our analysis sample included 6,613 girls and 6,160 boys. Although not shown, the variable means and standard deviations of our key measures, as well as overall pattern of findings, are not substantially different between the observed and imputed datasets. The results based upon the imputed sample are available upon request.

MEASURES

Table 1 provides descriptive statistics for our outcome and independent variables by respondents' gender.

OUTCOME VARIABLE: PEER ACCEPTANCE

During the in-school survey (1994), students in the sampled schools nominated their five best male and five best female friends from a roster of all students enrolled in the respondent's school and in a sister middle or high school. Peer acceptance is measured as the total number of friendship nominations that each Add Health respondent *received* from other students in their high school or associated middle school (Wasserman and Faust 1994). This pre-constructed variable in the Add Health dataset is thus a count measure of received friendship nominations ranging from 0 to 32 with the average peer status approximating 4.7 nominations for girls and 4.3 for boys.[2] We also create gender-specific measures of our dependent variable. Peer status from female peers is captured by multiplying the number of received friendship nominations by the percentage of the nominations that were female. This value was then subtracted from the total number of received friendship nominations to assess peer status from males.

PREDICTOR VARIABLES

Our key predictor variable is student-reported numbers of lifetime sexual partners. Students were first asked to nominate up to three "special romantic partners" from the 18 month period prior to the in-home survey. If they answered "yes" to this question, they were asked a series of relationship questions about each romantic relationship, including whether they had sexual intercourse. Following those questions, all respondents were asked if they had sexual relationships with anyeone other than the three "special romantic relationships." Those who answered "no" were assigned a value of 1 to 3 sexual partners, as determined by their answers to the sexual questions in the relationship section. Those who answered "yes" were asked to provide the total number of lifetime sexual partnerships, including the three "special romantic relationships" and any non-romantic sexual partners. Responses for the latter ranged from 1 to 900. To address the extreme right skew in these responses and to examine potential non-linear associations with peer acceptance, particularly at the lower end of the distribution (Kenrick, Sundie, Nicastle, and Stone 2001), we re-coded the number of lifetime partners into four dummy variables (i.e., "none," "1 to 2," "3 to 8," and "more than 8").[3] Additionally, due to likely misreporting, we deleted from our analyses those outlying respondents who reported 100 or more lifetime sexual partners. Less than one percent of the sample (all males) fell into this category, dropping the final sample of boys to 5,522. As shown in Table 1, approximately two-thirds of youth reported no sexual partnerships, while two percent of girls and five percent of boys fell into the highly permissive category of 8 or more partnerships. When restricted to students in grades 9-12, Add Health's patterns of sexual behavior are consistent with those observed in a recent national school-based survey conducted by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2006).

[2]An alternative measure of peer status relies on children's assessments of popular peers rather than the summation of individual's friendship nominations (Luthar and McMahon 1996; LaFontana and Cillessen 2002). These measures operationalize popularity as perceived social dominance rather than peer acceptance. Unfortunately, such measures are not available in the Add Health study.

[3]Alternatively, one could use polynomial terms to capture the non-linear effects of lifetime sex partners on peer acceptance. In unlisted analyses, we found that a quadratic term was statistically significant only for boys, whereas a continuous linear term was statistically significant and negative for girls. However, the models using dummy variables (shown in Table 2) suggest that these effects may be influenced by outliers and do not adequately capture non-linear effects at the bottom end of the distribution.

To gain leverage on potential sources of spuriousness, we include indicators of youth's involvement in "non-romantic" sexual relationships, athletic and extracurricular participation, academic ability, school performance, violence, alcohol use, and whether they were new to the school. Non-romantic sexual involvement was defined as having had sexual intercourse with someone outside of a "special romantic relationship" during the past year (i.e., since January 1, 1994). Respondents who reported having had a non-romantic sexual relationship were asked if they (1) held hands with the non-romantic sexual partner, (2) kissed the partner on the mouth, and (3) said "I love you" to the partner. If the respondent answered "no" to at least one of these items, we coded him or her as having had a non-romantic relationship (which could be ongoing). If a respondent answered "yes" to the three items, the relationship was coded as a "special romantic relationship" and the corresponding sexual questions were asked. Approximately twelve percent of boys and seven percent of girls reported at least one prior or current non-romantic sexual encounter. As stated previously, girls with many sexual partners may potentially avoid social marginalization if their sexual contacts occurred within romantic relationships. If so, then having sex outside of a romantic relationship should attenuate the association between sexual partnerships and peer acceptance.

Research finds that athletic participation is positively associated with peer status (Coleman 1961; Holland and Andre 1994) and these activities may also increase sexual opportunities, particularly for males (Miller et al. 2005). We include a self-reported indicator for whether or not respondents participated in any of twelve sports during the prior year (e.g., baseball/softball, basketball, field hockey, football, ice hockey, soccer, swimming, tennis, track, volleyball, wrestling, and other sports). We also measure participation in other non-athletic extracurricular clubs or activities, as these may provide avenues for peer acceptance (Kreager 2007). Peer acceptance is also positively associated with academic achievement and adjustment (Parker and Asher 1987). Academic aptitude was captured by a vocabulary test taken in the first in-home interview (1995). Respondents completed a picture vocabulary test (abridged Peabody-revised) in which students selected an illustration that best matched a word spoken by the interviewer (Dunn and Dunn 1981). Results were standardized by age and divided by 100. Grades indicate the average of student-reported GPAs in four subjects – math, English, social studies, and science. This measure is based on a four-point scale ranging from 1, "D or lower," to 4 "A". The respondent's frequency of fighting in the prior year is measured on a four-point ordinal scale ranging from "none" to "more than seven times." The respondent's frequency of alcohol use in the prior year is measured on a seven-point ordinal scale ranging from "never" to "every day or almost every day." We also include an indicator variable for respondents who had been at their current school for less than one year.

Attractiveness and early physical maturity may also confound the association between number of sex partners and peer status. Physical attractiveness is based upon an interviewer-rated measure of "how physically attractive is the respondent?" This variable is coded on a five-point scale ranging from 1, "very unattractive" to 5, "very attractive." Our measure of female physical development is an additive scale based on three items: (1) "how advanced is your physical development compared to other girls your age?" (five-point scale from "I look younger than most" to "I look older than most"); (2) "as a girl grows up her breasts develop

and get bigger. Which sentence best describes you?" (five-point scale from "my breasts are about the same size as when I was in grade school" to "my breasts are a whole lot bigger than when I was in grade school, they are as developed as a grown woman's breasts"); and (3) "as a girl grows up her body becomes more curved. Which sentence best describes you?" (five-point scale ranging from "my body is about as curvy as when I was in grade school" to "my body is a whole lot more curvy than when I was in grade school"). Each of these items was first standardized and then averaged. For males, physical development is an additive scale based upon four items: (1) "How much hair is under your arms now" (coded on a five-point scale from "I have no hair at all" to "I have a whole lot of hair that is very thick, as much hair as a grown man"; (2) "How thick is the hair on your face?" (four-point scale ranging from "I have a few scattered hairs, but the growth is not thick" to "the hair is very thick, like a grown man's facial hair"); (3) "Is your voice lower now than it was when you were in grade school?" (five-point scale ranging from "no" to "yes, it is as low as an adult man's voice"); and (4) "how advanced is your physical development compared to other boys your age?" (five-point scale from "I look younger than most" to "I look older than most"). Our measure of male physical development is based on these four constructs, which we first standardized and then averaged. Finally, we include a measure of body mass index (BMI), which we calculated based upon the respondent's self-reported height and weight.

Our final set of measures captures students' family and background characteristics. We measure the respondent's socioeconomic origins from student-reported items of mother's and father's educational attainment in 1994. Each parent had educational levels ranging from no formal education to education beyond a four-year degree. To indicate low parent education, we take the highest of the mother's and father's educational attainment (mother's *or* father's attainment in one-parent families) and create a binary variable coded as 1 if neither parent had pursued schooling beyond high school, and 0 otherwise. Approximately 41 percent of youth came from families where parent(s) education is not beyond a high school level.[4]

We create dummy variables for race and ethnic background from the in-home surveys. Respondents were allowed to mark more than one racial category, but were then asked which category *best* describes their racial background. We thus were able to create mutually exclusive dummy variables for Hispanic, non-Hispanic black, non-Hispanic Asian, and Other race. Non-Hispanic whites formed the reference category for our analyses. Intact family is generated from respondents' reports that they resided with both their biological mother and biological father in 1994.

[4]Add Health respondents were asked about their parents' occupation, but we did not use this information to construct measures of social origins. Respondents picked among fifteen occupational categories that "come closest to describing the mother's or the father's job." The occupational categories were crude (based on a fifteen-point scale ranging from homemaker to professional worker); the percentage of missing values on parent's job were high; and four times as many respondents were unsure of their mother's occupation as their mother's highest level of schooling. The high numbers of missing values, coding ambiguity, potential measurement error, and non-linearities between constructed occupational scales and the outcome reduced our confidence in using these measures in our analyses. A parent of the Add Health respondents was also asked to report his or her highest level of education. The primary reason we did not use parent-reported educational attainment is that over 15 percent of parents did not complete the parent survey. Furthermore, in analyses not shown, we found that the correlation between the mother-reported educational measure and the student-reported measure of mother's education was.846.

RESULTS

We present the empirical findings in three parts. First, to test the double-standard hypothesis, we estimate survey-adjusted negative binomial regression models of adolescent peer acceptance separately for girls and boys, and then use z-tests to compare the equality of the coefficients (Clogg, Petkova, and Haritou 1995). We estimate a negative binomial regression model because peer acceptance is an overdispersed (i.e., the mean is substantially smaller than the variance) count variable (Long 1997). In addition, Add Health's stratified sampling design necessitates standard error adjustments to correct for (1) correlated error structures resulting from students in one school network being more similar than students in a different school network, and (2) oversampling of racial, ethnic, disabled, and sibling students that result in a non-representative sample of American adolescents. We estimate all of our models using the SURVEY commands in Stata 9 (StataCorp 2007). This methodology relies on post-sampling weights and the hierarchical structure of the data to provide population estimates with unbiased standard errors. We split our models by gender because prior research suggests that the effects of sexual partner frequency on peer acceptance should be significantly different for girls and boys. The use of z-tests also allows us to directly compare the equality of coefficients for other individual characteristics, such as sport participation, attractiveness, and physical aggression (Coleman 1961; LaFontana and Cillessen 2002). Second, we apply the same methods to predict peer status derived from male and female peers. This set of analyses allows us to explore the connection between gender and the enforcement of sexual standards in adolescent peer culture. Third, to examine whether the effects of prior sex partners on peer status differ across gender and socioeconomic background, we estimate models separately for girls and boys and by high and low socioeconomic backgrounds (based upon whether parents were educated past high school) and then use z-tests to compare the equality of coefficients.

Our first goal is to document gender differences in the association between number of sex partners and peer acceptance. Table 2 presents estimates from survey-adjusted negative binomial models of peer acceptance by gender. The z statistics for the gender differences between the regression coefficients of lifetime sexual partners were statistically significant ($p < .05$; two-tailed) for all partner categories (z = -1.98 for 1 to 2 partners; z = -2.51 for 3 to 8 partners; z = -4.11 for more than 8 partners). None of the remaining coefficients differed significantly by gender, suggesting that sexual behaviors are one of the few areas where peers evaluate girls and boys differently.[5]

As shown in Table 2, we find evidence that sexually permissive girls (i.e., greater than eight lifetime partners) have fewer friendship nominations than girls who report no sexual partners. This provides some evidence that permissive girls are marginalized within peer groups. In addition, we find no evidence that girls with 1 to 8 sexual partners have fewer friendship nominations than their sexually inexperienced peers.[6]

[5]An alternative strategy to test the double standard hypothesis would be to include girls and boys in a pooled model and use interaction terms to estimate gender differences in the effects of lifetime sex partners on peer acceptance. In unlisted analyses, these interaction terms were in the expected direction and statistically significant at $p < .05$ (e.g., $b_{female*1\text{-}2\ partners} = -.10$; $b_{female*3\text{-}8\ partners} = -.20$; $b_{female*\ more\ than\ 8\ partners} = -.49$).

Girls with greater than eight sexual partners are predicted to have .8 fewer peer nominations than sexually inexperienced girls, holding all other variables constant. This effect is net of recent involvement in a non-romantic sexual encounter, suggesting that sexually permissive girls are socially marginalized regardless of whether or not their sexual behaviors occur only in the contexts of "romantic" relationships.[7] Indeed, sexual involvement outside of a romantic relationship during the past year has no direct effect on peer acceptance, failing to support the idea that intercourse outside of a committed relationship results in lowered female peer status. Looking at the remaining effects, we see few surprises. Female adolescents receive higher numbers of peer nominations if they participate in athletics or club activities, if they are doing well in school, or if they reside with both biological parents. Body mass is inversely related to female peer acceptance, so that girls with higher weight/height ratios have fewer peer nominations. Peer status is also higher among females who perceive that they are more physically mature than other females their age and who are rated as physically attractive by interviewers. Whereas violence has a negative effect on acceptance, alcohol use in the past year is positively associated with popularity. Hispanic and Asian females have significantly fewer friendship nominations than white females.

Supporting the hypothesis that boys are rewarded for sexually permissive behavior, we find that the number of lifetime sexual partners has a positive and monotonic effect on male peer acceptance. Unlike the results for girls, we find that sexually inexperienced boys have significantly less peer nominations than boys with one or more sexual partners, and more partners are associated with greater numbers of peer nominations. In comparison to boys who report no lifetime sexual partners, the predicted number of peer nominations changes by a factor of 1.3 among boys who report more than eight sexual partners, holding all other variables constant. The other coefficients are in the same direction as those observed in the female model, though the magnitude of these associations differs slightly by gender.

To assess the magnitude of these effects, Figure 1 presents predicted values of peer acceptance for girls and boys (based on Table 2). The values of lifetime sexual partners were allowed to vary while the other covariates are set to their mean values. As shown in Figure 1, among youth who report more than 8 lifetime sexual partners, boys have approximately 1.3 additional friendship nominations than girls. By contrast, among the majority of youth who report no current or prior sexual partners, boys report .7 fewer friendship nominations than girls.

We next turn our attention to the question, "Which peers provide (or fail to provide) status to sexually permissive youth?" Researchers in the area commonly assert that evaluations of "appropriate" sexual behavior are likely to vary by both the evaluator's and target's gender. Table 3 presents results from models that are identical to Table 2, but with gender-specific dependent variables. As shown in Table 3, permissive boys are more likely to gain status

[6]We also tested alternative specifications of the sexual partnership dummy variables (for example, 1 partner, 2-3 partners, 4-8 partners, >8 partners) and found similar overall results to those reported.

[7]We considered the possibility that the effect of lifetime sex partners on peer acceptance varies depending on whether the individual engaged in non-romantic sex during the past year (e.g., sexual permissiveness reduces the status of girls only if they are involved in a casual relationship). The interaction effect was statistically non-significant. For girls, this suggests that peer acceptance is negatively associated with number of lifetime sex partners regardless of whether or not their more recent sexual behaviors occurred within non-romantic relationships.

from female peers than from male peers, while permissive girls only have lower peer acceptance among other girls. These results suggest that female reactions to sexual behavior simultaneously escalate the status of permissive boys and decrease the status of permissive girls.

As reviewed previously, some research suggests that boys from disadvantaged backgrounds are the most likely to derive peer status from numerous lifetime sexual partners, in part because of the heterogeneity of gender frames and relational scripts in poor neighborhoods and urban schools (Anderson 1999; Harding 2007). Moreover, we expect that girls from advantaged backgrounds should receive more consistent messages than disadvantaged girls regarding the negative consequences of sexual permissiveness for life chances and "good" reputations. To test this conditional expectation, we estimated the effects of lifetime sexual partners on peer acceptance for girls and boys from families with high and low levels of parental education.

Table 4 presents survey-adjusted negative binomial regression estimates for the effects of number of sexual partners and other explanatory variables on peer acceptance by gender and socioeconomic background. We again used z-tests to compare the equality of the coefficients by socioeconomic background. Among girls, the z statistics for differences between the regression coefficients for lifetime sexual partners by socioeconomic background were not statistically significant ($p < .05$; two-tailed tests). Among boys, the z statistic was statistically significant for more than eight partners ($z = 2.03$).

As shown in Table 4, among girls from low educated families, the effect of sexual partners on peer acceptance is statistically non-significant (Model 1). By contrast, girls from high socioeconomic backgrounds who report eight or more lifetime sexual partners have significantly lower peer status than high SES girls who report no sexual partners (Model 2), even after we control for relationship status, school success, physical characteristics, and adjustment.

The positive effect of five or more lifetime sex partners on male peer acceptance is statistically significant only among boys from disadvantaged backgrounds (Model 3). For instance, boys from disadvantaged backgrounds who report 8 or more lifetime sexual partners have higher peer status than disadvantaged boys who report no partners. Among high SES boys, 8 or more lifetime sexual partners is not associated with increased peer status (Model 4). Thus, even though the association between lifetime sexual partners and peer status differs significantly by gender, the positive effects of sexual contacts are strongest among low SES boys.

DISCUSSION

In this study, we used social network data to explore the association between adolescent sexuality and peer acceptance at school. Our primary interest was to provide an innovative test of the sexual double standard in a nationally representative adolescent sample. Though most covariates of peer acceptance were similar for boys and girls (e.g., sports and club memberships, fighting, attractiveness, physical development, school performance, body

mass index, and social background), we found strong gender differences with regard to sexual behavior, such that increased numbers of sexual partnerships were positively associated with boys' peer acceptance but negatively associated with girls' peer acceptance. Boys with many sexual "conquests" are thus expected to be well-liked at schools, while permissive girls are predicted to have low status in school-based networks, regardless of whether or not their sexual behaviors occur within "romantic" relationships. Moreover, the positive association between male sexual permissiveness and peer acceptance was strongest among disadvantaged boys. Together, these findings suggest that gendered and social class-specific perceptions of normative sexual behaviors remain alive in contemporary adolescent peer contexts.

Our study has at least two advantages over prior research in the area. First, we examined the double standard hypothesis with a nationally representative sample of adolescents. Qualitative studies suggest that status concerns and gendered expectations for sexual conduct reach their peaks during the teenage years (Eder et al. 1995). The common use of relatively small undergraduate convenience samples overlooks this important developmental stage and likely explains null results from several quantitative tests of the double standard, particularly if gendered sexual attitudes become more egalitarian during young adulthood. Second, our analyses included concepts – such as socioeconomic background, attractiveness, delinquency, and bodyweight— that potentially mediate or moderate the association between sexual behavior and peer status. Prior research of the sexual double standard typically focuses solely on attitudinal differences by gender, without considering variation by other individual or social characteristics. Our finding that the effects of sexual permissiveness on peer acceptance vary by socioeconomic background points to the importance of social context for sexual attitudes and behavior.

Although we find evidence of the sexual double standard, we remain cautious in interpreting our results as causal associations. The ordering of sexual partnerships and peer status may be in the opposite direction to that predicted by the double standard hypothesis, such that peer status increases sexual opportunities and partnerships, rather than vice versa. Accordingly, unpopular girls would seek peer acceptance through sexual intercourse and popular boys would take advantage of their high status to have sex with many girls (Feldman et al. 1995). The sex-status association might also be reciprocal: unpopular girls may seek high status male sexual partners and simultaneously lose status among other girls, whereas high status boys may use their popularity to have sex with many females without fear of jeopardizing their places in popular mixed-gender adolescent cliques. Absent longitudinal network data, we cannot discern causal direction, nor can we completely rule out spuriousness resulting from unobserved characteristics. With this said, however, we assert that our observed patterns are clearly visible to the adolescents themselves, and thus help to perpetuate gendered sexual norms regardless of whether or not permissive sexual behaviors *cause* social status. Within adolescent peer culture, a discernable association between permissiveness and peer acceptance confirms preconceived notions of "slut" and "stud" labels and thereby solidifies permissive youths' positions within the peer status hierarchy.

We should also make clear that we do not provide a direct test of whether permissive girls are *stigmatized (i.e., rejected)* for their sexual behavior. To do so, we would need

nominations of peer dislike rather than peer friendships. Female stigmatization would then be apparent when disliked nominations increase with greater numbers of sexual partners. Such nominations are commonly collected in small-scale peer network studies, but were not part of the Add Health study. Absent disliked measures, we limit our discussion to relative peer acceptance and isolation. Future research that includes disliked nominations in a study of adolescent sexual behavior and peer networks could advance our understanding of sexual stigmatization processes.

We also note that our findings are confined to *school-based* peer networks. It is possible that permissive girls are unpopular in their schools, but have many out-of-school friends. Indeed, we find evidence for this when we compare self-reported out-of-school friends across girls and boys (Figure 2). As can be seen, average out-of-school friends increase with self-reported sexual partnerships among girls, but remain fairly level (and lower) for boys (gender differences at each category are significant at $p<.01$). This may indicate that permissive girls replace in-school friends for friends outside of school. However, absent any information about these friends (e.g., we do not know if they would reciprocate the friendship nomination), we are reluctant to conclude that these young women are indeed accepted by out-of-school peers. Moreover, having out-of-school sexual contacts and friendships may further undermine these girls' reputations within their schools, because school-based peers may interpret such liaisons as reinforcing "promiscuous" labels.

The assertion that girls and women are the arbiters of female sexual conduct has been made by numerous gender scholars (White 2002; Wolf 1997). However, the finding that permissive boys do not lose status among girls is worth further investigation and theorizing. It is also interesting that permissive girls do not appear to gain status from male peers, even though the girls are clearly sexually active. This may be because the young women are seeking status outside of school (as mentioned above) or because male peers seek casual sexual contacts with the girls without being friends (Oliver and Sedikides 1992). Further research is required to distinguish the mechanisms connecting the gendered origins of peer status to sexual behavior.

Another interesting, and perhaps counterintuitive, finding is that non-romantic sexual partnerships have no net correlation with school-based peer nominations. Several scholars point to non-romantic sexual liaisons as the clearest means for adolescent girls to be rejected by peers and earn "slut" labels (Risman and Schwartz 2002; Tolman 2002). To further explore this expectation, we estimated in unlisted analyses the zero-order association between non-romantic sexual involvement and peer acceptance. For boys, we found a significant positive association between non-romantic sex and peer acceptance, but for girls this estimate was non-significant and, although negative, approached zero.[8] One possible explanation for this pattern is that boys understand that positive peer attributions follow sexual activity of any sort, and volunteer information about recent non-romantic sexual contacts, whereas girls fear public knowledge of such liaisons and therefore do not disclose

[8]The way that Add Health measured non-romantic relationships may also reduce any association with peer acceptance. Rather than ask lifetime prevalence or frequency, Add Health asked only about non-romantic relationships within the past year. A wider time frame could potentially increase the association between non-romantic sex and peer acceptance and explain more of the correlation between sexual partnerships and peer acceptance.

the existence of non-romantic sex. Potential gender differences in sexual disclosure also emphasize the importance of social contexts for sexual double standard research. If female actors are successful at keeping their sexual contacts secret, then they may avoid any stigma associated with permissive behaviors. Clearly, increased frequencies of sexual partners and behaviors raises the risks of public disclosure and social reaction, perhaps explaining why only the most permissive girls have significantly fewer friendship nominations than other girls.

To this point, we have remained silent on issues of race and sexuality. Sexual norms may vary by racial category (Giordano, Manning, and Longmore 2005), either exacerbating or mitigating sexual double standards. Indeed, authors such as Anderson (1999) focus their attentions on the sexual dynamics in predominantly African-American communities, suggesting that racial contexts shape sexual attitudes. Future analyses should examine if the association between sexual partnerships and peer acceptance varies by race/ethnicity and gender.

We also do not address the association between same-sex partnerships and peer acceptance. Labels such as “fag” and “queer” are commonly applied to unpopular males (Eder et al. 1995), suggesting that the non-normative quality of adolescent homosexuality would create a negative correlation between same-sex partners and peer status. Unfortunately, Add Health lacks a measure for number of same-sex partners. However, the survey did ask respondents if they had ever had an attraction to someone of the same sex. In a recent paper using a subset of youth from the Add Health study, Ueno (2005) found that number of friendship nominations was equivalent for youth who ever had an attraction to someone of the same sex and other youth. Similarly, in unlisted models, we included this measure into our models and found a small and statistically non-significant effect (i.e., $p > .10$) between it and peer acceptance for both girls and boys. We also did not find any interaction effects between homosexual attraction and our sexual partner categories. Finally, removing sexual minority youth from our dataset left our findings virtually unchanged. We are hesitant to interpret these null effects as indicating that sexually active homosexual students are not stigmatized by their peers, however. The low variance in the homosexual attraction measure (approximately five percent of respondents answer yes to this question) and its uncertain association with actual sexual behavior make it a weak measure for testing the homosexuality-peer status link.

Another proposition left unexplored in our study is the association between school contexts and sexual double standards. Norms of appropriate sexual conduct may vary substantially across school settings, and understanding the sources of this variation could provide important insights for policy recommendations. For example, is sexual permissiveness more problematic for female status in small schools where students are less able to remain anonymous? In addition, characteristics of a school’s peer network – such as its size, density of ties, or tendency toward friendship reciprocity – may help explain the correlation between sexual behaviors and peer acceptance. Our survey analysis corrects for the correlated errors arising due to these within-school dependencies, but in future analyses, we intend to explore these potential contextual effects with multi-level models and random effects.

Finally, our findings prompt the question, "What are the long-term consequences of adolescent sexual double standards?" Trade books on sexual permissiveness are typically written by and about women who gained the "slut" label in adolescence (Tanenbaum 1999; White 2002; Wolf 1997). Although these women often describe their teenage years as tortuous, they also state that they were able to shed sexually derogative labels in young adulthood and learn from their early outsider experiences to become independent and successful adults. The women volunteering their autobiographies, however, may be a minority of previously permissive girls who were able to move beyond traumatic adolescent social experiences. Future research could better ascertain if, compared to less permissive peers, adolescents with many sexual partners successfully transition into economic, educational, and romantic adult roles. Of particular interest would be the potential for hyper-sexuality to derail the economic futures of disadvantaged boys. Staff and Kreager (forthcoming) found that low-SES males with high status in violent peer groups were at much greater risk of high school dropout than their peers. They argued that the immediate status benefits gained from violent peers are likely to outweigh long-term and often devalued educational goals. The same pattern may hold for disadvantaged boys who are highly invested in "player" identities. Success with women provides immediate status and sexual rewards, but may also result in unplanned childbirths and the diversion of energy from educational and employment tasks, thereby cementing these boys' futures in unconventional employment and low-income neighborhoods. Exploring this hypothesis with follow-on waves of Add Health will be at the heart of a future project.

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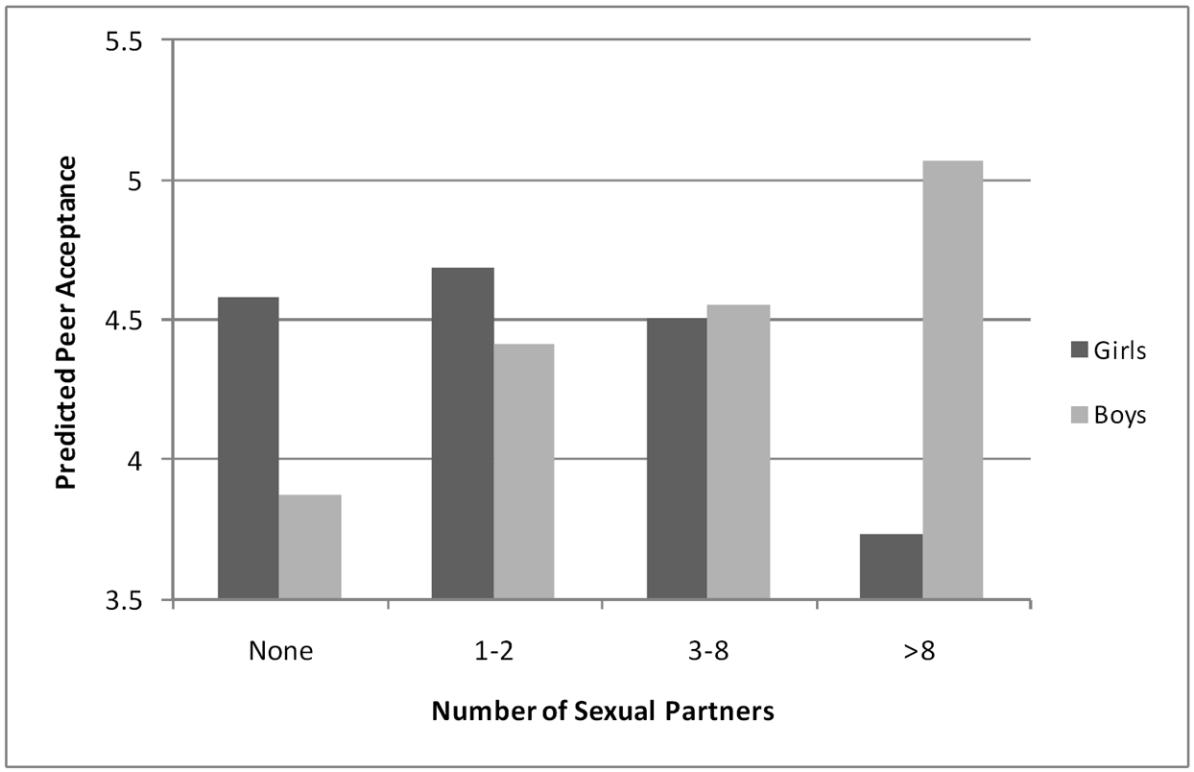

Figure 1.
Predicted Peer Acceptance among Girls and Boys by Number of Sexual Partners

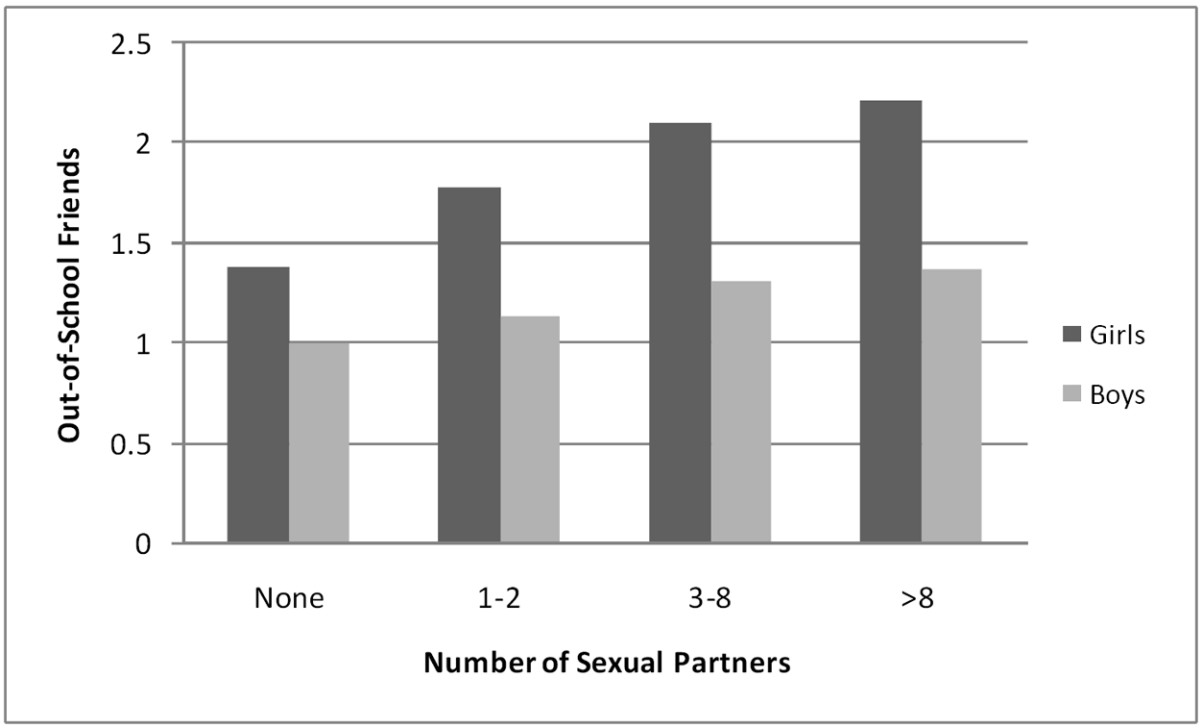

Figure 2.
Average Number of Out-of-School Friends among Girls and Boys by Number of Sexual Partners.

Soc Psychol Q. Author manuscript; available in PMC 2014 December 05.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics by Gender

	Females				Males			
Variables	**Mean / %**	**Std. Dev.**	**Min Value**	**Max Value**	**Mean / %**	**Std. Dev.**	**Min Value**	**Max Value**
Outcome Variable								
Peer Acceptance	4.71	3.62	0	32	4.27	3.76	0	30
Number of Lifetime Sexual Partners								
None	67%		0	1	62%		0	1
1-2 Partners	22%		0	1	20%		0	1
3-8 Partners	10%		0	1	13%		0	1
>8 Partners	2%		0	1	5%		0	1
Non-romantic sex (past year)	7%		0	1	12%		0	1
Athlete	47%		0	1	63%		0	1
Club Activities	69%		0	1	42%		0	1
Peabody Vocabulary Test	1.01	.14	.16	1.38	1.03	.14	.13	1.39
Grade Point Average	2.90	.73	1	4	2.69	.76	1	4
New to School	26%		0	1	25%		0	1
Physical Development	.01	.76	-2.09	1.61	.04	.69	-1.87	1.89
Physical Attractiveness	3.71	.90	1	5	3.48	.81	1	5
Body Mass Index	22.33	4.42	11.76	49.82	22.75	4.42	11.49	63.56
Fighting	.28	.60	0	3	.56	.83	0	3
Alcohol Use	1.99	1.33	1	7	2.14	1.52	1	7
White	53%		0	1	55%		0	1
Black	23%		0	1	20%		0	1
Hispanic	15%		0	1	16%		0	1
Asian	7%		0	1	8%		0	1
Other	1%		0	1	1%		0	1
Intact Family	53%		0	1	56%		0	1
Low Parent Education	42%		0	1	40%		0	1
Age	15.55	1.68	11	20	15.70	1.66	11	20
Sample Size		5,944				5,522		

Table 2

Survey-Adjusted Negative Binomial Regressions of Adolescent Peer Acceptance by Gender

Predictor Variables	***Girls***	***Boys***
1-2 Lifetime Sex Partners (vs. None)	.022 (.031)	.131 ** (.046)
3-8 Lifetime Sex Partners (vs. None)	-.019 (.049)	.163 ** (.053)
>8 Lifetime Sex Partners (vs. None)	-.207 * (.091)	.271 *** (.072)
Non-romantic sex (past year)	-.022 (.051)	.077 (.061)
Athlete	.191 *** (.033)	.210 *** (.036)
Club Activities	.212 *** (.030)	.131 *** (.034)
Peabody Vocabulary Test	.004 (.132)	-.085 (.145)
Grade Point Average	.069 ** (.024)	.107 *** (.026)
New to School	-.042 (.040)	-.122 * (.050)
Physical Development	.065 *** (.016)	.130 *** (.030)
Physical Attractiveness	.082 *** (.016)	.106 *** (.019)
Body Mass Index	-.024 *** (.004)	-.021 *** (.004)
Fighting	-.058 * (.023)	-.025 (.019)
Alcohol Use	.065 *** (.010)	.035 ** (.013)
Black (vs. White)	-.130 (.067)	-.123 (.068)
Hispanic (vs. White)	-.167 * (.067)	-.093 (.053)
Asian (vs. White)	-.283 *** (.070)	-.213 * (.087)
Other Race (vs. White)	-.154 (.163)	-.440 *** (.091)
Intact Family	.111 *** (.027)	.057 (.031)
Low Parent Education	.034 (.028)	-.031 (.036)
Age	-.019 (.012)	-.035 ** (.012)
Intercept	1.504 *** (.264)	1.620 *** (.248)
Sample Size	5,944	5,522
Alpha (dispersion parameter)	.28	.42

Note. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors;

*** $p < .001$,

** $p < .01$,

* $p < .05$

Table 3

Survey-Adjusted Negative Binomial Regressions of Adolescent Peer Acceptance By Gender of Respondent and Nominator

	Girls		Boys	
Predictor Variables	***Model 1. Peer Status from Girls Only***	***Model 2. Peer Status from Boys Only***	***Model 3. Peer Status from Girls Only***	***Model 4. Peer Status from Boys Only***
1-2 Lifetime Sex Partners (vs. None)	-.027 (.032)	.089 (.048)	.238 *** (.064)	.049 (.050)
3-8 Lifetime Sex Partners (vs. None)	-.050 (.045)	.033 (.086)	.265 *** (.072)	.083 (.055)
>8 Lifetime Sex Partners (vs. None)	-.197 * (.081)	-.194 (.191)	.401 *** (.096)	.148 (.086)
Non-romantic sex (past year)	.014 (.048)	-.083 (.097)	.099 (.077)	.065 (.063)
Athlete	.133 *** (.028)	.295 *** (.052)	.236 *** (.054)	.200 *** (.037)
Club Activities	.145 *** (.031)	.317 *** (.049)	.269 *** (.050)	.032 (.034)
Peabody Vocabulary Test	-.005 (.131)	.024 (.193)	-.271 (.219)	.014 (.134)
Grade Point Average	.070 ** (.024)	.063 (.036)	.086 (.046)	.125 *** (.023)
New to School	-.079 * (.037)	.020 (.061)	-.183 * (.075)	-.078 (.046)
Physical Development	.016 (.016)	.142 *** (.029)	.198 *** (.049)	.077 ** (.027)
Physical Attractiveness	.059 *** (.014)	.117 *** (.028)	.171 *** (.033)	.061 ** (.020)
Body Mass Index	-.013 *** (.004)	-.043 *** (.006)	-.039 *** (.006)	-.011 * (.004)
Fighting	-.044 * (.020)	-.085 * (.040)	-.054 (.027)	-.005 (.021)
Alcohol Use	.046 *** (.009)	.095 *** (.017)	.053 * (.022)	.024 * (.011)
Black (vs. White)	-.109 * (.055)	-.162 (.103)	-.004 (.089)	-.219 ** (.069)
Hispanic (vs. White)	-.188 ** (.058)	-.117 (.107)	-.095 (.082)	-.089 (.055)
Asian (vs. White)	-.235 *** (.057)	-.359 * (.144)	-.313 * (.150)	-.155 (.079)
Other Race (vs. White)	-.192 (.154)	-.038 (.250)	-.593 ** (.223)	-.338 ** (.109)
Intact Family	.086 *** (.023)	.142 ** (.047)	-.038 (.053)	.129 *** (.034)
Low Parent Education	.016 (.026)	.057 (.047)	-.041 (.059)	-.030 (.040)
Age	-.019 (.010)	-.015 (.018)	-.018 (.022)	-.045 *** (.012)
Intercept	1.031 *** (.256)	.540 (.385)	.814 (.449)	1.040 *** (.231)
Sample Size	5,940	5,940	5,521	5,521
Alpha (dispersion parameter)	.11	.81	1.07	.28

Note. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors;

*** $p < .001$,

** $p < .01$,

* $p < .05$

Table 4

Survey-Adjusted Negative Binomial Regressions of Adolescent Peer Acceptance By Gender and Socieconomic Origins

	Females		Males	
Predictor Variables	***Model 1: Low Parent Education***	***Model 2: High Parent Education***	***Model 3: Low Parent Education***	***Model 4: High Parent Education***
1-4 Lifetime Sex Partners (vs. None)	.007 (.050)	.036 (.039)	.160 * (.074)	.146 ** (.051)
5-8 Lifetime Sex Partners (vs. None)	.084 (.091)	-.159 (.089)	.345 ** (.115)	.009 (.089)
>8 Lifetime Sex Partners (vs. None)	-.080 (.150)	-.282 * (.126)	.437 *** (.111)	.102 (.108)
Non-romantic sex (past year)	.023 (.072)	-.044 (.069)	.085 (.071)	.060 (.080)
Athlete	.127 ** (.042)	.228 *** (.040)	.213 *** (.057)	.201 *** (.043)
Club Activities	.229 *** (.046)	.181 *** (.038)	.117 * (.046)	.117 ** (.041)
Peabody Vocabulary Test	.383 * (.172)	-.231 (.152)	.044 (.238)	-.102 (.195)
Grade Point Average	.027 (.036)	.086 ** (.030)	.102 * (.040)	.099 ** (.034)
New to School	-.093 (.057)	-.014 (.045)	-.086 (.083)	-.159 ** (.052)
Physical Development	.048 (.031)	.085 ** (.027)	.112 * (.046)	.147 *** (.037)
Physical Attractiveness	.074 ** (.027)	.084 *** (.018)	.113 *** (.029)	.095 *** (.023)
Body Mass Index	-.027 *** (.005)	-.021 *** (.005)	-.010 (.006)	-.031 *** (.005)
Fighting	-.049 (.029)	-.077 * (.031)	-.035 (.029)	-.016 (.026)
Alcohol Use	.062 *** (.018)	.070 *** (.013)	.030 (.020)	.045 ** (.015)
Religiosity	.029 (.026)	.065 *** (.018)	.023 (.023)	.060 ** (.022)
Black (vs. White)	-.089 (.090)	-.196 *** (.059)	-.024 (.103)	-.223 *** (.059)
Hispanic (vs. White)	-.135 (.073)	-.210 * (.083)	-.070 (.079)	-.066 (.064)
Asian (vs. White)	-.355 *** (.102)	-.248 ** (.079)	-.151 (.149)	-.205 * (.092)
Intact Family	.111 * (.045)	.098 ** (.032)	.047 (.057)	.057 (.038)
Age	-.025 (.014)	-.015 (.014)	-.050 * (.021)	-.025 (.013)
Intercept	1.399 *** (.327)	1.376 *** (.303)	1.343 *** (.378)	1.589 *** (.294)
Sample Size	2,473	3,465	2,206	3,312
Alpha (dispersion parameter)	.32	.24	.43	.41

Note. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors;

*** $p < .001$,

** $p < .01$,

* $p < .05$