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Shelly Ronan. 2010. “Grinding on The Dance Floor: Gendered Scripts and Sexualized Dancing at College Parties.” *Journal of Gender and Society* 24(3):355-377.

College is its own little world with its own set of rules and scripts that everybody follows. Partying, dancing, and mingling is a norm for college students on the weekend. Gender inequality is a current social issue that is well known by most of society. In a college setting you wouldn’t really see many gender inequality issues, but if you dig deep there are many. One hidden issue has to do with the sexual act of “grinding” in a party situation.

This article was written to understand the gender roles and scripts at college parties, specifically while on the dance floor. The main form of sexual dancing at college parties is known as “grinding” which is the focus in this study. Grinding is a risqué form of dancing and was observed within a two-week period at different college parties. 53 students were observed for a total of 90 minutes without knowing it. The behavior and actions of each gender was observed and considered for further understanding of gender scripts and roles while dancing in a party scene.

After all the observations were through they came to the conclusion that due to gender roles, males were the ones who initiated the “grinding” the most which hindered women’s ability to “access sexual agency and pleasures” (Ronan 2010). They found that there are four stages to grinding. The first is initiation where they found that men engaged the woman first because they assume a higher status. At this stage they explained that men did this to seem masculine and the women danced by themselves at first to get the attention of the males. The second stage is acceptance. This is where the female allows the male to start dancing with her. The third stage is compliance where both the male and female engage in more sexual dancing through the night. The alternative stage is called rejection. This is where the female doesn’t allow the male to dance with her and is often seen as a prude. They also found that the women who engage in grinding face the “Madonna-Whore dichotomy” (Ronan. 2010). This is where the women at parties want to seem sexy and desirable, but if they engage in grinding they are seen as whores, whereas males are seen as mighty. These findings really open your eyes to gender inequality.

At first glance I though this article was overexaggerated. Bring a college student myself I didn’t realize that there is a gender inequality problem when it comes to partying. Their findings are a bit shocking but make complete sense. Their methods were a tad informal and could have been extended over a longer period of time, but the way they did it seemed like the best way to get accurate information. Since they only did this at one college and over a two-week period they assumed a lot of information from just a small experiment so that is one limitation. Other than that the info seems accurate and relatable as I am also a college student. I totally believe their findings and argument. Gender inequality may not seem like a problem when you are going out to have a fun time, but this article sheds light on the issue.

Before reading this article, I would have never thought twice about gender inequality while dancing at a party. It showed me that men are seen as a higher status than women in even a basic setting. It also shows me that women are labeled more than men and are judged more. Though this may seem silly to some, it opens up my mind about other gender inequality issues and what we as a community can do to fix them.

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