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Human Rights Attitudes and Peer Influence:  
The Role of Explicit Bias, Gender, and Salience

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Abstract

Human rights are an essential element of a civil society. Attitudes about these laws and the role of peer influence in shaping these attitudes, has not garnered much attention. This study examined the strategies individuals employ to influence a peers' beliefs about human rights laws in Spain. One hundred ninety-six participants at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid completed measures of human rights knowledge, feelings concerning human rights, political alienation, prejudice, sexism, and ethnic bias towards Gitanos (gypsies). Social power strategies to influence peers' attitudes about the rights of ethnic minorities (Gitanos) and women were measured on Raven's Interpersonal Power Inventory. Gitano Bias, feelings about human rights, and Gough's Prejudice (Pr) scale predicted the endorsement of hard influence strategies. Hostile sexism and the Pr scale predicted the use of both soft and hard strategies concerning women's rights. Greater effort to influence a peer was employed in a high salience condition (e.g. women's use of social power concerning the rights of women). Findings indicate that explicit bias, gender, and salience of human rights to the individual contribute to efforts to influence a peer's beliefs concerning human rights laws.

Human rights, and polices meant to enforce them, are cornerstones of civil societies. Human Rights have long been an important issue to the international community (United Nations, 2003). This study examined three inter-related issues concerning human rights in a member country of the European Union (EU). These included the relationship between knowledge about human rights and attitudes about these laws, the preferred social power strategies used to influence a peer's attitudes about human rights, and whether the salience of these laws modified an individual's efforts to influence peer attitudes about the rights of ethnic minorities and women.

#### Knowledge and Attitudes Concerning Human Rights

Human rights initiatives seek to promote voting rights, freedom of speech, the rights of women, economic self-determination, and opposition to ethnic violence (Weisbrodt, 1988). The United Nations and European Union advocate public education about human rights laws and policies. For example, the United Nations promoted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a document to be "... disseminated, displayed, read and expounded principally in schools and other educational institutions, without distinction based on the political status of countries or territories" (United Nations Website, 2003). This issue remains important for social policy, as exemplified by the recent adoption of laws by the EU that explicitly address human rights at a time of increased minority group in-migration to Europe and associated tensions between ethnic groups throughout the region.

The study of attitudes concerning human rights has examined a variety of factors. An individual's social attitudes reflect the interaction of cognitive, affective, and situational factors (Zanna, 1994). Kravitz and Kleinberg (2000) have proposed that attitudes concerning individual rights are influenced by beliefs relevant to the issue – such as the perceived fairness of such laws – and individual differences such as political orientation. In a study concerning affirmative action attitudes in the U.S., Aberson and Haag found that both attitudes and individual differences

contributed to the degree of favorableness in how these laws were viewed and that attitudes varied in terms of specific affirmative action practices. However, there is little evidence that knowledge about human rights laws is related to individual's attitudes about these laws. In conjunction with the efforts to formulate human rights policy, political psychologists have studied citizen comprehension of civil rights laws (Batelaan & Coomans, 1999; Davies, 2000). Price (1993) identifies citizen knowledge, ideological sophistication, and opinion change as constituting three distinct areas of investigation. At present there is limited information about the relationship between knowledge of human rights laws, and attitudes and feelings about the laws themselves (Sales & Garcia-Lopez, 1998).

A particularly important human rights issue globally concerns women's rights. The rights of women constitute a universal social issue. At the same time sexist attitudes have only recently begun to be conceptualized as a type of prejudice (Swim, Aikin, Hall & Hunter, 1995). Prior research has found associations between authoritarianism and hostile attitudes toward women (Walker, Rowe & Quinsey, 1993). A series of international studies concerning sexism elaborates upon the idea of sexism as a form of prejudice; one that encompasses both hostile feelings toward women (Hostile Sexism) and patronizing ideologies about women (Benevolent Sexism) (Glick et al., 2000). The rights of women are critical to the civil society initiative in the European Union; laws have been implemented by the European Union Commission on Human Rights and the Spanish Constitution that explicitly address the question of gender equality, particularly in the areas of sexual harassment and employment rights.

#### *Peer Influence upon Human Rights Attitudes*

Fishbein (2002) has proposed that intergroup attitudes are frequently influenced by peer relationships. These informal social relationships shape both ingroup norms and perceptions of social outgroups. The most influential work in the study of social influence is by French and Raven

(1959), who proposed a general model of social power. Raven's subsequent research has distinguished between "hard" strategies, such as explicit reward behavior or coercion, and "soft" relational and logic-based strategies, such as the use of referent or information power (Raven, 1992). Determining how social power is used to shape peer attitudes about human rights extends the work of French and Raven into the area of intergroup research. In addition, examining the question of human rights in terms of social power is particularly important given that many psycho-educational initiatives strive to develop intergroup awareness through peer interaction and cooperative learning. It is therefore important to examine how peer interaction may influence attitudes about the rights of social outgroups.

One study that examined peer influence and human rights attitudes found that men and women differ in their endorsement of strategies to influence a peer's beliefs concerning the rights of ethnic minorities (Dunbar, Blanco, Sullaway, & Horcajo, 2003). This study found that men in Spain endorsed the use of hard influence strategies significantly more so than did women. This is consistent with the literature on gender and social influence generally (Carli, 2001). Interestingly, in the Dunbar et al. study, the possession of knowledge about human rights laws did not lead to greater use of logic-based (i.e., information) arguments to influence a peer toward one's own point of view on this issue, even though it would seem likely that increased knowledge would be associated with increased use of an information power strategy. In this study, peer influence strategies were examined in terms of human rights attitudes generally. It would be useful to know whether peer influence strategies would vary, based upon the target (gender or ethnic) group that these laws were being used to protect.

Attitudes about individual rights may additionally be influenced by the intrinsic meaningfulness or salience of the topic to the individual (Aberson, in press) and perceived threat, as evidenced by the relationship of mortality salience with intergroup bias (Greenberg et al., 1990;

Wischusen, Nelson, & Pollini, 2002). The salience of human rights laws to the individual and their ingroup may influence how these issues are addressed in peer relationships. In conditions concerning the rights of outgroup persons – a low-salience condition – individuals may be expected to put forth less effort to influence peer attitudes. By comparison, human rights policies that have direct consequence for the individual and their ingroup – a high-salience condition – would be expected to result in a more effortful and complex approach in influencing peer attitudes. In these high salience conditions, the individual's intrinsic motivation is heightened. Deci and Ryan (1980) note that intrinsic motivation encompasses the individual's perception of the favorableness of a task and the extrinsic, interpersonal, and intrinsic demands encountered in the realization of a desired outcome. As such, efforts to influence a peer's attitudes about human rights may be thought to vary based upon the intrinsic meaningfulness of the issue to the individual.

#### *Individual Characteristics and Human Rights Attitudes*

Individual difference variables such as gender (Carter, 1990) and age (Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1994) have been found to be associated with racism and attitudes concerning employment rights (Kravitz et. al. 2000). Political attitudes, including alienation from the political system, may play a role in attitudes concerning human rights. Reef and Knoke (1993) describe political alienation as the individuals' absence of support for governmental institutions and the political system itself, rather than a particular governing administration that is in office at a given time. It would seem evident that support for human rights laws would in part be dependent upon belief in governmental institutions as a whole, and that a sense of alienation from and hostility toward democratic forms of government, such as those of E.U. member states, would be associated with negative attitudes concerning human rights laws.

Another individual difference variable relevant to intergroup attitudes concerns one's disposition towards bias in general. Gough's Prejudice (Pr) scale, has consistently demonstrated

relationships to bias against ethnic and other minority out-groups (Gough, 1951; Gough & Bradley, 1993; Dunbar, 1995). This scale (also called the “To” or Tolerance Scale in the California Psychological Inventory) has demonstrated cross-cultural validity in predicting bias against indigenous people (Dunbar, Saiz, Stela, & Saiz, 1999) and the endorsement of anti-Semitic and Roma (Gitano) bias (Dunbar & Simonova, 2003).

### *Social and Historical Context of the Current Study*

This study was conducted in Spain, a multi-lingual and multi-ethnic nation. Spain has undergone significant political change during the past generation. Contemporary Spanish culture incorporates a variety of socializing forces relevant to human rights. As a Latin culture, the male-dominant cultural traditions are significant, but at the same time Spain, as a member of the European Union, is committed to policies supporting the rights of women, ethnic minorities, and gays and lesbians. As instituted under the Constitution of 1978 and its E.U. member status, Spain is governed by both national and EU human rights laws. For example, the Spanish Constitution recognizes the legitimacy of the multi-ethnic status and rights of the citizenry in Article 143 of the Constitution. The current study sought to examine the attitudes toward human rights laws in this specific cultural context.

Spain additionally has a notable history for inter-ethnic problems and religious conflict (Menocal, 2002), and the out-migration of minorities during the inquisition. For the past millennium, Gitanos – gypsies - have constituted a visible ethnic minority group throughout Europe. Gitanos play a prominent role in much of Spanish folklore, but at the same time they are often viewed as more criminal, as less work-motivated, and as belonging outside of mainstream Spanish culture (Caton Ortiz & Gómez Jacinto, 1996).

### Research Questions

This study examined the predictors of peer influence strategies concerning the rights of

ethnic minorities—Gitanos—and women. This latter question was tested in conditions of both low and high salience to the individual. Five hypotheses based upon prior research were proposed, these are described below.

H1: Feelings about human rights laws - as measured on the Human Rights Affect Rating - would be correlated with negative attitudes about social issues – as measured on the political alienation and the Pr scales – and measures of explicit outgroup bias - Gitano bias, Hostile Sexism, and Benevolent Sexism.

H2: Positive feelings about human rights laws would be predicted by possession of accurate knowledge about these laws when controlling for participant age and gender. It was of interest to consider whether possession of specific knowledge about human rights would positively influence how individuals felt about these laws.

H3: As suggested by prior research (Dunbar, et. al. 2003), negative affect concerning human rights laws and an orientation towards outgroup bias would predict the endorsement of “hard” social power strategies to influence a peer’s opinion concerning human rights laws for ethnic minority persons (i.e. Gitanos) and for women. The endorsement of soft strategies would be predicted by possession of accurate knowledge about human rights and greater positive affect concerning human rights laws.

H4: It was anticipated that men and women would differ in their endorsement of social power strategies (Carli, 2001) concerning human rights. It was hypothesized that men would report greater effort, or certitude, than women in trying to influence a peer’s beliefs about human rights, replicating the Dunbar et. al. findings (2003).

H5: It was expected that peer influence strategies would vary by the salience of the human rights topic. It was anticipated that gender differences in the endorsement of peer influence strategies would decrease or disappear in a high-salience condition – i.e. in which women would

experience greater consequence - versus debating issues of Gitano rights (a low salience condition). In other words, the strategy selected will vary as a function of the salience to the individual and their ingroup.

### *Method*

#### *Sample*

One-hundred ninety-six students (22.5% males, 77.5 % females) enrolled at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid participated in the study. Participant median age was 21 years ( $SD = 2.43$ ) with a range from 19 to 36 years.

#### *Materials*

*Demographic Variables:* Participant age and gender were recorded on a demographic face sheet.

*Human Rights Knowledge Scale:* The 23-item measure of human rights laws and policies in Spain and the European Union was developed by the second author, in consultation with members of the European human rights community. Scale items consisted of factual statements about human rights laws that were evaluated on a 7-point Likert scale, with statements rated from “very certain this is true” to “very certain this is not true.” The statements examined knowledge concerning human rights policies of Spain (“Spain does not have an agency responsible for monitoring the civil rights of minority groups such as Gitanos”) and civil laws (“There are laws in Spain against the advocacy of violence against minority groups such as Gitanos or Jews”), as well as knowledge of EU human rights practices (“The European Union does not have a policy concerning the human rights of social groups such as Gitanos”). The measure consists of four subscales. The first subscale measures knowledge about ethnic violence (e.g. hate crime) laws and consists of four items ( $M = 13.25$ ,  $SD = 2.01$ ;  $\alpha = .76$ , 95% CI = 12.97 – 13.54). The second subscale of six items measures knowledge about laws concerning protection against discrimination; the scale mean was 23.01 ( $SD$

= 2.24;  $\alpha = .69$ , 95% CI = 22.69 – 23.32). The third subscale of three items measured knowledge of laws concerning hate speech; the subscale mean was 9.07 ( $SD = 2.52$ ;  $\alpha = .64$ , 95% CI = 8.71 – 9.42). The final subscale measures knowledge of government policies regarding human rights enforcement. This scale consists of 10 items with a subscale mean of 36.19 ( $SD = 3.13$ ;  $\alpha = .88$ , 35.75 – 36.63).

*Human Rights Affect Ratings:* Participants were asked to rate their feelings about human rights laws on three 7-point semantic differential measures, developed by Haddock and Zanna (1999) in their study of attitudes about capital punishment. The three affect pairs (“Positive-Negative, Good-Bad, Like-Dislike”) were aggregated to form a global rating of feelings concerning human rights laws. The scale mean was 9.03 ( $SD = 3.97$ ,  $\alpha = .86$ , 95% CI = 8.47 – 9.59). Higher scores indicate more positive feelings about human rights laws.

*Political Support – Alienation Scale* (Muller, Jukam, & Seligson, 1982) According to its authors, “the intent of the scale is to measure... how well the political system and political institutions conform to a person’s general sense of what is right and proper and how well the system and institutions uphold basic political values of importance to citizens”. The eight-item scale is scored on a 7-point response continuum, with scores ranging from 7 (low support, high alienation) to 56 (high support, low alienation). Items include such questions as “To what extent do you feel that the basic rights of citizens are well protected by our political system?” The scale mean was 25.76 ( $SD = 8.02$ ;  $\alpha = .85$ , 95% CI = 24.63 – 26.89).

*Prejudice Scale (Pr):* The 32 items of Gough’s original Pr scale (Gough, 1951) from the established Spanish version of the MMPI were employed. This scale includes items that reflect a cynical, rigid, bitter perspective on social and intergroup issues. Prior research with the measure has shown cross-cultural reliability in its prediction of outgroup bias (Dunbar, 1995; Dunbar et al.,

1999). The sample scale mean was 9.95 ( $SD = 4.39$ ,  $\alpha = .77$ , 95% CI = 9.33 – 10.58), which is comparable to the normative values reported by Gough in (1951).

*Gitano Bias Scale*: This is a 22-item Likert-type scale that includes negative and positive social attitudes concerning Gitanos. The measure was first developed to examine anti-Roma (i.e., Gitano) attitudes in the Czech Republic (Dunbar & Simonova, 2003). Items measure negative stereotypes such as laziness (“Gitanos do not have a positive relationship to work, they are lazy”), criminality (“Gitanos commit more criminal acts than other people), and problems integrating into mainstream Spanish culture (“Gitanos place greater importance on their own ethnic interests than in the interest of Spain”). The scale mean was 73.34 ( $SD = 15.38$ ,  $\alpha = .89$ , 95% CI = 71.16 – 75.51).

*Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI)*: The 22-item Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996) is a self-report measure of sexist attitudes composed of separate 11-item Hostile Sexism (HS) and Benevolent Sexism (BS) subscales. HS reflects “antipathy toward women who are viewed as usurping men’s power” (Glick & Fiske, 2001, 109), and an “adversarial view of gender relations in which women are perceived as seeking to control men, whether through sexuality or feminist ideology” (Glick & Fiske, 2001). Examples of HS items include “Many women are actually seeking special favors, such as hiring policies that favor them over men, under the guise of asking for equality”, and “Women seek to gain power by getting control over men”. BS reflects “a subjectively favorable, chivalrous ideology that offers protection and affection to women who embrace conventional roles” (Glick & Fiske, 2001, p.109), for example “Women should be cherished and protected by men” and “Women, compared to men, tend to have a superior moral sensibility”. BS and HS tend to be modestly correlated. The HS subscale mean was 1.68 ( $SD = .97$ , ;  $\alpha = .87$ , 95% CI = 1.54 – 1.82). The BS subscale mean was 1.92 ( $SD = .96$ ,  $\alpha = .90$ , 95% CI = 1.79 – 2.01).

*Interpersonal Power Inventory* (IPI) (after Raven, Schwarzwald, & Koslowsky, 1998): This 33-item Likert-scaled measure asks respondents to describe forms of social power they would employ to gain the agreement or compliance of another. The IPI measures the forms of social power described by French and Raven (1959). The power strategies include both hard (e.g., personal coercion) and soft (e.g., information) forms of influence strategies. In the current version of the Raven Inventory, all items were worded to reflect interaction with a peer, that is, a person of equal status. Participants were asked to respond to describe their use of social influence strategies under two different condition involving interaction with a peer in which the participant was asked to convince the peer to agree with them on a topic concerning human rights. One condition asked respondents to describe how they would influence a peer to agree with their position about laws protecting the civil rights of Gitanos. The second condition asked respondents to describe how they would influence a peer to agree with their position about laws to guard against discrimination against women.

An example of a statement reflecting personal expertise (one of the “soft” influence strategies) on the IPI is “I would probably have had more knowledge about the issue than they would have,” whereas a statement such as “I could have made it more difficult for them to get some special benefits if they disagreed with me” would reflect the use of material reward (a “hard” social influence strategy). Each IPI item is scored on a 7-point Likert scale. Low values reflect a disinclination to use a certain form of social power (1 = almost certainly not a strategy) and high scores a preference to use a strategy (7 = almost certainly a strategy). Each IPI scale consists of 3 items, allowing for a scale range from 3 to 21. For the 11 individual scales, the mean reliability coefficient (alpha) was .70 (range of .51 to .95) for the Gitano condition; for the women’s rights condition the mean alpha coefficient was .63 (scale range from .50 to .95)

### *Procedure*

All measures, with the exception of the Pr Scale and the ASI, were translated from English into Spanish by both the third and fourth authors. The materials were then back-translated by a US-based professional author, fluent in both Spanish and English. The Prejudice Scale items were taken from a prior translation of the MMPI, which has been widely used in Spain. A Spanish language translation of the ASI, which has been used in Spain and other Spanish speaking countries, was kindly provided by the developers of the ASI for use in this study (Glick, 2002, personal communication; Fiske, 2002, personal communication). Participants were solicited at their university and received academic credit for participating in the study. To reduce response bias (Sundberg & Bachelis, 1956) no reference to the topics of inter-group attitudes was made in participant solicitation. All questionnaire materials were administered during regular class sessions. The administration of the materials was as follows: the Prejudice scale was administered first, followed by the Human Rights Knowledge Scale, the Political Support-Alienation Scale, and the Human Rights Affect scale. The ASI followed, then the Gitano Bias Scale. The Interpersonal Power Inventory was administered, and the demographic self-ratings were administered last. On the IPI it was emphasized that participants were to think of a situation in which they would try to change the opinion of a peer who held opposite attitudes from those of the participant concerning, separately, the rights of Gitano persons and the rights of women. The completed materials were entered into a database by a research team supervised by the third author.

#### Analysis of Data

The data set was analyzed using SPSS 10.5. This dataset was initially analyzed via computation of zero order correlations to examine the relationships between the independent variables. The hypothesized relationships concerning feelings about human rights laws and peer influence strategies was examined via hierarchical multiple regression (HMR) analysis. The HMR equation allowed for the determination of the (proposed) contribution of individual difference

variables – i.e., Gitano bias and the Gough Pr scale –after participant demographic and human rights knowledge variables had been entered into the regression model. This research strategy largely replicates the methodology employed in the Dunbar, et. al. study (2004). Finally, a set of analysis of variance computations were conducted to test hypothesis four, in examining how social power varied by gender.

## Results

*Relationships between sexism, ethnic bias and Pr Scale.* Computed significance tests revealed differences between men ( $M = 11.14$ ) and women ( $M=9.60$ ) for the Pr scale,  $t(183) = 2.04, p < .05$ ) and the Hostile Sexism Scale ( $M=2.02$  and  $1.59$  for men and women respectively),  $t(189) = 2.62, p < .05$ ). Consequently, zero-order correlations were computed separately for women and men. For women the Pr scale was correlated with Gitano Bias, Benevolent Sexism, and Hostile Sexism. Gitano Bias was correlated with Benevolent Sexism and Hostile Sexism for women participants. As found in prior research Benevolent Sexism and Hostile Sexism were intercorrelated. For men the Pr Scale was correlated with Gitano Bias and Hostile Sexism but not with Benevolent Sexism. Hostile Sexism was also correlated with Gitano Bias, and with Benevolent Sexism for men.

*Relationships between feelings about human rights, Pr Scale, and political alienation.* To examine hypothesis one the relationship of the measures of bias and attitudes about human rights and political support/alienation were examined via zero order correlations for women and men. For women, Political Support-Alienation and Human Rights Affect were negatively correlated, in other words, political alienation was associated with less positive feelings about human rights laws. Results for men found a negative correlation between the Pr Scale with Human Rights Affect. Political Support-Alienation was also negatively correlated with Human Rights Affect.

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Insert Table 1 About Here

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*Predicting positive feelings about human rights laws.* A hierarchical regression model was computed to test hypothesis two, with the Human Rights Affect Rating serving as the dependent variable. On step one, participant gender and age were entered into the model ( $Adj. R^2 = -.002$ ),  $F Change = .05$ ,  $p = n.s.$ ). On step two, the four subscales for knowledge of human rights laws were entered ( $Adj. R^2 = .07$ ,  $F Change = 3.51$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Knowledge about government policies to reduce discrimination ( $B = .29$ ,  $t = 2.94$ ,  $p < .004$ ) was the singularly significant predictor to more positive attitudes about human rights.

*Social influence strategies and Gitano rights.* Hypothesis three proposed that hard social influence strategies would be related to bias orientation. To test this hierarchical multiple regression models were computed to examine the endorsement of hard and soft social strategies on the IPI to influence peers' attitudes concerning Gitano rights. Participant gender and age were initially entered (step 1) followed by the four Human Rights Knowledge subscales (step 2). On step 3 Human Rights Affect was entered; on step 4 the Gitano Bias Scale was entered. Finally, in step 5, the Pr scale was entered into the model. Hard social influence was predicted by participant gender and age, the Human Rights Affect scale, the Gitano Bias scale, and the Pr scale. The soft social influence score of the IPI in the Gitano rights condition was predicted by participant gender and age ( $Adj. R^2 = .09$ ,  $F Change = 9.29$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Human Rights Affect, the Gitano Bias scale, and the Pr scale were also significant predictors in the model. These findings are presented in Table 2.

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*Social influence strategies and women's rights.* The prediction of hard and soft social

influence strategies selected to influence peer attitudes concerning women's issues was examined via a hierarchical regression model. Participant gender and age were entered on step 1 followed by the four Human Rights Knowledge Scales on step 2. On step 3 the Human Rights Affect score was entered; on step 4 the two Ambivalent Sexism Inventory scales – Hostile Sexism and Benevolent Sexism – were entered. Finally, in step 5, the Pr scale was entered into the model.

The endorsement of hard social influence tactics on the IPI was predicted by participant demographic status for gender and age combined, Human Rights Affect, the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory, with the Hostile Sexism scale demonstrating a significant predictive relationship. After all these values were entered the Pr scale additionally improved the model.

Endorsement of soft social influence tactics concerning women's rights on the IPI was predicted by participant age. After the human rights knowledge and Human Rights Affect values were entered, Hostile Sexism additionally improved the model. These findings are presented in Table 3.

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*Gender differences in the use of social power strategies.* As proposed by hypothesis four, gender differences in the endorsement of social influence strategies on the IPI were examined in a series of one-way ANOVA tests. When influence strategies regarding Gitano rights were examined, results indicated significant gender differences for reward-material ( $F(1,188) = 4.96, p < .05, \eta^2 = .03, \text{power} = .60$ ), coercive-personal ( $F(1,189) = 7.35, p < .01, \eta^2 = .04, \text{power} = .79$ ), coercive-material ( $F(1,188) = 4.44, p < .05, \eta^2 = .02, \text{power} = .55$ ), legitimate equity ( $F(1,188) = 6.41, p < .05, \eta^2 = .03, \text{power} = .71$ ), legitimate-reciprocity ( $F(1,189) = 8.00, p < .01, \eta^2 = .04, \text{power} = .80$ ),

and expert ( $F(1,189) = 4.23, p < .05, \eta^2 = .02, \text{power} = .53$ ) based influence strategies. Men express greater likelihood of selecting these strategies than women. For men, the preferred peer influence strategies were information ( $M = 17.62, SD = 2.55$ ), legitimate-position ( $M = 12.77, SD = 2.94$ ), and legitimate-dependence ( $M = 12.28, SD = 4.46$ ). Similarly, for women the preferred peer influence strategies were information ( $M = 17.40, SD = 2.72$ ), legitimate-position ( $M = 11.80, SD = 2.99$ ), and legitimate-dependence ( $M = 11.79, SD = 3.65$ ).

When influence strategies regarding women's rights were examined using a series of one-way ANOVA tests, gender differences were found for reward-material ( $F(1,187) = 6.96, p < .01, \eta^2 = .04, \text{power} = .75$ ), coercive-personal ( $F(1,186) = 9.36, p < .01, \eta^2 = .01, \text{power} = .35$ ), legitimate-equity ( $F(1,186) = 9.08, p < .01, \eta^2 = .05, \text{power} = .85$ ), and legitimate-reciprocity ( $F(1,187) = 8.76, p < .01, \eta^2 = .05, \text{power} = .84$ ) based influence strategies. Once more men expressed greater likelihood of selecting these strategies than women. However, in contrast to results found in the Gitano rights condition, women and men did not differ in selecting expert and coercive-material strategies to influence a peer about women's rights. These findings are presented in Table 4.

In order of preference, men most strongly endorsed selection of information ( $M = 17.54, SD = 2.60$ ), legitimate-position ( $M = 12.79, SD = 2.98$ ), and legitimate-dependence ( $M = 12.14, SD = 4.14$ ) influence strategies. Women most frequently endorsed information ( $M = 17.82, SD = 2.25$ ), legitimate-position ( $M = 11.71, SD = 2.99$ ), and legitimate-dependence ( $M = 11.96, SD = 3.80$ ) strategies.

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Table 4 About Here

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*The role of human rights salience upon social influence effort.* We expected (hypothesis five)

that in a high salience condition, peer influence efforts would increase. Specifically it was hypothesized that women would report greater effort through the use of expert and information strategies when attempting to influence a peer about a topic women would have greater concern and commitment to (the high-salience condition), that of gender equity laws, compared to that of Gitano rights. Women were more likely to select expert strategies ( $t = -8.37, p < .001$ ) regarding gender equity ( $M = 11.58, SD = 2.33$ ) compared to Gitano equity ( $M = 9.80, SD = 3.32$ ). Women were also more likely to endorse information strategies ( $t = -2.10, p < .05$ ) regarding gender equity ( $M = 17.78, SD = 4.11$ ) compared to Gitano equity ( $M = 17.49, SD = 2.65$ ), and more likely to endorse Reward-Personal strategies ( $t = -4.52, p < .01$ ) regarding gender equity ( $M = 8.83, SD = 4.17$ ) compared to Gitano equity ( $M = 8.03, SD = 3.47$ ). When the individual strategies were aggregated, it was found that women selected significantly more soft forms of social influence ( $t = 6.21, p < .001$ ) concerning the rights of women (the high-salience condition) than in influencing a peer concerning ethnic minority rights (the low-salience condition). For women, hard influence tactics did not change significantly for women's rights when compared to the rights of Gitanos. Similar computations for men on the women's and Gitano rights conditions were conducted. The selection of Reward-Personal strategies was significantly greater ( $t = 2.17, p < .03$ ) for men in arguing the issue of women's rights ( $M = 9.97, SD = 3.69$ ) compared to Gitano rights ( $M = 8.90, SD = 2.31$ ). Neither the hard or soft aggregated strategies varied significantly for men when comparing Gitano and women's issues.

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Table 5 About Here

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### *Discussion*

The results of this study reveal a confluence of factors, including ethnic and gender bias,

participant gender, and individual differences that are associated with how subjects would try to influence a peer's attitudes concerning human rights laws. This study has considered the role of peer influence as a socializing process in the formation of young adult's attitudes about laws and policies designed to protect vulnerable social groups.

The relationship of knowledge, explicit bias, and individual differences of political and prejudice orientation were also examined in relationship to the feelings about human rights laws. Findings indicated a modest role for the possession of knowledge concerning human rights policies, on the one hand, and attitudes about ethnic outgroups and the political climate on the other, in examining how individuals feel about these laws. As expected by hypothesis one, positive Human Rights Affect was negatively correlated with Political Alienation for both men and women; Pr scale scores were also negatively correlated with Human Rights Affect, but only for men. Contrary to our expectations Gitano Bias and Ambivalent and Hostile Sexism were not associated with Human Rights Affect. This suggests that opposition to human rights laws is more likely to reflect a general cynicism or estrangement concerning the political process than the expression of explicit bias towards the groups these laws are designed to protect.

Consistent with our second hypothesis, Human Rights Affect was predicted by accurate possession of knowledge about government policies to reduce discrimination, one of the four Human Rights Knowledge subscales. Knowledge about hate crime laws, laws governing hate speech, and human rights enforcement did not predict how individuals felt in general about human rights.

#### *Characteristics of Peer Influence Concerning Human Rights*

A variety of factors were examined that might be related to the use of peer influence tactics concerning human rights. For the Gitano rights condition, hard social influence tactics were predicted by participant gender and age, Human Rights Affect, Gitano Bias, and the Pr scale. Soft

social influence tactics were predicted by participant gender and age, Human Rights Affect, Gitano Bias, and the Pr scale. Contrary to our hypothesis, however, Human Rights Knowledge played no role in the endorsement of soft influence strategies. In the gender equity condition, hard social influence was predicted by a combination of gender and age differences, Human Rights Affect, Hostile Sexism and Pr scores. Soft social influence strategies were predicted by participant age and Hostile Sexism.

As predicted (hypothesis four) a consistent gender difference are found in the effort – i.e. the degree - to which social power strategies were endorsed, Men consistently endorsed greater use of social power strategies than did women. This replicates the Dunbar et. al. (2003) finding. However, men and women preferred similar social power strategies. Men and women most frequently endorsed information, legitimate position, and legitimate dependence strategies as peer influence tactics.

Efforts to influence a peer's attitudes about human rights appear to be influenced by both attitudinal and individual difference factors. Participants who endorsed explicitly biased beliefs concerning ethnic minorities and hostile sexism against women endorsed more forceful efforts to shape a peer's beliefs about human rights. These findings indicate that explicitly biased individuals are consistently more effortful in changing a peers' attitudes concerning ethnic minority and women's rights. More tolerant and (relatively) older college-aged participants, by comparison, were less forceful in how they would debate human rights issues with their peers.

The role of individual differences, as measured on Gough's Pr scale, was related to feelings about human rights (for men), explicit bias against an ethnic minority group, and efforts to influence others beliefs about human rights laws. This self-report measure – which consists of items unrelated to outgroup attitudes - reflects a general orientation towards outgroup bias, resulted in the endorsement of both hard and soft influence tactics. The current findings also provide cross-cultural

evidence of the Pr scale in terms of bias against women. Additionally, it is interesting that this finding was observed for both men and women. This latter finding suggests that individuals who are implicitly oriented towards the endorsement of outgroup bias may in some instances hold negative attitudes concerning the rights and responsibilities of ingroup persons as well. Understanding the attitudes of individuals who explicitly endorse both negative outgroup and ingroup attitudes simultaneously are in need of further study.

### *Salience of Human Rights upon Peer Influence*

In comparison to our prior observation, a somewhat different impression emerges when the question of the salience of human rights to the participant is considered. As had been hypothesized, women participants were more likely to endorse greater effort to influence a peer about women's rights – an issue of greater salience – than that of an ethnic outgroup. Women specifically used more soft – i.e., relationship enhancing and ultimately persuasive – tactics in the high salience condition. For women, the choice and effort to employ expert, information and personal reward strategies increased significantly. This is perhaps not surprising, as one would expect that women possess personal experience with gender bias, and thus have more information about, and more expertise in this context than that of Gitano rights.

Our findings also illustrate the relevance of self-determination theory as proposed by Ryan and Deci (2000). The efforts by women to modify a peer's beliefs concerning the rights of woman is consistent with what Ryan and Deci refer to as identified regulation- i.e. the conscious valuing of a behavioral goal (influencing the beliefs of the peer) in such a way that the belief is accepted as personally important (in this case by a peer of the individual). Further, women participants evidenced an internal belief – the issue of equity of women – which they sought to regulate in an interpersonal – i.e. an external - context. Peer influence, as suggested by the Ryan and Deci (2000) model, seeks to satisfy an external demand or reward, in this case for legitimizing the role of human

rights as a social norm. As suggested by other research, opposition to human rights may be founded upon mortality salience (Solomon, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 2000) as well as the expression of ingroup identity. Additionally, however, attitudes reflecting esteem for a civil society (Aberson & Haag, 2003) may also increase both commitment and effort to endorse human rights, this later is a topic was not explicitly examined in our research.

*Future Directions in the Psychological Study of Human Rights*

The study of human rights has most frequently been the purview of policy theorists. While there have been numerous useful efforts by psychologists to examine intergroup relations, there is to date no unified model or established methodology for the psychological study of human rights as a distinct area of investigation. Research on this important topic is needed with more diverse samples than the university participants employed on the present study. Adults with more diverse life experiences may perceive greater importance of the issues addressed by laws that protect the rights of minority groups. As such, the recognized limitations of this study include the homogenous nature of the sample, issues of limited life experience that may restrict the ecological validity of the findings, and the simple self-report nature of the methodology.

This study examines human rights at the individual and interpersonal level, an area that has received less attention when compared to the fields of political psychology and social policy research. While not attempting to dismiss the importance of these larger social forces upon attitudes, examining the role of peer interaction may yield useful information about informal social learning, attitude manipulation, or naturalistic processes of establishing pro-social beliefs concerning outgroups. Our findings could be of value to future experimental or laboratory methodologies exploring these issues. Further research may also focus upon other human rights policies - such as housing rights, or hate crime

laws. Experimental study could provide information concerning how individuals reason about, or conceptualize human rights problems. Specifically, it would be of valuable to examine how individuals construe these issues in terms of cognitions and affects in both low and high salience conditions. This implies as well the value of considering both explicit and implicit judgments made about human rights issues. Methodologies that may be fruitfully applied may include articulated thoughts measures (ATSS, Rayburn & Davison, 2002) and implicit attitudes tests (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998). Incorporating these techniques in future research would be highly desirable in this regard. Laboratory study might also benefit from measurement of intrinsic motivation to advocate (for or against) human rights laws. Finally, measurement of individuals' affective response to intergroup problems ought to include both subjective self-report and measures such as behavioral observation and psychophysiological recording methods.

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Table 1. Zero Order Correlations of Measures of Bias Orientation: Men's and Women's Relationships on Gough Pr Scale, Gitano Bias, Human Rights Affects, Political Support-Alienation, and Benevolent and Hostile Sexism

	Gough Pr Scale	Gitano Bias	Human Rights Affect	Political Support/ Alienation	Benevolent Sexism	Hostile Sexism
Gough Pr Scale	--	.30**	.17	-.14	.30**	.44**
Gitano Bias	.41**	--	.09	.10	.29**	.17*
Human Rights Affect	-.31*	.17	--	-.33**	.11	.14
Political Support/ Alienation	.17	.15	-.43*	--	.13	-.02
Benevolent Sexism	.10	.25	.02	.09	--	.47**
Hostile Sexism	.35*	.53**	.12	.15	.34*	--

Women (n = 148) are above the diagonal and men (n = 43 ) are below

Table 2. Hierarchical Regression Results in Predicting Hard and Soft Social Influence Strategies Concerning Gitano Rights

Step	Predictor	Hard Strategies					Soft Strategies				
		$R^2$	Adj. $R^2$	$F$ Change	$B$	$t$	$R^2$	Adj. $R^2$	$F$ Change	$B$	$t$
1.	Participant Demographics	.08	.07	7.60**			.10	.09	9.29***		
	Gender				-.15	-3.00**				-.16	-2.23*
	Age				-.19	-2.98**				-.22	-3.42*
2.	Human Rights Knowledge	.11	.08	1.20			.12	.09	1.19		
	Bias Crime Laws				.04	1.26				.03	.47
	Non-Discrimination Laws				.01	-.10				.05	.81
	Bias Speech Laws				-.03	1.22				.09	1.19
	Government Policies				-.02	-1.47				-.04	-.48
3.	Human Rights Affect Ratings	.13	.10	5.84*	.11	1.77*	.15	.12	6.35*	.13	1.85
4.	Gitano Bias Scale	.17	.13	6.70*	.12	1.40*	.17	.13	4.65*	.07	.96
5.	Gough Pr Scale	.23	.19	14.87***	.29	3.85**	.24	.20	14.88***	.28	3.86***

\*  $p < .01$ \*\*  $p < .01$ \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Table 3. Hierarchical Regression Results in Predicting Hard and Soft Social Influence Strategies Concerning Women's Rights

Step	Predictor	Hard Strategies					Soft Strategies				
		$R^2$	Adj. $R^2$	$F$ Change	$B$	$t$	$R^2$	Adj. $R^2$	$F$ Change	$B$	$t$
1.	Participant Demographics	.05	.04	5.31*			.05	.04	9.29		
	Gender				-.11	-1.54				-.03	-.36
	Age				-.09	-1.34				-.14	-2.00*
2.	Human Rights Knowledge	.08	.05	1.34			.07	.04	1.19		
	Bias Crime Laws				.02	.30				.05	.67
	Non-Discrimination Laws				.03	-.38				.03	.06
	Bias Speech Laws				.13	.19				.13	.49
	Government Policies				.11	-.15				-.05	-.69
3.	Human Rights Affect Ratings	.10	.06	3.60*	.07	1.06	.07	.04	6.35	.01	.10
4.	Ambivalent Sexism Inventory	.20	.16	12.38***			.18	.14	4.65***		
	Hostile Sexism				.24	3.11***				.24	3.04***
	Benevolent Sexism				.06	.76				.10	1.23
5.	Gough Pr Scale	.23	.18	5.42*	.29	3.85*	.20	.15	3.12	.13	1.77

\*  $p < .01$ \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Table 4. Oneway ANOVA Results for Gender Difference of Social Influence Strategies for Gitano and Gender Equity Issues

	Gitano Rights Condition		<i>f</i>	Gender Equity Condition		<i>f</i>
	Men ( <i>n</i> =43 ) Mean( <i>SD</i> )	Women ( <i>n</i> = 148) Mean( <i>SD</i> )		Men ( <i>n</i> =43 ) Mean( <i>SD</i> )	Women ( <i>n</i> = 148) Mean( <i>SD</i> )	
Reward-personal	8.91 (3.70)	7.82 (3.36)	3.36	9.79 (4.36)	8.54 (4.10)	2.93
Reward-material	7.35 (4.05)	5.99 (3.34)	4.96*	7.42 (3.80)	5.83 (3.37)	6.96**
Coercive-personal	8.30 (3.56)	6.74 (3.25)	7.35**	8.55 (4.08)	6.76 (3.16)	9.36**
Coercive-material	5.44 (2.60)	4.62 (2.14)	4.44*	5.19 (2.65)	4.54 (2.26)	2.49
Legitimate-position	12.77 (2.94)	11.80 (2.99)	3.48	12.79 (2.98)	11.71 (2.99)	4.33
Legitimate-equity	6.49 (3.40)	5.27 (2.54)	6.41*	6.53 (3.28 )	5.17 (2.37)	9.08**
Legitimate-dependent	12.28 (4.46)	11.79 (3.65)	.54	12.14 (4.14)	11.96 (3.80)	.07
Legitimate-reciprocity	6.86 (3.53)	5.44 (2.69)	8.00**	6.67 (3.25)	5.28 (2.52)	8.76**
Expert	10.72 (3.71)	9.55 (3.14)	4.23*	11.42 (4.21)	11.64 (4.11)	.09
Information	17.62 (2.55)	17.40 (2.72)	.24	17.54 (2.60)	17.82 (2.25)	.46
Referent	10.53 (3.71)	9.63 (3.21)	2.48	10.33 (3.61)	9.73 (3.25)	1.06
“Hard” Influence Tactics	55.05 (9.77)	47.40 (9.77)	3.17	55.88 (15.87)	49.41 (14.61)	1.68
“Soft” Influence Tactics	52.24 (12.01)	48.55 (13.68)	2.59	52.24 (12.01)	51.97 (9.18)	.05

\*  $p < .05$ \*\*  $p < .01$

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Table 5. Women's Strategy Changes in Low and High Salience Peer Influence Conditions

	Gitano Rights Condition (Low Salience) Mean (SD)	Women's Rights Condition (High Salience) Mean (SD)	<i>t</i>
Reward-personal	8.03 (3.47)	8.83 (4.17)	-4.52**
Reward-material	6.28 (3.55)	6.21 (3.52)	.47
Coercive-personal	7.10 (3.38)	7.17 (3.45)	-.47
Coercive-material	4.80 (2.26)	4.70 (2.36)	.96
Legitimate-position	12.01 (3.04)	11.94 (3.02)	.47
Legitimate-equity	5.52 (2.77)	5.51 (2.66)	.07
Legitimate-dependent	11.90 (3.85)	11.98 (3.86)	-.44
Legitimate-reciprocity	5.74 (2.94)	5.62 (2.76)	1.14
Expert	9.80 (3.32)	11.58 (4.11)	-8.37***
Information	17.49 (2.65)	17.78 (2.33)	-2.10*
Referent	9.81 (3.36)	9.87 (3.32)	-.43
Hard influence tactics	48.53 (13.21)	49.11 (14.32)	1.02
Soft influence tactics	46.02 (9.78)	49.71 (9.89)	6.21***

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

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