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Abstract

Prior to the imposition of patriarchal colonial norms, Native American (NA) gender relations were characterized as complementary and egalitarian; however, little research has explored gender relations within NA communities today. This study used a community-based critical ethnography to explore contemporary NA gender relations with a purposive sample of 208 individuals from the "Coastal Tribe" and 228 participants from the "Inland Tribe." After participant observation, interviews, and focus groups were conducted, a collaborative approach to reconstructive analysis was used to identify themes in the data. Within these communities, gender relations tended to reflect egalitarian and cooperative but gendered norms, and

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participants provided examples of how tribal members are transcending patriarchal colonialism. Through the lens of the Framework of Historical Oppression, Resilience, and Transcendence, we theorize how these gender norms may protect families from risks associated with historical oppression and promote family resilience with implications for research, practice, and policy.

Prior to the imposition of patriarchal colonial norms, Native American (NA) gender relations were characterized as complementary and egalitarian (Burnette, 2015b; Klein & Ackerman, 2000; LaFromboise, Heyle, & Ozer, 1990); however, there is a dearth of research exploring gender relations within NA communities today. It is important for helping professionals to understand how women and men within a particular social context relate to one another as extant research suggests that gender relations are a contextually specific social determinant of health (Bottorff, Oliffe, Robinson, & Carey, 2011; Sen & Ostlin, 2009) relating to family resilience (Black & Lobo, 2008; Burnette, 2018). A gender relations approach to examining heterosexual partnerships in NA communities recognizes that family resilience and wellness is influenced by men's and women's interactions and the socio-structural institutions that shape gender dynamics (Bottorff et al., 2011). The gender relations approach is particularly salient for women and men in NA communities, whose egalitarian gender norms were intentionally disrupted through historical oppression (Burnette, 2015a; Klein & Ackerman, 2000).

Focusing on two tribes in the southeastern region of the United States, this study explores interactions and relationships between NA men and women within the family system. By interpreting findings through the Framework of Historical Oppression, Resilience, and Transcendence (FHORT) (Burnette & Figley, 2016a), this culturally responsive and contextually specific research aims to increase understanding of gender relations within NA heterosexual partnerships, so those insights may promote family resilience.

The Framework of Historical Oppression, Resilience, and Transcendence

To understand and effectively support NA couples and families, a culturally responsive theoretical framework that contextualizes their experiences is needed. The FHORT is a culturally grounded framework developed through

years of community-based research with the two focal tribes of this study (Burnette & Figley, 2016a), inspired by Freire's (1996) critical examination of power dynamics and colonization, and theories of resilience adapted to Indigenous peoples. The FHORT posits that after experiencing adversity, an individual's, family's, or community's experience of resilience (recovering from adversity), transcendence (developing skills to overcome oppression), and wellness (balance across physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual do-mains) can be attributed to a balance of intersecting risk and protective factors across ecological levels (Burnette & Figley, 2016a, 2016b).

Historical oppression is an important risk factor introduced in this framework that recognizes both historical and contemporary forms of op-pression across multiple and intersecting ecological levels. Historical op-pression describes "the chronic, pervasive, and intergenerational experiences of oppression that, over time, may be normalized, imposed, and internalized into the daily lives of many indigenous people" (Burnette & Figley, 2016a, p. 38). Using this framework to examine gender relations within NA com-munities today accounts for the historical traumas and losses associated with the imposition of patriarchal colonialism (i.e., assimilative boarding school experiences, Christian influences, and women's loss of status) as well as proximal factors that perpetuate oppression today (i.e., gender discrimination, poverty, and violence against women). The FHORT considers interactions between NA men and women in relationship to historic and contemporary macro-level structures and circumstances that shaped gender dynamics.

In contrast to a deficits-based perspective, the FHORT highlights the resilience and transcendence of tribal members in the face of historical op-pression (Burnette & Figley, 2016a). The strengths-based FHORT draws attention to contextually and culturally specific protective factors at the in-dividual, family, and community level that mitigate or eliminate the risk factors NA peoples experience (Burnette & Figley, 2016a). This framework is useful in theorizing protective factors that may contribute to contemporary NA families' resilience and transcendence of patriarchal norms. Within NA communities, inequitable gender relations that disadvantage and dehumanize women reflect the imposition, normalization, and internalization of patriarchal values and norms, while attempts to maintain or revive egalitarian gender relations attest to NA people's resilience to and transcendence of historical oppression.

Patriarchal Colonialism Through the Lens of the FHORT

Because colonization greatly impacted gender dynamics across tribes in the United States, gender roles in contemporary NA families must be situated within this historical context. "Patriarchal colonialism" refers to the

imposition of patriarchal values (that position women as inferior to men) and Eurocentric notions (that position non-white people as inferior to white people) as part of the colonial project (Guerrero, 2003; Spencer-Wood, 2016). It was through patriarchal colonialism that traditional NA gender relations were replaced with patriarchal family and social arrangements (Guerrero, 2003; Klein & Ackerman, 2000; Weaver, 2009). Through the lens of the FHORT, patriarchal colonialism and its ongoing effects are understood as a significant form of historical oppression perpetrated against NA peoples.

Before colonization, egalitarian, balanced, and reciprocal gender relations were common within NA families, with some variation amongst tribes (Burnette, 2015a; Klein & Ackerman, 2000; LaFromboise et al., 1990). Labor divisions among NA men and women were meant to facilitate survival through cooperation with neither role seen as superior (Klein & Ackerman, 2000; Shoemaker, 2012). Unlike patriarchal power arrangements, power and authority within NA communities was shared between women and men. In fact, many tribes were matrilineal and female centered, with women as leaders in all aspects of social, economic, familial, and spiritual life (Burnette, 2015a). However, the imposition of patriarchal colonialism and Christianity systematically eroded women's leadership by refusing to acknowledge women in trade deals (Burnette, 2015a) and regulating and enforcing patriarchal gender relations (LaFromboise et al., 1990). Boarding schools deteriorated precolonial gender relations by promoting patriarchal social arrangements (Haag, 2007). These changes in gender relations were deliberately imposed as a strategy of colonization (Burnette, 2015a; Guerrero, 2003) which led to the systematic devaluing of NA women (Harris et al., 2000; Smith, 2005).

Despite this forced assimilation to patriarchal arrangements, many NA women have continued to resist both the Eurocentrism and sexism wrought by colonization (Burnette, 2015a; Smith, 2005). NA women have continued to engage in leadership both formally and informally, historically, and contemporarily (Hightower-Langston, 2003; Shoemaker, 2012; Smith, 2005), demonstrating their resilience. Indeed, quantitative research examining gender role attitudes amongst Native American men and women in the late 20th century (1972–1996) concluded that "beliefs about appropriate roles for men and women among most Native Americans may have come full circle back to ideas of gender reciprocity and/or gender equality" (Harris, Firestone, & Bollinger, 2000, p. 73).

Methods

This article examines gender relations between partners in heterosexual relationships within two Southeastern tribes, analyzing qualitative data from a broader study focused on culturally specific risk and protective factors through the lens of the FHORT (McKinley et al., 2019). This study utilized a critical

ethnographic methodology (Carspecken, 1996), deemed appropriate because it attends to power dynamics in the study of culture, preserves and amplifies the voices of research participants, and has emancipatory aims. To ensure ethical research conduct, this study also followed guidance recommended by the "Toolkit for Ethically and Culturally Sensitive Research with Indigenous Communities" (Burnette et al., 2014). This study was guided by the question, "How do men and women relate to one another in their families?" Multiple forms of ethnographic data were collected, including fieldnotes, interviews, and focus groups (Carspecken, 1996).

Setting and Participants

Two tribes located in the southeastern region of the United States participated in the research. As recommended by the aforementioned toolkit (Burnette et al., 2014) and out of respect for resolution agreements made with each of the tribes, we do not include potentially identifying information in this study to keep the identities of the tribes confidential. Recognizing that context is important to understanding and interpreting the findings presented, we use the pseudonyms "Coastal Tribe" and "Inland Tribe" to describe the research setting. The Coastal Tribe, located near the Gulf Coast, is recognized at the state, but not the federal, level, which means that tribal sovereignty and access to resources are limited. In spite of this, the Coastal Tribe offers a range of programs and services for its members, including cultural, employment, education, and youth-focused initiatives. The Inland Tribe is located further inland from the Gulf of Mexico. The Inland Tribe is federally recognized, which increases its access to resources and sovereign decision-making abilities. The Inland Tribe operates criminal justice, law enforcement, social and healthcare services, and educational activities for members.

Both tribes have experienced and continue to experience racism, educational discrimination, and economic disadvantage as a result of historical oppression. Identified community risk factors for these tribes included family violence and teen pregnancy (Burnette, 2018), and concerns about violence against women were espoused by members of both tribes. About half (53%) of adult participants across both tribes in this study reported experiencing some form of intimate partner violence (Burnette, 2015a, 2016).

Our sample included 436 participants across the two tribes, with 208 individuals from the Coastal Tribe and 228 from the Inland Tribe. We collected data from individuals spanning the life-course (elders, adults, and youth age 11 and above) to ensure that a variety of perspectives were presented. We also interviewed professional service providers (working in behavioral health, health, family services, and policing) within each tribe who have specialized knowledge of these communities. Participants reported having on average between two and three children. Approximately 29% of participants were

married. Two-parent, single-parent, and blended families were common. Most participants (65.8%) were women.

Data Collection

This study and all of its procedures received advance approval by each of the participating tribes and the Tulane University Institutional Review Board. Participants were recruited through word of mouth, online fliers on tribal websites and Facebook, and tribal newsletters and community agencies. In both tribal settings, qualitative data included individual interviews ($n = 254$), family interviews ($n = 64$), focus groups ($n = 27$), and participant observation.

In an effort to ensure interviews were conducted in a culturally sensitive manner, individual interviews utilized a life history approach as recommended for critical ethnography (Carspecken, 1996). A semi-structured interview guide was used for interviews and focus groups, with questions and probes related to the research questions and aims. This guide included probes such as: "How would you describe the role of a father/mother or man/woman in your community? Who is the primary decision-maker in your household? Tell me about how responsibilities are handled within your home." Family interviews lasted on average 70 minutes, individual interviews 64 minutes, and focus groups 57 minutes. Gifts cards to a local department store were provided as incentives for participation, US$20 for individual interviews, and US$60 for family interviews. All participants who could be reached were also given a copy of their individual interview transcript.

Data Analysis

We used a collaborative, team-based approach to analyze the extensive amount of ethnographic data gathered for this study (Guest & MacQueen, 2008). The analysis team was led by the second author (the Principal Investigator) and also included a team of trained PhD students, including NA students from the focal tribes. All interviews and focus groups were transcribed and cleaned as the first step in the analytic process. NVivo software was used.

All data were analyzed using reconstructive analysis, an approach to analyzing themes in qualitative data rooted in critical theory, which proceeded in three steps: (1) repeated immersion in transcripts to arrive at a holistic conception of the body of data; (2) development of a hierarchical coding scheme, consisting of codes and sub-codes derived inductively from the data, and agreed-upon through team-member consensus; and (3) in-depth analysis of all transcripts and codes to examine both explicit and implicit meanings within the coded data. Interrater reliability was extremely high with Cohen's kappa coefficients at .90 or above (McHugh, 2012).

This study analyzed a subset of data from the broader study coded as "inter-relationships between men and women," which was coded 243 times across 104 unique sources (i.e., focus group, family interview, and individual interview). This theme was evidenced approximately equally across tribes (140 times across 55 sources for the Coastal Tribe and 103 times across 43 sources for the Inland Tribe), attesting to its salience within both communities. Several themes emerged within these data, and results reflect the themes that were most frequently coded. We chose to integrate findings from both tribes, focusing on universal themes, while assessing for potential differences across settings. We report findings from each tribe separately within each theme.

Rigor

A number of member-checking strategies were employed to enhance the rigor of this study. First, participants were able to review their individual transcripts to suggest changes and/or elaborate upon their responses. Next, a summary of compiled results was distributed to all participants who could be reached, allowing participants to confirm, correct, or extend upon interpretations. None of the participants disagreed with interpretations, though many confirmed and extended upon them. Then, results were more broadly disseminated to each tribe on more than 10 separate occasions through trainings and presentations for tribal agencies, tribal councils, and other community groups. Research team members met weekly throughout the data analysis process to check consistency and incorporate participants' suggestions. The majority (55.5%) of participants were interviewed more than once, adding depth to the findings.

Findings and Discussion

Within the subset of data analyzed for this study, three themes emerged: (a) egalitarian relationships (b) cooperative gendered relationships, and (c) transcending patriarchal colonialism. Each of these themes is discussed below with discussion integrated throughout. Results are interpreted through the lens of the FHORT to analyze gender relations within the context of historical oppression and theorize how they demonstrate resilience and transcendence.

Egalitarian Relationships: "It's Got to be 50/50"

Congruent with pre-colonial gender relations, participants in both tribes described heterosexual partnerships characterized by egalitarian norms in which men and women were seen as equal contributors to the family. Participants related that men and women equally shared responsibility for household expenses, labor, and childcare. Tribal members also described men and women as equal participants in decision-making. Consistent with the

FHORT, these findings highlight how tribal members demonstrate resilience by resisting the gendered norms imposed through historical oppression, insisting instead on egalitarian, balanced relationships.

Coastal Tribe. The idea of an equal partnership was characterized as a "50/50" approach to contributing to household labor and expenses. A married woman in a family interview shared: "Everything is not 100% for the man, it's not 100% for the wife. It's got to be 50/50. That's what they say when you get married." A single, college-aged woman interviewed shared a similar perspective on the importance of men and women equally contributing to the family, stating:

> I've always been like everything's equal, like 50/50. I never really had this man take care of the whole family…so if we're going to do this together, we're going to pay the bills equally. We're going to clean the house equally because don't think you're going to leave your boots and your dishes all over here. You can clean up after yourself.

Reflecting the value of egalitarian gender relations, these quotes convey the perspective that women and men should equally contribute to both the economic and domestic spheres. Similarly, a divorced woman interviewed conveyed the sense of mutual responsibility for all tasks, stating: "It needs to get done, and so whoever is around, they just do whatever needs to get done."

Women earning income and men sharing in household responsibilities like cooking and cleaning was a way of maintaining balance between men's and women's responsibilities in this tribe. When asked in a focus group if they did most of the cooking in the family, two professional, elder women responded: "No, my husband cooks too" and, "My husband always did the cooking." Another elder woman interviewed reflected on how responsibilities were shared with her deceased husband:

> We shared everything. I used to laugh. I used to say, "I like coming home later than him because like that, I didn't have to cook because he already cooked." He had already cooked. Our kids would go to school and like on Saturdays, he'd make our second daughter, as she wasn't old enough to work, on Saturdays she had to do the housework.

Participants in this tribe frequently described childrearing arrangements in which both partners were involved in raising, disciplining, and caring for children. An unmarried man saw the roles of mothers and fathers as interchangeable, stating: "Well down here it can go both ways, you know. Fathers,

mothers, vice versa." When asked which of his parents acted as the disciplinarian, a young man responded:

> They share it a lot but ... It's never really on one [parent]. My father gets a lot of that sometimes. I guess just because with me being a boy. Except they equally share it... I'd say they equally share between the two, disciplinary.

A married woman explained how she and her husband were both involved with their children: "When my little boy gets up to go to school, we both get up. When our kids are growing up, we both get up and watch them get on the bus."

Participants also described how men and women came together as partners in decision-making, demonstrating an equitable balance of power within the relationship. When asked about decision-making processes in her family, another married woman said: "We've kind of always come together." Similarly, a professional said of her parents' decision-making: "I wouldn't say either one really had the last word. It was just whatever they said."

Inland Tribe. Participants in this tribe also described expectations for heterosexual partnerships to contribute equally to family life. In a focus group, a married woman explained her relationship as: "I'd say it's equal between me and him because, I mean, if I can't do my discipline 50%, then he'll do his 50% and, and then, you know, with bills and all that, vice versa." Men and women sharing household expenses was frequently mentioned in this tribe, which may reflect economic circumstances that necessitate two incomes to support a family. In another focus group, a young professional woman stated: "Nowadays, uh, both the husband and wife need to work to support the kids." A divorced father described his views on how men and women should contribute to household expenses, stating: "My son, I told him that, 'Since you have a woman in the house you got to pay half a bill.'" While this perspective demonstrates a 50/50 division of household expenses, it also challenges the patriarchal notion of men as the primary breadwinners, instead conveying the sense that cohabitating provides a needed reprieve from covering household expenses on one's own.

Participants in this tribe also described men and women sharing responsibilities for domestic labor and family decisions fairly equally. A young woman cohabitating with her partner explained in a family interview: "He mostly does the cleaning…And I just wash dishes and cook. That's all (laughs)…And sometimes wash the clothes." Shared decision-making was also described as a component of egalitarian relationships in this tribe. One woman described how her parents came to a joint agreement about caring for her mother's nephews, stating:

> I believe my mom sat down with my dad and, because they were my mom's nephews from her sister and the sister left the kids and the kids didn't really have nowhere to go, she had sat down with my dad and they came to an agreement and just took them in.

Similarly, a married man interviewed explained how his parents both had the power to make decisions in the family; when asked who had the last word in decisions, he stated: "I don't know. I think Mom did…Sometimes, I think Mom and Dad ... Sometimes Dad would get it, Mom would get it. It really kind of swapped."

Additionally, participants related that both men and women were involved in childrearing. In a family interview, a cohabiting young mother explained how she felt men should participate in the family:

> Help around the house, and also just laying down and get engaged [with the kids]. He should just get up and move around, help his partner take care of the kids. Bring food to the table. Go out and work, on both parts on that one.

When asked who was the primary caretaker of her daughter, a young, married mother responded: "Me [sic] and my husband." She went on to say that they share "mostly everything" related to childcare and other household responsibilities. When asked which of her parents cared for her growing up, another young woman replied: "They both did." Responses like these, that do not assign the majority of responsibility to either parent nor differentiate between their roles, suggest that men and women were equally involved with their children, challenging patriarchal norms that prescribe childcare to women.

Discussion. Egalitarian relationships in these communities were characterized by equal contributions by men and women to family expenses, labor, and care. These results indicate that participants are resisting patriarchal gender expectations that position men as the head of the household and relegate housekeeping and childcare to women; instead, responsibilities are shared between men and women. While extant research has revealed both benefits and problems in enacting egalitarian relationships (Kaufman, 2000; Sweeting, Bhaskar, Benzeval, Popham, & Hunt, 2014), participants in this study perceived such balanced relationships as a norm within their communities.

By maintaining egalitarian gender relations, NA families in these tribes have resisted the imposition of patriarchal family structures. Applying the FHORT to these findings suggests that egalitarian relations between men and women may act as a protective factor in the face of economic stress; egalitarian couples tended to be dual-earners who both contributed to family expenses. Furthermore, both parents' active and equal involvement with

children represents families' resilience to experiences of historical oppression that separate families (Gross, 2003; O'Sullivan, 2016) and may promote individual and family resilience processes (Burnette, 2018; Burnette & Figley, 2016a; Robbins et al., 2013). Consistent with the FHORT, these findings highlight how tribal members demonstrate their resilience by resisting the patriarchal norms imposed through historical oppression and instead insisting on egalitarian relationships with a balance in responsibilities.

Cooperative Gendered Relationships: "That's How it Balances Out to Me"

When discussing relations between men and women, participants in both tribes often conveyed the idea that men and women play different but complementary roles in family life. Relations between men and women were perceived to be cooperative, although distinct, gendered divisions did exist. Participants' perspectives in this theme reflect the notion of separate spheres for men and women, but also demonstrate the importance of cooperation between men and women for the family's resilience, especially in the face of adversity.

Coastal Tribe. Within the Coastal Tribe, cooperative gendered relationships were most often evidenced in family situations when men worked outside the home for long stretches of time on boats, which is common in this community. While men were away providing for the family financially, women cared for the children and household, as one woman stated: "My Daddy was a tugboat captain until 1983…. She [mother] was a stay-at-home mom." These roles are certainly different, but participants saw them as cooperative roles that were both essential to supporting a family. When men returned home, participants reported that they helped out at home, mostly through outdoor tasks. One married woman in this situation shared:

> He'll do the yard, a lot of stuff in the yard I guess, because when he's away on the boat, he's on the boat. When he's home, he'll do a lot of stuff in the yard if the weather permits. I mean, if not, he'll find stuff to do inside.

Similarly, a married couple in a family interview shared how they balanced family and work responsibilities. The elder, retired woman stated:

> Whenever he worked seven and seven [seven days away, seven days at home], a couple of days before he'd come in, I'd say, "Y'all [children] got to clean your room. Daddy's coming home." ... They'd move the stuff around a little bit,

because he'd fuss all the time. He'd say, "Y'all got to clean those rooms." … and they would.

When asked how he spent his time at home, her husband, a retired tugboat captain, responded:

> The basic, something went wrong or whatever, washer and dryer, lights, or whatever, I'd fix it. I do most of that myself. Whatever needed to be done ... She would let me know what went wrong. ... I'd get all that done, and we'd get in the camper and go camping.

Their experience shows how family responsibilities were divided along gender lines, but balanced and cooperative, with both partners contributing in different ways. A married woman in a focus group explained how she perceived the cooperative gendered relationship she had with her husband, who was also often away working on a boat. She shared:

> If there is something that needs to be fixed outside [that] I can't do, I ask him when he comes in and he does it for me, but I want him to want to come home and relax. He has been out there all the time on the tug boat with all the other men... I want him to want to come home, relax…I like that because he gives plenty to me. His loyalty and his hard work, and he provides for us…I don't have no money coming in but I'm doing what I can do. That's how it balances out to me…You can't have somebody just giving and somebody taking, because it's not going to work out.

As this woman explained, while the roles she and her husband fulfill in the family are very different, they are cooperative and equally important for the family. Each partner was attentive to the tasks and responsibilities that the other could not do, demonstrating their cooperation.

Other participants described providing for their families in ways that depended upon a cooperative, gendered distribution of labor. In families where men fished, trapped, and hunted, women were often responsible for preparing the food the men brought home. A widowed, professional woman shared: "With his trapping, when he come back, I had to skin the animals and then put them on the pole, put them outside." A married woman in a family interview remembered of her family growing up:

> My dad, he fished… Plus, he hunted for ducks, and of course, we had to clean ducks, and we had to help my mom clean the ducks…The girls cleaned the ducks. The boys, they went and killed it and wouldn't have to clean. My mom cooked it…my mom made our pillows from the feathers.

Thus, responsibilities were divided along gender lines but related to one another in essential ways. Cooperation between men and women was essential to the family's livelihood.

Participants in this tribe also described the importance of cooperation between men and women in supporting their children. In a family interview, a man reflected:

> In a different way I was closer to my mom than my dad but they were both always there for me. If I needed anything, they were there…My mom I could probably tell different things to than telling my dad. Like with our money situation, I was with my dad. Emotional kind of problems were with my mom.

As this man described, his mother and father provided support in different areas, but both were there when he needed them.

Cooperation between men and women as partners was also evidenced in adapting to changed family circumstances. Participants described a re-arrangement of household responsibilities that helped them to get through times of uncertainty or change. A widowed, professional woman explained how this cooperation was helpful when her husband lost his job: "I had gone to school and I was getting paid to go to school, and he stayed home to take care of the kids and take care of the house until he got another job." The man taking on the duties commonly associated with women (childcare, and housework) demonstrates the cooperative, flexible nature of their relationship. This same woman went on to describe how her husband began taking on more re-sponsibilities in the home after he was unable to work, stating:

> When I'm working over here, after he couldn't work anymore, he would cook for me every day, he would wash my dishes, he would mop my kitch-en…Everything ... I said, "Why are you doing that? You shouldn't be doing that." He said, "That's the only thing I can do," because he was a working man.

As this woman's story demonstrates, cooking and cleaning were gendered tasks that she typically completed, but her husband's work ethic led him to share in these responsibilities when he stopped working. Their cooperative relationships allowed room for flexibility with regard to the performance of gendered tasks, allowing this family to adapt to adversity.

Inland Tribe. Unlike the Coastal Tribe, members of the federally recognized Inland Tribe were more often able to work close to home. While cooperative gendered relationships were evidenced in this tribe, participants often con-tradicted themselves in explaining their views. A college-aged, married woman described the roles of fathers and mothers: "The dad should be helping out, bills and stuff, and work on outside jobs and everything and stuff. The

mom should be at home sometimes and clean and cook. But I really like to do outside stuff and everything. I'm still getting there to be cooking and everything." While she conveys her knowledge of gendered roles and expectations, it seems she and her husband do not necessarily subscribe to these ideas. The interviewer followed up by asking if it was "okay to be kind of flexible on who does what?" to which she replied: "Yeah, he's okay with that. Sometimes we switch around… but equal to do what he should do and what I should do and we help together and everything." Her statements show that cooperating and helping one another were key in her relationship, though gendered expectations and a sense of men's authority are also present in her statements.

A boy in a family interview also espoused the idea that men and women fulfill different, but cooperative roles, with women perhaps shouldering more of the responsibility. When asked about the job of a dad, he replied: "Make sure everything is staying steady in the house. Make sure that we've got enough money…keeping the house right and keeping the family right." This description reflects the gendered notion that men act as economic providers for the family. When asked about the job of a mom, this boy responded: "She could cook, clean, change the baby's diaper and just like Dad, make sure we have money and have stuff … to let us live." Here, the boy suggests that the woman take care of household responsibilities in addition to working outside of the home. Although he encouraged women to seek out economic opportunities, this was not necessarily met with a lessening of their other responsibilities. Yet, he went on to say that mothers' and fathers' roles "could be a little different but overall they should be the same."

A professional interviewed described how her parents maintained a sense of gendered labor divisions, but also worked cooperatively to help one another. She explained: "I think it's changed over time…she [mother] does kind of still tend to her house duties, but she goes outside and helps him [father] with the cuttin' of the grass and stuff like that… he helps you know, clean inside the house." While it seems her parents once maintained separate spheres (man outside, woman inside), now their relationship is characterized by cooperation and overlap in roles. This same woman related conflicting sentiments in describing how her family of origin influenced her views on the roles men and women should play in a family, reflecting:

> I think my expectations and, it probably follows in line with my, my family's, is where the husband, he's I guess like a protector…not dominant, but like, you know, head of the household. You know, it's his house, so, if the wife can't make a decision then, you know, he should be able to make that decision…to help run his household…because that's kind of what my dad did. He wasn't dominant. He let my mom kind of do most of the decision making, but if there was

something serious, then you know, he would kind of put his [two] cents in and you know, my mom…she would just kind of trust his decision.

This woman's views show a recognition of and desire to maintain gendered norms, but also the idea that men and women can be cooperatively involved in decision-making. Consistent with the imposition of patriarchal and Christian values (prevalent in this Deep South region), participants conveyed the sense that in some cases, men possessed more power in the relationship, while women shouldered more of the responsibilities for the family. Participants' perspectives show that cooperative gendered relations are not uncommon in this tribe; however, they clash with the patriarchal values and expectations imposed upon them.

In a family interview, a married man described a complementary balance between men's and women's responsibilities, with each partner cooperating based on their strengths. He stated: "Well, she [his wife] stays at home…But she takes care of all the finances…Her strengths are in different things, and my strengths are in different things, and weaknesses cover up…" This relationship challenges patriarchal notions that men control the family's finances, favoring instead a cooperative view that tasks should be suited to the person. When asked if he would consider their roles as complementary, he responded: "Yeah, I guess that's a good word."

As in the Coastal Tribe, cooperative gendered relationships were sometimes described as especially helpful in times of adversity. An elder woman shared how her husband has been helping with household tasks while she is managing chronic illness, stating: "Now that I'm going to dialysis he helps me a lot. If I can't cook, he cooks for me...I can still cook, but he does that most of the time, laundry and all that…" Such cooperation and flexibility within a gendered division of labor allowed one partner to help out when the other could not. In line with this, a boy in a family interview explained his father's role: "If my mom is not here, just to take care of the kids and stuff, just washing dishes, do outside and inside work at the same time."

Unique to this tribe, participants also described how young men within the community are being taught the value of self-sufficiency, which might help them to have more cooperative partnerships with women. A woman in a family interview explained that she is trying to teach her sons to contribute to household responsibilities, stating: "Probably teach them to do things around the house, you know, 'cause you might not always have a woman around to cook for you and do your laundry and all this." Similarly, a man in another family interview shared: "My mom taught me…We cooked and cleaned, we washed our clothes, and wash dishes…you don't need to depend on another woman or whoever to do your stuff. You can do it yourself." These statements show that men are learning to take on household responsibilities, while also conveying the idea that it may be the norm within this tribe for women to care

for the household. Through cooperative, flexible roles within the family, tribal members demonstrate their resilience through their ability to balance multiple demands and responsibilities.

Discussion. Cooperative gendered relationships were those in which men's and women's responsibilities were considered different, but complementary. While the division of labor in cooperative gendered relationships was not always equal and in some cases was undergirded by the patriarchal assignment of power to men, relations between men and women were rooted in mutual assistance to work toward the common goal of supporting the family. Results suggest that cooperative gendered relationships proved particularly valuable in times of adversity and change as they allowed for a flexible division of labor that helped families adapt successfully.

These findings are consistent with pre-colonial gender roles as individuals often exercised flexibility in switching between roles, with no role seen as superior, and gendered divisions were not rigidly enforced (LaFromboise et al., 1990; Shoemaker, 2012). From the perspective of the FHORT, the empirical evidence demonstrated in this study suggests that such cooperative gendered relationships may play a protective role within NA families, promoting resilience in the face of adversity. Cooperative gender relations were evident in NA communities prior to colonization (Klein & Ackerman, 2000), and the FHORT helps in understanding how the persistence of these norms demonstrates the resilience of NA values and social arrangements.

Transcending Patriarchal Colonialism

Participants in both tribes articulated ways in which tribal members are transcending patriarchal colonialism by dismantling gendered labor divisions and eschewing gendered expectations. In this theme, participants exhibit awareness of the imposition of patriarchal values and norms in their communities and a desire to acknowledge and revive gender relations that align with their cultural values.

Coastal Tribe. Participants described a breakdown in patriarchal notions of gender roles to make way for more flexible and egalitarian gender relations. A young man explained:

> I see the whole gender role, I feel like they're being broken down, because in today's society it's hard to say, "This is a woman's job or this is a man's job." … As far as gender roles and stuff like that, that's all changing. ...

This statement exemplifies the idea that gendered divisions are being dismantled. A woman attending college focused on the ways that women's place in family life and society is changing for the better, stating:

> The women are becoming more empowered. They're starting to know their value. You don't need a man. I mean it's great to have one. Everyone needs like the opposite...Well not opposite, whatever you like. You do need a companion to depend on, like emotionally or whatever. I think a lot more women are going to college and getting like the upper jobs, and just knowing that you can do it yourself. Whereas my dad and like grandpa... My grandma stayed home from what I've heard. She was like the homemaker. She had 4 children. He was a welder. That's just how it was.

As this statement shows, women in the community are becoming increasingly independent, rather than dependent on their relationship to men. This woman's perspective shows how heterosexual partnerships used to be characterized by power imbalances and gendered divisions, but now offer companionship. A divorced woman explained how women are leaders in the tribe:

> The women are working now. Actually, they've always worked…For the [name of tribe], having a woman chief, we've done that. Tribal members, tribal council members ... That's not new for us at all. I think we've always kind of been like that…We go work, and I've not ever seen it that the women aren't out there with the guys doing whatever they do.

Her statement shows how women in leadership positions now are a continuation from the gender relations of the past, in which women and men worked alongside one another as equals.

Individual choices also reflected the transcendence of patriarchal colonialism. An elder woman explained how she and other women worked in a male-dominated industry:

> On the rig, I got that job myself. I had to go through some training but I made it…The whole galley crew was women. I used to stay out there for months at a time. The guys would laugh about me saying, "God you out here for this long and that long." I said, "Yeah I got three kids that's going through, fixing to graduate there." I said, "I got prom nights and prom suits to buy and stuff like that for the kids."

This woman's story demonstrates a breakdown in gendered divisions of labor, as does this man's description of his father's choice to stay at home with the kids: "He just watched after us and was a stay-at-home dad." These

participants' quotes reveal how members of this tribe have transcended historical oppression, transforming gender relations in their community.

Inland Tribe. Participants in this tribe also described efforts to transcend patriarchal colonialism by refusing to subscribe to patriarchal gender norms. When asked if the roles of mothers and fathers in the community were different, a young woman in a family interview said: "I guess yeah, it used to be, but now it's interchangeable." In another family interview, a woman explained how men in the tribe need to move away from gendered labor divisions, stating:

> You know, you [men] can help clean. So, most men think it's a woman's job to cook and clean and they just want to do the outside work…It's just, when you come together and do everything it'll be better for everybody…(Laughs) I think some men think they shouldn't have to change diapers or do laundry or anything like that.

A professional explained that her mother, not her father, had greater authority over family decisions: "I guess my mom, if she couldn't make the decision, it would be my dad. But my mom was, you know, the first one, and if she couldn't handle the situation she would turn it over to my dad." This woman's family structure reflects a return to matrilocal family arrangements, demonstrating transcendence of patriarchal colonialism in the gender relations in her family.

Discussion. Although patriarchal values and beliefs that created inequalities between men and women were imposed upon these communities as a deliberate strategy of colonization and forced assimilation, there is evidence that NA families are transcending this experience of historical oppression in active resistance to the ideologies of gender imposed by patriarchal colonialism. In accordance with the FHORT, the findings in this theme display participants' ability to transcend the imposition, normalization, and internalization of patriarchal ideals. Tribal members are moving away from gendered roles and expectations that create inequalities between men and women as a means of transcending patriarchal colonialism and its legacies.

Conclusions and Implications

Within these two Southeastern NA communities, gender relations tended to reflect egalitarian and cooperative but gendered norms, and participants provided examples of how tribal members are transcending patriarchal colonialism. While some participants' accounts revealed contradictions between internalized patriarchal norms and those within the community, participants

conveyed an overarching sense of shared responsibilities and balanced arrangements. Interpreting these results through the lens of the FHORT suggests that the egalitarian and cooperative gender dynamics evidenced in these tribes may protect NA families from historical oppression and its ongoing effects and promote family resilience (Burnette, 2018; Burnette & Figley, 2016a).

Implications for Research

This study calls attention to the need for culturally congruent theoretical perspectives based on contextually specific understandings of historic and contemporary gender relations within NA families. Future research is needed in this area to explore gender relations in other communities, further elucidating similarities and differences across tribes. Longitudinal research is also needed to illuminate potential changes over time.

Great heterogeneity exists across NA Nations, and qualitative results are not intended to be generalizable or representative of the diversity across groups. Moreover, though the scope of this inquiry was focused on inter-relationships between heterosexual couples, diversity across participants exists. Some participants reported more constrictive or oppressive gender relations; however, the scope of this inquiry was focused on the most prominently reported themes which centered on egalitarian and cooperative relationships. Results are based on self-report, and triangulation of data would strengthen this preliminary research. Future research is needed to explore associations between gender relations and family resilience, furthering understandings of the potential protective role that egalitarian and cooperative gender relations may play.

Implications for Practice and Policy

This research contributes to the limited NA research that examines gender relations as a promising pathway toward family resilience. Given the extensive social and health inequities experienced by NAs, understanding their strengths, resilience, and optimum relational functioning is necessary to offset, address, and transcend social inequities (Burnette, 2016; LaFromboise et al., 1990; Shoemaker, 2012). This study has important implications for practice that will help ensure that social service practitioners are working with NA family systems in ways that are culturally congruent and strengths-based. The findings presented here provide a more nuanced perspective on how NA men and women balance responsibilities, even while maintaining gendered labor divisions in some cases. This information may be useful to practitioners in assessing NA family structures, relationships, and functioning. Due to the imposition of historical oppression, it may be likely that NA families experience conflict between the rigid patriarchal gender norms imposed upon

them and those traditionally associated with NA values and family arrangements. Critical practitioners may engage in consciousness-raising dialogues (Freire, 1996) with clients to deconstruct patriarchal gender relations and redress them in more empowering ways for both men and women.

Implications for policies that promote the well-being of NA families can also be drawn from this study's findings. Policies that support dual-earner, dual-caregiver couples may help NA men and women to maintain egalitarian gender norms and provide increased flexibility to adapt to adversity and change. Research suggests that paid family leave, subsidized childcare, and flexible work schedules may help promote egalitarian labor divisions and contribute to a greater degree of gender equity in US society (Pedulla & Thébaud, 2015). Redressing gender inequities and striving toward the more egalitarian and cooperative relations demonstrated within these Native American communities—both historically and in contemporary times—may offset and prevent some of the psychological and social sequelae of historical oppression and promote family resilience and wellness (Burnette, 2018; Burnette & Figley, 2016a).

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