

CULTURE & SOCIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT LAB



ABOUT OUR LAB & RESEARCH

California State University, Long Beach
Department of Psychology

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Director: **Dr. May Ling Halim**

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In the Culture and Social Identity Development Laboratory, we aim to understand the experiences of diverse children as they begin to form their gender and racial/ethnic identities. We seek to investigate children's early "intergroup" attitudes (e.g. towards children from various gender and racial/ethnic backgrounds), thoughts (e.g. group stereotypes), and behaviors (e.g. choosing stereotypical feminine or masculine clothing) that are linked with their developing identities with the goal of encouraging academic achievement, respectful peer relationships, and a positive sense of self.

This newsletter describes some of the studies that we are currently working on or have already completed. We hope that you and your child have enjoyed being a part of our research.

PARTICIPATING CENTERS

Much of the research described in this newsletter has been made possible by many parents, children, schools, centers, programs, teachers and staff. We thank these schools and centers for their participation.



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COMPLETED STUDIES

Early Gender Bias Found Across 4 Ethnic Groups and 5 US Regions with Implications for Gender Inclusiveness and Equity

Previous studies of White American children have found that gender bias is reliable and strong – children tend to like their own gender group more than other gender groups. This study asked whether this pattern would also be found among Asian-, Black-, and Latiné-American children living in 5 US geographical regions - Hawaii, Seattle, North Carolina, Connecticut, and California. Further, this study tested whether children’s liking of girls and boys would be associated with actual equitable and inclusive behavior.

Interviewing 623 4- to 6-year-old children, we found that young children’s favoritism towards their own gender group was remarkably consistent across ethnic groups and across all 5 US regions. Further, children who felt more positively about other genders showed more equitable and inclusive treatment (smaller differences in the number of erasers they would give to girls versus boys, and how close they would sit from a girl versus boy) than children who felt more negatively about other genders. Across a large and diverse sample, these findings suggest that to encourage more egalitarian behavior, future interventions should aim to improve attitudes towards different gender groups.



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Parent and Cognitive Development Factors Linked with Children’s Early Attitudes Towards Girls and Boys



Children vary in the ways that they feel towards different gender groups, which can color interactions at school and on the playground. For example, one child might gravitate towards playing with boys, while another might avoid them. Using the same sample as above, this study tested whether parent and cognitive development factors might contribute to these individual differences. Children who were actively forming a gender identity (paying great attention and interest to figuring what gender means in our society) tended to show favoritism towards their own gender group and were less equitable in their

treatment of girls and boys. On average, parents of young children encouraged their children to be friends with all gender groups, but reported discussing gender equality and discrimination infrequently. These explicit conversations about gender did not show connections to children’s attitudes or behaviors towards girls and boys. However, parents’ behaviors seemed to have more impact. The more housework mothers did than fathers, the greater was boys’ awareness of men’s higher social status than women’s (assessed by showing photos of women and men and asking children, “Who is in charge?”). Overall, multiple factors may contribute to variation in children’s early attitudes towards girls and boys. However, cognitive development factors seemed to play a stronger role compared to parent factors in early childhood.

Messages About the Comparative Worth of Women and Men Among Asian, Latiné, and European Heritage Families in the U.S.

We were interested in what young adults have learned from their family members during childhood about how women and men are comparatively valued, as these messages might shape young adults' own views about women and men. Thus we asked 307 university students from diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds to write about messages they recalled. The most prevalent theme described explicit conversations about gender inequality at work, in the home,



and through double standards regarding sexual behaviors (30% of all messages). Mothers, especially single mothers, strived to prepare daughters for possible future gender discrimination, pointing out advantages that men have over women (e.g., “Women have to work twice as hard to get the respect they deserve”). The second most prevalent way young adults discerned the comparative worth of women and men was through observing (un)equal treatment of female/male siblings or cousins in the family in the assignment of school/career expectations, chores, privileges, resources, and interpersonal treatment (e.g., “My sisters and I are punished for talking back, while my brother can give attitude and get away with it”; 25%). Fathers often encouraged general respect for all people regardless of gender (15%). Family members also conveyed “benevolent sexist” ideas (e.g., women and men have complementary roles/traits; “When it comes to the physical and to roles, my father said women and men were not equal and that men were stronger and the providers”; 16%). Finally, young adults who heard messages that conveyed benevolent sexism were more likely to endorse sexist views as well. These findings show that families can influence children’s views of women and men, and that the content of messages about gender that are conveyed can vary widely across different families.

CSULB Undergraduate Students: Audrey DeFoe, Kevin Han Mark Ortiz-Payne (alum), Brenda Gutierrez (alum); Collaborator: Dr. Campbell Leaper (UC Santa Cruz)



Pg. 3 Study Students: Stats Atwood, Jessica Glazier, Alisha Osornio, Anais Martinez, Mark Ortiz-Payne; Pg. 3 Collaborators: Dr. Yarrow Dunham (Yale), Dr. Sarah Gaither (Duke), Dr. Kristina Olson (Princeton), and Dr. Kristin Pauker (University of Hawaii). This study is supported by the National Science Foundation.

CURRENT STUDIES

Play and Learning Across a Year

Infant behavior is important to the study of human development; however, recently the study of infants' behavior has often been either overlooked or only conducted in university labs. At this age, infants' and toddlers' movement abilities, language, object manipulation, and social interactions are changing rapidly. To better examine infant behavior, we and several other researchers will observe the behavior of infants and toddlers with their mothers in natural play at home. Videos will be taken of the natural play and home settings to examine infant behavior in a manner that reflects real-time development. These videos will later be combined with videos from 60+ other child development research labs from across the U.S. to create a large database. With this large-scale project (the first of its kind), we can achieve a better understanding of infant behavior and answer questions related to the influence of environment and experience on infants' learning and development.

- *Infants 12 months, 18 months, and 24 months of age may participate.*
- *This study is supported by the National Institutes of Health for Child Health and Human Development and The LEGO Foundation.*
- *Principal Investigators: Dr. Karen Adolph (New York University), Dr. Catherine Tamis-LeMonda (New York University), and Dr. Rick Gilmore (Penn State University)*



RESEARCH DISSEMINATION

Talks

- **Halim, M. D. (January 2022). *Reducing gender stereotyping and promoting positive relationships among genders in diverse classrooms*. National Institute on the Teaching of Psychology.**

Conferences

- **California State University, Long Beach, *Psychology Day*, Long Beach, CA**
- **Cognitive Development Society, Madison, WI**
- **Western Psychological Association, Portland, OR**
- **Society for Personality and Social Psychology, San Francisco, CA**

Media

- Halim, M. D., & Martin, C. L. (2022, March 17). *Friendships with different genders reduce sexism*. Society for Personality and Social Psychology Character & Context. <https://www.spsp.org/news-center/blog/halim-martin-children-gender-friendships>
- Halim, M. D. (2021, June). Podcast interview: Gender expression and identity in young children. Families Canada/CEECD/University of Montreal/Dr. Paul Roumeliotis. Retrieved from <https://familiescanada.libsyn.com/supporting-gender-identity-in-early-years>



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RECENT PUBLICATIONS

- Osornio, A. C.*, Lane, S. P., Urizar, G., Gonzalez, A., & Halim, M. D. (in press). Developmental trajectories of internalizing distress among ethnic minoritized mothers following childbirth: Associations with early child psychological adjustment. *Development and Psychopathology*.
- Halim, M. D., Sakamoto, D. J.*, Russo, L. N.*, Echave, K. N.*, Portillo, M. A.*, & Tawa, S.* (2022). Early gender differences in valuing strength. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 51, 2169-2182. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-021-02185-4>
- Caleo, S., & Halim, M. D. (2021). Gender and the development of leadership stereotypes. Commentary on Heck et al. *Psychological Inquiry*, 2, 72-76. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1047840X.2021.1930745>
- Kuchirko, Y., Bennet, A., Halim, M. D., Costanzo, P., & Ruble, D. N. (2021). The influence of siblings on ethnically diverse children's gender typing across development. *Developmental Psychology*, 57, 771-782. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dev0001173>
- Martinez, M. A.*, Gutierrez, B. C.*, Halim, M. D., & Leaper, C. (2021). Gender and ethnic variation in emerging adults' recalled dating socialization in relation to current romantic attitudes and relationship experiences. *Sexuality and Culture*, 25, 2208-2230. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-021-09873-2>

*denotes current or former CSULB undergraduate or graduate students

—STUDENT AWARDS & HONORS—

- **CSULB Psychology Outstanding Senior in Psychology Award (2021-22):** Crystal Sanchez
- **CSULB Psychology Outstanding Senior in Psychology Award (2022-23):** Audrey Tran
- **CSULB Associated Students Inc. Student Research Grant (2022):** Esther Choe



SPECIAL SHOUT-OUTS

It has been a wonderful year of accomplishments for students in our lab! Congratulations:

- **Kevin Han** for his acceptance into UC Riverside's Ph.D. Program in School Psychology
- **Dylan Sakamoto (alum)** for his acceptance into California State University, Long Beach's Master of Industrial-Organizational Psychology Program
- **Anais Martinez (alum)** for her acceptance into UC Riverside's Ph.D. Program in Social Psychology
- **Sachiko Tawa (alum)** for her acceptance into Alliant University's Psy.D. program
- **Brenda Gutierrez (alum)** for her upcoming position as a new Assistant Professor in our very own California State University, Long Beach Department of Psychology
- For graduating with a B.A. in Psychology: **Audrey DeFoe, Kevin Han, Crystal Sanchez**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about your lab.

- We are researchers from the psychology department at California State University, Long Beach. Dr. May Ling Halim is the director of the lab and the principal investigator. Our research focuses on children's social identity (gender, race/ethnicity) development. All researchers are graduate and undergraduate students that were screened through a competitive application process and were selected by Dr. Halim. They have all been trained specifically to work with children by Dr. Halim. They have also completed IRB ethics training.

2. My child has already participated in one (or more) of your studies, should I still participate this year?

- We are actively looking for 12, 18, and 24-month-old infants for the PLAY study. If your child has a younger sibling, please let us know! Our researchers will go to the child's home. Participants will be compensated for their time.

3. I know of a center that would be interested in your research. Is there a way to put you in contact with each other?

- Yes! We are always interested in working with different institutions and would appreciate a referral. You can send information about the center and your name to ChildDevResearch@csulb.edu.

4. How can I learn more/participate in your studies?

- For more information about our studies and participation, please email us at ChildDevResearch@csulb.edu. You may also visit our website at <http://home.csulb.edu/~mhalim/index.html>.

5. Where can I find the results of the study?

- For past studies, if you'd like to be put on a list for notification of publication, email us at ChildDevResearch@csulb.edu or inform a research assistant. You may also ask to subscribe to our newsletter to keep up-to-date with our research studies. It also allows you to be informed of studies during the research process. For current studies, we are still collecting data. When data collection is complete, we then interpret our data and results and eventually write a report for publication. This may take a long time, as it involves writing, reviewing, editing, and rewriting.

HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE?

If you would like more information on any of our studies or would like to participate in the PLAY study, we can be reached through:

Email: ChildDevResearch@csulb.edu

Text: (562) 263-9175

Thank you so much for your participation and interest in our research! None of this could have been achieved without your participation.

2021–2022 LAB MEMBERS

Benjamin Beyer
Rita Butrus
Esther Choe

Kevin Han
Audrey DeFoe
Jesica Kan

Crystal Sanchez
Devynn Smith

Akashi Suon
Audrey Tran



Hosting Dr. Sethi from U. of Delhi, India (2022)



Crystal Sanchez at graduation (2022)