

EXPLORING INTERSECTIONS IN THE
INTIMATE LIVES OF MEXICAN ORIGIN WOMEN

by

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Ana A. Lucero-Liu

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to Wilson and to my family.

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ABSTRACT

Relationship research on Mexican origin women often focuses on their ethnicity while ignoring other aspects of their lives. Mexican origin women are diverse and as researchers we need to study this diversity. Informed by Chicana Feminism, this dissertation examines the experiences of Mexican origin women in intimate relationship in the form of three manuscripts. My goal is to make Mexican origin women's voices more wholly heard in relationship research.

The first manuscript is a conceptual one, in which I examine the shortcomings of relationship research on heterosexual Mexican origin women. Some scholars have regarded Mexican origin women as a "triple minority" (see Arellano & Ayala-Alcantar, 2004) due to their disadvantaged social locations in terms of gender, ethnicity, and social class. I argue that in order to fully understand the experiences of Mexican origin women, it is necessary to study the intersections in which they are situated. This manuscript critically examines how the intersection of gender, ethnicity, and class affects women's experiences in heterosexual intimate relationships.

In the second manuscript, I examine Mexican origin women's perceptions of the division of childcare and how these perceptions influence evaluations of their romantic and parenting relationships. Results reveal women's perceptions of the division of childcare impact both their romantic and parenting relationship. The moderating effects of gender role attitudes are also investigated. Results demonstrate the diversity of Mexican origin women's experiences within families.

Lastly, in the third manuscript, I explore the impact of structural, behavioral, and attitudinal familism on relationship conflict. Participants were 64 cohabiting or married couples

of Mexican origin. Actor and partner effects of structural, behavioral, and attitudinal familism on relationship conflict were examined with a series of structural equation models using the Actor-Partner Interdependence Model (Kashy & Kenny, 2000; Kenny & Cook, 1999). Results reveal that higher levels of men's behavioral familism is associated with lower levels of relationship conflict. Furthermore, higher levels of men's structural and behavioral familism are also associated with lower levels of their partner's relationship conflict. Results suggest that structural and behavioral familism for men may promote healthy relationships, as evidenced by lower relationship conflict.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation examines the intersections in which Mexican origin women are situated. In order to better serve the Mexican origin community, a better understanding of unique issues that may arise in these relationships is needed. By exploring the spaces in which Mexican origin women are located, I hope to bring a better understanding of women's experiences in intimate relationships. My goal is to make Mexican origin women's voices more wholly heard in relationship research.

I propose examining Mexican origin women's experiences in relationships through the study of intersections. Intersectionality refers to "the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relations and subject formations" (McCall, 2005). Embedded in the concept of intersections is the idea that there is fluidity in people's identities, that social phenomena are socially constructed, and that inequalities are found in these intersections. The goal of studying intersections is to transcend dichotomous positions (De Reus, Few, Blume, 2005). For it is through dichotomizing that the fluidity of people's identities and experiences are lost. Intersectionality refers to the process by which gender, ethnicity, and class (along with the other "isms" in which people are located) co-construct one another (Crenshaw, 1993). Thus it is not possible for women to focus exclusively on their oppression as women, as it is inseparable from other structures and systems such as ethnicity and class. This implies that aspects of self-identity are not fixed, but rather are dynamic (De Reus, Few, Blume, 2005).

bell hooks (2000) defines oppression as the absence of choice. Implicit in the concept of intersectionality is the idea that there are inequalities found within intersections. For example, both gender-based and race-based research have failed to account for the lived experiences of Women of Color. Creating gender categories fails to portray the realities of Women of Color, just as creating racial categories fails to capture women's experiences (Tong, 1998). Thus we face the challenge of understanding how everything about women provides part of the explanation for their subordinate status. This perspective goes beyond proclaiming that the personal is political, it asks "Which personal?" and "Whose political?" (Siegal, 1997).

Guiding Theories

The primary theories underlying this dissertation are feminist theories, with a focus on a multicultural feminist perspective and on Chicana feminism. Feminist theories place gender at the center of analysis. This is done partly because women have been excluded from history, literature, and until recently the social sciences, thus a central theme of feminist theory is the idea that women have been exploited, devalued and oppressed (Walker and Thompson, 1984). Feminists also challenge the idea of a monolithic family, that is, a nuclear household made up of a married heterosexual couple and their biological or adopted children (Stacey, 1996). Furthermore, feminists are committed to social change, and acknowledge the importance of activism (Travis & Compton, 1996). Multicultural feminism and Chicana feminism share the beliefs that women are oppressed due to their sex, but further recognize other sources of women's oppression, including racial oppression and oppression due to class. Thus multicultural and Chicana feminists challenge the notion that all women experience oppression in the same way.

Multicultural Feminism

Multicultural feminism incorporates culture, race, and ethnicity into the study of women. It views the self not only as fragmented primarily due to culture, race, and ethnicity, but also due to a host of other proclivities individuals might possess such as: class, age, sexual preference, religion, educational attainment, occupation, marital status, and health condition, to name a few (Tong, 1998). Multicultural feminists challenge the idea that all women are equal and fight the notion that one type of women should represent all women (Tong, 1998). Thus, because of the diversity between women, women are not all oppressed in the same way. In fact, it is possible for some women to be the oppressors of other women.

Multicultural feminists also believe that it is important to examine how different forms of oppression intersect, sometimes systematically. For example, Hurtado (1994) shows that Women of Color including Black, Hispanic, and Native American women stay in school fewer years, have fewer dollars to spend, and bear more economic hardships than any other group in the United States. White women's relationship to White men gives them an "economic cushion" that Women of Color do not have. bell hooks (2000) believes no one form of "ism" can be eliminated without the prior elimination of another; thus questioning the separate fights against sexism, racism, and classism.

Multicultural feminists hold that all Americans are not the same. Thus, you cannot generalize from middle class, White samples to other populations of people living in the United States. Even studies with large samples with a proportional representation of ethnic minorities do not get at the truth because there is no such thing as an average American or an average

American married woman. Thus, such studies miss an essential element when aggregating across different people, that is, the diversity that does exist between them.

Chicana Feminism

The origins of Chicana feminism were formed during the 1960s and 1970s as a response to Chicana's participation and experiences within the Chicano movement and Feminist movement, as Chicana's were marginalized within both movements (for example see Pesquera & Segura, 1997 and Zavella, 1989). Today Chicana feminists are in agreement with many principles of multicultural feminism including: incorporating culture, race, and ethnicity into the study of women; the recognition of the importance of examining intersections, and challenging the notion of a universal experience of womanhood.

Chicana feminists acknowledge that the definition of women is constructed differently for White women versus Women of Color. Furthermore, class privilege functions to one degree regardless of race, while White privilege also functions to a degree regardless of class (Hurtado, 1989). For example, gender privilege within the Chicano community is noted by statistics that show women often receive fewer advantages than male counterparts in ethnic enclaves (Pessar, 2003). Alternatively, ethnic privilege is evidenced by research that finds more job mobility for Mexican American women in White-female dominated jobs versus minority-female dominated jobs (Segura, 1989). Thus, White-female dominated jobs have privileges absent in minority-female dominated jobs.

Chicana feminism also acknowledges the experiences of both men and women, as they recognize that Mexican origin men also experience oppression, and may be disenfranchised due to their experiences with power relations and social structures (Arellano & Ayala-Alcantar,

2004). Thus, Chicana feminists recognize the need to address issues that impact Chicano communities including issues revolving around health care, immigration reform, and limited opportunities for higher education (García, 1997).

Chicana feminists face the struggle to gain social equality and end both sexist and racist oppression. Furthermore, Chicanas experience male domination in their own communities as well as in the larger society (García, 1997). Thus, Mexican origin women have experiences as a “triple minority” (see Arellano & Ayala-Alcantar, 2004) due to their disadvantaged social locations in terms of gender, ethnicity, and social class.

Several Chicanas question mainstream society notions that multiplicity is a problem (for examples see Anzaldúa, 1999 and Hurtado, 1996). Rather than assuming diversity is a problem, they suggest that there is power held from multiplicity. Not being part of the mainstream gives people a unique and at times brilliant perspective.

The three manuscripts presented examine the intersections in which Mexican origin women are situated. Chicana feminism guides the three manuscripts by providing a framework for understanding intimate relationships. The works assume that Mexican origin women are diverse, and aim to study this diversity. Chapter II is a conceptual manuscript that examines the shortcomings of relationship research on Mexican origin women as it currently is. In it, I argue that in order to fully understand the experiences of Mexican origin women in close relationships, it is necessary to study the intersections in which they are situated. The manuscript critically examines how this intersection of gender, ethnicity, and class affects Mexican origin women’s experiences in heterosexual intimate relationships. Chapter III and Chapter IV present two empirical studies that aim to uncover the experiences of Mexican origin women in relationships.

Both studies use data from low-income families, thus examining the experiences of Mexican origin women at the intersection of gender, ethnicity, and class. The work in Chapter III explores the effects of the division of childcare on Mexican origin women's perceptions of their romantic and parenting relationships. Using data from couples, the study presented in Chapter IV explores the impact of structural, behavioral, and attitudinal familism on relationship conflict. Lastly, Chapter V summarizes and integrates the three manuscripts.

CHAPTER II:
EXPLORING INTERSECTIONS IN THE
INTIMATE LIVES OF MEXICAN ORIGIN WOMEN

Introduction

The Latino population is the largest and fastest growing ethnic minority group in the United States, (US Census Bureau, 2002), with Mexican Americans comprising the largest segment of the Latino population. Mexican origin women are often invisible members of our society, doing work that is often unseen. These women are diverse; they may be the unseen workers that clean offices or they may be colleagues with unique issues that are often unknown. They are real women in real relationships situated in a variety of contexts. Recently their voices have become more visible as they fight for their neighborhoods and immigration laws. However, the Mexican origin population is still largely underrepresented in family research. We know little of the predictors of relationship adjustment particularly the unique issues of Mexican origin women. We present evidence that the experiences of Mexican origin women in relationships are unique, and argue that their voices need to be included in relationship research in order to better serve the Mexican population in our society.

The central purpose of this paper is to explore the experiences of Mexican origin women in the context of close relationships. We propose that in order to fully understand these experiences, it is necessary to study the intersections in which Mexican origin women are situated. We examine how the intersection of gender, ethnicity, and class affects Mexican origin women's experiences in intimate relationships, recognizing that these intersections do not

capture the realities of all Mexican origin women. For example, another critical intersection for Mexican origin women is that immigration. Due to space consideration, immigration issues are not addressed in the current paper.

At its core, the study of the intersections recognizes the diversity of peoples' experiences. In social science research, women's experiences may be left behind if we fail to consider the interplay of intersections. For example, analyzing data only by gender may fail to capture the realities of Women of Color. Just as conducting analyses only by ethnicity may ignore the unique reality of women. This paper first considers what gender, ethnicity, and class separately tell us about peoples' experiences in close relationships. From this, we begin examining how these identities intersect and affect Mexican origin women's experiences in close relationships.

Gender

Jessie Bernard (1972) proposed that men and women experience the same marriage in different ways. In *The Future of Marriage*, she suggested that because of the patriarchal nature of the institution of marriage, men benefit from marriage physically, socially, and psychologically more than women. Whereas, married women suffer from lower physical, emotional, and mental well-being than their single counterparts. More recent research on marriage and physical well-being finds that both married men and women, on average, enjoy better mental and physical health than their unmarried counterparts; however some researchers argue that marriage's protective effects are still notably stronger for men than women (for a review see Kiecolt-Glaser & Newton, 2001; Marks, 1996).

Other research also suggests that men and women may have different experiences in marriage. For example, using data from two national surveys of married individuals, Amato et

al. (2003) find that wives were less happy than husbands both in 1980 and in 2000, but the gap between husbands and wives was smaller in 2000 than it was in 1980. Another marital experience that differs for men and women is the division of household labor. In his decade review of household labor, Coltrane (2000) reports that on average women still perform 2 to 3 times more housework than men. Women are also more likely than men to adjust their work schedules to accommodate others in the family (Shelton, 1992). Another line of research suggests that perhaps because of differential socialization between the sexes, women are more attuned to the emotional quality of marital functioning. Women's self-representations are more closely tied to their romantic relationships than are men's. As such, wife's feelings in marriage will be regulated not only by her own behavior, but also that of her partner; whereas men's representations are less interdependent (for a review see Kiecolt-Glaser & Newton, 2001).

There is a relative absence of differences between men and women in regards to predictors of marital quality. The one difference that is consistently found is for employment and income. Husbands' employment and higher income predicts positive outcomes for both men and women; whereas wives' employment and income predicts negative outcomes for both spouses (Karney & Bradbury, 1995). Coltrane (2000) also found that a more balanced division of housework is associated with women perceiving fairness, experiencing less depression, and enjoying higher marital satisfaction, but these associations are not found for husbands.

Almost thirty-five years after Jessie Bernard took notice of women's disadvantaged position produced by their experiences in marriage, there are still inequalities between the sexes in marriage. Women are less happy in marriage than their partners are (Amato et al., 2003), they still do more housework than their partners (Coltrane, 2000), and are more likely to adjust their

work schedule to accommodate family needs (Shelton, 1992). Thus women may not benefit as much from marriage as their male counterparts.

Ethnicity

Just as experiences in marriage vary between men and woman, experiences in marriage may also vary by ethnicity. Thus ethnicity adds another layer of diversity to peoples' experiences of marriage. We focus our discussion of ethnicity to the experiences of Mexican origin families. Before we begin, we want to clarify what we mean by ethnicity. We are borrowing Betancourt and López's (1993) definition of ethnicity, where *ethnicity* is used as a reference to groups that are characterized in terms of common nationality, language, or culture. This is in contrast to the term *race*, which they define in terms of physical characteristics. We agree with Betancourt and López's (1993) contention that the study of racial differences is of little use without a clear understanding of variables responsible for the observed differences. A point that is echoed by Phinney (1996) when she suggests that research should focus on group processes rather than on comparisons across groups.

There is little research on Mexican origin families and intimate relationships. What there is shows Mexican origin couples perform just as well, if not better, than Non-Hispanic White samples in the direction of relational adjustment. For example, using the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS; Spanier, 1976), Casas and Ortiz (1985) found that a Mexican American sample had significantly higher levels of adjustment as compared to a White sample. The Mexican American sample scored higher on the total DAS scale and on three of four subscales including satisfaction, cohesion, and affection. However more than a decade later, Contreras, Hendrick, and Hendrick (1996) found no group differences between a Non-Hispanic

White and a Mexican American sample for relationship satisfaction or adjustment using both the DAS and the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS; Hendrick, 1988). Research by Oropesa and colleagues finds that despite lower economic circumstances, Mexican Americans are just as likely to marry than are non-Hispanic Whites. They have termed this the “paradox of Mexican American nuptiality” (Oropesa, Lichter, & Anderson, 1994).

Other studies of relational outcomes assessed with different measures have found similar results. Schumm and colleagues (1988) found that marital satisfaction was higher for Hispanic families as compared to Non-Hispanic White families according to husbands’ and adolescents’ reports and was equal according to wives’ report. Mackey and O’Brien (1998) found that Hispanic couples do not differ from Non-Hispanic White couples in the frequency of major conflict. Finally, Frisbe (1986) found that Mexican American women have the highest odds of marital stability, followed closely by Cuban and Non-Hispanic White women, with the lowest odds of marital stability among Puerto Rican and African American women. However, Bean and Tienda (1987) hold that this advantage disappears if marital separation is accounted for.

The literature on predictors of marital satisfaction with Mexican origin samples is narrow, with a limited number of predictors explored. The majority of studies that have examined such predictors are comparative, comparing Mexican origin and Non-Hispanic White samples. These studies have found much overlap between Non-Hispanic White and Mexican origin couples. For example, Bean, Curtis, and Marcum (1977) found that having fewer children and having an egalitarian conjugal power structure, meaning that husbands and wives make joint decisions, are associated with higher levels of affective satisfaction for both Mexican American and Non-Hispanic White couples. However among Mexican Americans, they found a positive

association between an affective component of marital satisfaction and premarital pregnancy. Also, for lower socioeconomic status Mexican American couples, husband's satisfaction is negatively associated with their wife's working, and the wife's satisfaction is negatively associated with the wife working voluntarily. In a sample of married Mexican Americans, Markides and colleagues (Markides, Roberts-Jolly, Ray, Hoppe, & Rudkin, 1999) found a significant decline in reports of positive interactions as reported young, middle-aged, and older women, and also as reported by young men.

Other relationship outcomes that have been studied with this population include marital conflict and marital strain. Lindahl and Malik's (1999) have established that low levels of family cohesiveness and hostile marital coalitions, in comparison to balanced family subsystems interactions, predicts higher levels of marital conflict, irrespective of family ethnicity. Vega, Kolody, and Valle (1988) found that the sources of marital strain are similar between Mexican American and non-Hispanic women. For example, nonacceptance of spouse is a source strain for both groups.

Contreras, Hendrick, and Hendrick (1996) found that the love dimension most strongly associated with satisfaction was Eros or passionate love for both Caucasian and Mexican American couples. The overall differences found between the groups were not large. They found that Pragma, or practical love, is negatively correlated with satisfaction for bicultural Mexican American wives, and Agape, or giving love, is positively associated with satisfaction for Caucasian women and for Hispanic-oriented (less acculturated) Mexican American men and women. Finally, Ludus, or game-playing love, is negatively associated with satisfaction for Hispanic-oriented Mexican American men.

As most of the research on Mexican origin families and intimate relationships are comparative there is little understanding of the variables responsible for the observed differences. Marín and Marín (1991) delineate key Hispanic cultural values and hold that researchers studying Hispanic populations must be familiar with these basic cultural values. The inclusion of cultural values in research moves us towards understanding group processes rather than simply focusing on comparisons across groups. Cultural values are a group's desired principles, goals, and shared beliefs, and have been found to influence what people believe, how they behave, and how they organize their social relationships (Schwartz, 1994). From a psychological perspective, cultural values are one of the core aspects to ethnicity (Phinney, 1996).

Key Hispanic cultural values that have been identified include collectivism, *simpatía*, familism, power distance, personal space, time orientation, and traditional gender roles (Marín & Marín, 1991). Collectivist societies emphasize the needs, objectives, and points of view of an ingroup, while individualistic cultures emphasize personal objectives, attitudes, and values. Collectivism is associated with personal interdependence, mutual empathy, willingness to sacrifice for the welfare of ingroup members, and trust of ingroup members. In collectivist societies, group identity is historically more important than the self for both men and women (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). The cultural value of *simpatía* refers to the need for behaviors that promote smooth and pleasant social relationships (Triandis, Marin, Lisansky, & Betancourt, 1984). Familism involves individuals' strong identification with and attachment to their nuclear and extended families, as well as strong feelings of loyalty, reciprocity, and solidarity among members of the same family (Sabogal, Marín, Otero-Sabogal, & Marín, 1987). Power distance

is defined as a measure of interpersonal power or influence that exists between two individuals. Individuals strive to maintain their power in relationship to those less powerful, and this power differential is supported by society (Marín & Marín, 1991). Related to the preferred power differentials is the value of *respeto*. *Respeto* emphasizes deference and respect towards persons with higher authority, power, and recognition (Yep, 1995), thus maintaining existing power differentials. In general, Hispanics have also been shown to prefer shorter distances of personal space than Caucasians and also tend to have more flexible attitudes towards time. Lastly, some researchers have also suggested that Hispanics may have more traditionally defined gender roles than non-Hispanic Whites (Phinney & Flores, 2002).

Cultural values influence people's daily lives and provide guidelines on how to structure relationships, including intimate relationships. Despite a growing awareness of Hispanic cultural values, empirical studies have yet to examine the impact of cultural values on intimate relationships. It is not difficult, however, to imagine cultural values affecting relationships. For example, the value of familism may have a direct effect on lower rates of divorce. This might be evidenced by findings that Mexican Americans tend to value marriage more highly than non-Latino Whites (Oropesa & Gorman, 2000). Additionally, the value of *simpatía* may affect how conflict is expressed. Varying degrees of adherence to cultural values within couples may also influence their marriage. Suppose a Mexican descent husband has strong familial loyalties but his wife does not, it would not be difficult to imagine that problems in the marriage might arise over how to spend holidays or how much support should be extended to relatives. Research on the division of household labor finds that Hispanic families are more likely to perceive the

division of household labor as fair, even if housework is not equally divided between partners (Coltrane, 2000). This may be due to cultural values revolving around traditional gender roles.

Given recent demographics trends in the growth of the Hispanic population, it is shocking how little we understand about Mexican origin couples. What we do know is that the level of marital satisfaction appears to be either the same between Mexican origin couples and Non-Hispanic White couples, or that Mexican origin couples report higher rates. There also appears to be overlap in predictors of relationship outcomes between the two groups; however, only a limited number of predictors have been examined. The main limitation in the area is that most of the studies are comparative, and within group predictors, such as cultural values, have not been explored. Research with African American men shows that chronic exposure to prejudice and racism may affect marital functioning among minority couples. Taylor (1990) found that husbands with higher levels of internalized racism tended to report lower marital satisfaction. Although this line of research has not been examined with Mexican origin couples, it is important to consider that prejudices and racism, as well as cultural values, can impact Mexican origin couple relationships and the experiences of Chicanas in relationships.

Class

Just as gender and ethnicity affects peoples' experiences in marriage, class also affects peoples' experiences in marriage. Class adds a third layer of diversity in peoples' experiences of marriage. Economic disadvantage affects many domains of family life. Rank (2000) summarizes the effects of socioeconomic status on different domains of family life. Social class influences the age of first marriage, specifically higher levels of education in women are associated with later age of first marriage (Cherlin, 1991). This is consistent with research that

shows that higher levels of neighborhood socioeconomic disadvantage are associated with earlier timing of first marriage and also with higher rates of premarital childbearing (South & Crowder, 1999). Social class is also associated with gender role attitudes. There is some evidence that blue-collar families tend to prefer more traditional gender roles as compared to white-collar families. Upper-class families also exhibit more traditional patterns and acceptance of traditional gender roles as compared to middle-class families (Rank, 2000).

There is also a well-established link between economic hardship and relationship outcomes. Higher levels of income (except for in the highest levels) are associated with both greater marital satisfaction and lower marital instability (Voydanoff, 1990). Conger and colleagues (1999) have examined possible mechanisms, whereby economic pressure leads to marital distress. They find support for a family stress model, in which economic pressure predicts emotional distress for both husbands and wives. Husbands' and wives' emotional distress are positively associated with conflict in the marriage, which in turn, predicts greater marital distress. The effects of economic pressure on emotional distress are greater in marriages low in social support (Conger, Rueter & Elder, 1999).

Recent work by Karney and Bradbury (2005) questions whether programs developed with middle-class populations are effective with low-income couples, where the realities of everyday life are different. The stressful environments in which low-income couples are situated present couples with more challenges and also diminish couples' ability to overcome new challenges effectively. Bradbury and Karney (2004) emphasize the importance of context in shaping the content of marital interactions. They propose that models developed to understand the balance between the resources available to couples and the challenges they confront are more

informative than those models that only focus on interactional processes or contextual influences. Research focusing solely on relationship processes assumes that the way couples communicate is more important than the specific issues they discuss. This assumption has gone unchallenged because the majority of studies on marital relationships study a relatively narrow segment of the population whose problems, on average, are relatively mild (Karney & Bradbury, 2005). Thus, the relational process assumption may not hold for all. For example, low-income households rate drugs and infidelity as more severe problems than households with higher income (Neff & Karney, 2004). Context affects spouses' ability to interact effectively, couples experiencing high levels of chronic stress not only report lower levels of marital satisfaction, but also have more difficulty in maintaining their satisfaction over time (Karney, Story, & Bradbury, 2005).

The economic hardships of the Hispanic population are vast. The latest data issued by the U. S. Census Bureau (Ramirez & De la Cruz, 2003) about the Hispanic population reveals that within Hispanic subgroups, Mexican Americans fare worse in most domains. The educational attainment of Mexican Americans is much lower than that the rest of the U. S. population, for example 50.6% of Mexican Americans over 25 graduate from high school compared to 88.7% of non-Hispanic Whites. Mexican Americans are also more likely to be unemployed, 8.4% compared to 5.1% non-Hispanic Whites. Mexican American workers also earn less than non-Hispanic White workers, only 23.6% of Mexican Americans earn \$35,000 or more compared to 53.8% of non-Hispanic Whites. Lastly, Mexican Americans are more likely to live in poverty than non-Hispanic Whites, 22.8% as compared to 7.8%.

Class and ethnicity are confounded in most studies of Mexican origin families. It is important to unravel the sources that may differentiate Mexican origin families from other families. It is crucial to determine whether differences are due to culture versus class or other structural variables. Disentangling the effects of class from ethnicity is critical given that variance does exist within Mexican origin families in terms of their economic location in society. Research is also needed to examine whether patterns in lower-class majority samples are also found in Mexican origin samples, and to test whether cultural values moderate associations. For example, familism may have a buffer effect on findings that show lower levels of income are associated with lower rates of marital satisfaction and stability.

Gender and Ethnicity

Now that we have explored how gender, ethnicity, and class separately contribute to peoples' experiences in marriage, we would like to begin a discussion of how these identities intersect.

Anzaldúa (1999), an influential Chicana poet and feminist, documents the experiences of Mexican Americans in the Southwest. Anzaldúa depicts Mexican origin women's identities as influenced by a good woman-bad woman dichotomy. The good side of this dichotomy is exemplified by the Virgen de Guadalupe. The Virgen de Guadalupe is a Mexican apparition of the Virgin Mary, she is portrayed as the good mother who tries to make her children conform and humble themselves. She provides women with an ideal of purity and virtue. This good-woman representation is known as *marianismo* in the social sciences. Other aspects of *marianismo* include the notion that a woman is expected to be home oriented, nurturing, self-sacrificing, soft, passive, and submissive to her husband (Niemann, 2004). The bad woman of the dichotomy is

represented by Doña Marina, also known as la Malinche. Historically, Doña Marina was a Native American woman who became Hernán Cortez's sexual conquest and translator, she represents the mother of a new race of people. Doña Marina is also known as La Malinche and is often accused of being a traitor to her people. Some feminist scholars reject the notion that Doña Marina was a traitor, claiming that she was only a child of 14 when she was given to Cortez as his slave, concubine, and translator (Castillo, 1994). The bad side of the representation portrays women as self-centered, promiscuous, and not conforming to traditional gender roles (Niemann, 2004).

There is some empirical evidence that this good-bad women dichotomy impacts marriages. For example, research on lessons Mexican immigrant women teach their daughters about sexuality illustrates support for how the ideal of women preserving their virginity until marriage impacts the marital relationship (González-López, 2003). Women who had emigrated from rural areas of Mexico expressed to their daughters their desire for them to preserve their virginity until marriage. The mothers advised their daughters that entering a marriage as a nonvirgin provides their husbands with leverage to use against them in the marriage. Three of the women in the study lost their virginity through force prior to marriage. The husbands of these three women, who had been raped, held their lack of virginity prior to marriage against them. The importance of preserving virginity until marriage is also documented by the popularity of "doctors" who claim to be able to restore a woman's virginity (González-López, 2003). The ideal of a woman's purity is also documented by one of the interviewed participants who declared that her husband criticized her impurity because she vaginally lubricated during intercourse.

There is debate as to the actual prevalence of these dichotomous images of women within the Mexican American population. Baca Zinn (1980) stresses that the actual behaviors among Mexican American women are not as rigid as the stereotypic roles of a self-sacrificing women. She argues that simplistic and one-dimensional notions do not capture the complexities of peoples' experiences.

There is also a good-bad dichotomy presented for men, revolving around the concept of machismo. Literally translated, machismo means that which is related to the male or masculinity (Castillo, 1994). There are both good depictions of macho men and more often bad depictions of macho men (Niemann, 2004). The good depictions of a macho man emphasize a man's role as a family provider within a patriarchal society. The good macho man carries out his role as head of the family with pride, dignity, and respect. He is a community leader who deserves respect from those he serves and protects (Niemann, 2004). The bad side of the dichotomy depicts macho men as demanding respect and submissiveness from others (including his family), having numerous girlfriends, being authoritarian, irresponsible, aggressive, and violent (Niemann, 2004). Some researches have interpreted this bad side of machismo as a man's attempt to compensate for feelings of internalized inferiority due to racism and classism (Baca Zinn, 1980). Thus, it maybe other structural forces rather than ethnicity that may be associated with machismo.

Casas and colleagues (Casas, Wagenheim, Banchemo, & Mendoza-Romero, 1995) hold that the concept of machismo needs to be revisited by psychologists. They use the term machismo to suggest the broad specific beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that have been traditionally ascribed to men regardless of ethnicity. They explain machismo through gender

schema theory, which holds that early in life people become sex-typed through learning. Thus they attribute the origins of machismo to learned behavior rather than intrapsychic, historical, or socioeconomic forces. Casas et al. (1995) review research that demonstrates a negative association between machismo and many measures of individual well-being; such as stress, alcoholism, and depression. Given that these associations exist, the authors contend that research on machismo with the end of providing treatment to men with rigid traditional male identity is necessary. The authors also argue that machismo is not simply a Hispanic phenomena, but rather a universal one.

There is much debate in the research literature as to the prevalence of machismo within Mexican culture (Casas et al., 1995). Some researchers contend that machismo is very prevalent (Mirandé, 1988), while others believe that it is nothing more than a stereotypic myth that portrays men as hyper-masculine (Baca Zinn, 1982). Still others argue that machismo is on the decline due to acculturation, modernity, and other economic advances (Cromwell & Ruiz, 1979).

Baca Zinn (1982) examines empirical challenges of machismo. Her central theme states that while ethnic status may be associated with differences in masculinity, those differences can be better explained by structural variables rather than by reference to a common cultural heritage. Baca Zinn confronts the notion that machismo is rooted in Chicano history and embedded in culture, especially considering the fact that male dominance is universal. She does not deny that male dominance does exist within the Chicano community, but rather holds that negative stereotypes about Chicanos need to be dispelled, mainly because of the variability across circumstances. Baca Zinn suggests that social structural characteristics of families may be driving the presence of male dominance. Regardless of whether machismo is conceived as good

or bad thing, some Chicana feminists have proposed that there is no such thing as a positive macho image arguing that there is no justification for machismo. All qualities that maintain the idea that the man should be the head of the family are embedded in patriarchal ideals that perpetuate the oppression of women (Castillo, 1994).

Recently, Niemann (2004) explores the impact of gendered stereotypes on the Chicano/a community. Niemann proposes that members of the ingroup internalize the extreme dichotomous depictions of Chicanas and Chicanos. She views marianismo and machismo as stereotypes that affect both outsiders' and insiders' expectations for behavior. These stereotypes are perpetuated by members of both the stereotyped group, as well as by the larger society. She views families as the main conveyers of culture, and mothers are the primary reinforcer's of culture within the family. The stereotypes of the good-woman and the macho-man has many consequences on the Chicano population, including influences on sexual behavior and sexual practices, labor force participation, educational values and behaviors, sexual identity, family violence, and sexual and alcohol abuse. Niemann's (2004) solution is to expand the definitions of men and women within the culture.

Research still needs to empirically determine the extent to which Mexican origin individuals have internalized these dichotomous images of the good-bad women or the good-bad macho, while being cautious of diversity within the population (i.e. being cautious not to make generalizations that may not hold for all). It is also important to determine the origins of these internalizations; whether they be structural or cultural. As researchers we cannot be afraid to ask these difficult questions and take a stand against the perpetuation of the oppression of Mexican origin women within their own culture. We also need to empirically determine how stereotypes

of Mexican origin men and women are perpetuated. We agree with Niemann's (2004) solution that the definitions of men and women need to be expanded. Research is needed on how these images affect the experiences of Mexican origin women and men in families and relationships. These images likely create unrealistic expectations of behaviors in marriage, images that neither women nor men can achieve. Dichotomous depictions of women and men may also impact the meanings given to cultural values by men and women. These images may cause the practicing of cultural values to be oppressive towards Mexican origin women.

Gender, Ethnicity, and Class

There is little research on how the experiences of Mexican origin people vary by class. A recent study by Barnett and colleagues (2003) found a positive association between work-family balance and satisfaction with marriage for working-class Mexican Americans. They suggest that working-class Mexican Americans face unique challenges in balancing work and family. These families may not have discretionary income to buy goods and services to help manage the work-family balance. Additionally, rigid schedules result in low control over daily routine and offer very little flexibility to manage work-family balance (Barnett et. al., 2003). This lack of flexibility may be particularly distressing for families with a strong familistic orientation.

Mexican origin women's experiences within the family vary by social class. It is not sufficient to consider her family's economic standing within the greater economic social structure, but also necessary to analyze her economic standing within the family. Thus, it is crucial to examine not only whether she's employed, but also the conditions of her employment and her contribution to the family relative to her husband.

Research by Ybarra (1982) examines the division of household chores within families. Ybarra explores several variables such as acculturation, education, and employment status and their association with egalitarian conjugal role structure. She questions the assumption that more egalitarian roles are associated with greater acculturation into U. S. culture. Ybarra finds support for her argument; it is wife employment and not acculturation that she finds accounts for shared household chores and child care within the marital relationship. Ybarra, however, does not take into account the type of employment the women hold or their relative contribution to the family.

Research by De La Torre (1993) suggests that all Mexican origin women do not equally share the positive impact of wife's employment on family life. Her work on women migrant workers suggests that there are disadvantages to women's employment, including a loss of control in the household and reduced care to the children. The point she raises is that agricultural economic development does not always lead to greater equality for women. Additionally De La Torre finds that the traditional gender roles in the household are not radically altered with female seasonal employment. There is also variance in how Mexican origin women view housework. Pessar (2003) documents that some Latinas, in contrast to their White counterparts, view unpaid domestic work, such as having children and maintaining families, more as a form of resistance to racist oppression than as a form of exploitation by men. Being a housewife is viewed by some Latinas as achieving success in the United States.

Mexican origin women's experiences within families are also found to vary by their economic standing relative to their husbands. Pesquera (1993) illustrates this point in her research on how the distribution of household labor is shaped by women's level of economic contribution to the household. Pesquera uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative

methodologies to explore the division of household labor in Mexican origin families. She finds differences between professionals, clerical workers, and blue-collar workers in the division of household labor. Mexican origin professionals and blue-collar workers have greater expectations and observe greater male participation in household tasks as compared to clerical workers. This, Pesquera finds, reflects not only differences in expectations held by the women, but also a greater willingness to engage in conflict with their husbands over the division of household labor. Pesquera believes clerical women have husbands who do less household labor because of the bigger earning gap between them, which gives women less leverage in the marriage.

Researchers have also documented familial barriers Mexican origin women encounter in their career and educational advancement. For example, Gándara's (1982) qualitative research with highly educated Chicana women from low socioeconomic backgrounds found that the single characteristic that was most critical in the women's advancement was that they were all unmarried and childless.

The experiences of Mexican origin individuals vary by class. The work of Barnett and colleagues (2003) demonstrates the importance of a work-family balance for Mexican Americans. This balance may be particularly important in families with a strong familistic orientation, as not being able to prioritize family obligations may be particularly stressful. Mexican origin women's experiences in marriage also vary depending on whether she is employed (Ybarra, 1982), on the nature of her employment (De La Torre, 1993), and on her contribution to the family relative to her husband (Pesquera, 1993).

Concluding Thoughts and Future Directions

We have seen that experiences in marriage vary by gender, ethnicity, and class. In terms of gender, research shows that women are less happy in marriage (Amato et al., 2003), do more housework (Coltrane, 2000), are more likely to adjust their work schedules for family needs (Shelton, 1992), and thus may not benefit as much from marriage than their male counterparts. There is still much more we need to learn about how experiences in marriage vary by ethnicity. We know Mexican origin couples report comparable rates of marital satisfaction as compared to Non-Hispanic White couples (Contreras, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 1996), with some samples showing Mexican origin couples reporting higher rates of marital satisfaction (Casas & Ortiz, 1985). Only a limited number of predictors of relationships outcomes have been studied with Mexican origin couples. Most show overlap between Mexican origin and Non-Hispanic White samples. However, there is almost no research examining within group predictors of relationship outcomes, such as how cultural values or racism affect marital interactions. Research also finds that class has a strong impact on relationship outcomes. Class affects the age of first marriage (Cherling, 1991), marital satisfaction and stability (Voydanoff, 1990), as well as the problems faced in marriage (Neff & Karney, 2004). Recently, Karney and Bradbury (2005) have questioned assumptions operating in relationship research that stress the importance of interactional styles in predicting marital success while ignoring the impact of context. Low-income couples encounter more stressful environments, which may diminish a couples' ability to overcome new challenges effectively. Such issues may be more salient in families encountering racism and prejudices.

Aspects of self-identity are not fixed, but rather are dynamic; each aspect of a self-identity is inseparable from other structures and systems such as gender, ethnicity, and class (De

Reus, Few, Blume, 2005). Examining gender and ethnicity separately does not reveal a full picture of Mexican origin women's experiences in marriage. These intersections have a compounding effect on women's experience in marriage. Research needs to empirically determine the extent to which Mexican origin individuals have internalized dichotomous images of the good-bad women or the good-bad macho, while being cognizant of the diversity within the population, and with the goal of examining how these images impact Mexican origin women's experiences in relationships. As suggested earlier, the dichotomous images likely create unrealistic expectations of behaviors in marriage that place women at a disadvantage in our society and in their own close relationships. Other questions that remain unanswered include whether the meanings that men and women ascribe to cultural values differ; thus do the implications of cultural values differ for men and women? In terms of racism, we need to not only ask whether and how racism impacts intimate relationships, but also if the effects impact the marital experiences differently for men and women.

Class adds another layer of complexity to the intersection of gender and ethnicity. The stresses faced by the lower-class samples are given different meanings across cultures. For example, the stresses of work-family balance may be exacerbated for families with a strong familistic orientation. We know that Mexican origin women's experiences in marriage vary depending on whether she is employed, with employed women experiencing greater equality in their marital relationships than unemployed women (Ybarra, 1982). The nature of a woman's employment also relates to her experiences in marriage (De La Torre, 1993), an important determinant to equality in relationships is a woman's contribution to the family relative to her

husband (Pesquera, 1993). Unanswered questions also remain about the experiences of women in upper-class Mexican origin relationships.

Highlighting within-group variation is a response to one-dimensional historical depictions of people of Mexican descent and of research that approaches the study of ethnic minorities through a cultural deficit lens. This move away from such depictions and representations puts feminists in a difficult place, as feminist approach social norms through a critical lens. On the one hand, feminists may fear that their research will perpetuate caricatures of Mexican families. However, as feminists, it is difficult to ignore gender inequalities found within our families.

Pervasive gendered patterns within the Hispanic culture cannot be ignored. Chicana feminists cannot be afraid to say that machismo is harmful or try to explain it away or to validate it through cultural values. For by doing so we are doing a disservice to Mexican origin women that are oppressed in their relationships. Difficult questions need to be asked, such as: are the ways cultural values are practiced oppressive to Mexican origin women. Perhaps collectivist values such as *simpatía* and familism in combination with learned images of the good-bad woman may lead women to feel responsible for her family, even at the cost of her own well-being. For men, collectivist cultural values in combination with macho ideals, whether good or bad, may also lead to the reinforcement of traditional roles within the family. Some academics have speculated that the value of *respeto* helps maintain a gender imbalance in families, whereby *respeto* helps preserve a hierarchical family structure. Paniagua (1994) suggests women and children are required to show deference and respect towards the father, but this respect does not need to be reciprocated. Thereby maintaining a structure in which the man holds greater

authority over his partner and children. These propositions are yet to be tested empirically. Our hope is that this paper has given some guidelines in order to expand our understanding of the experiences of Mexican origin women in relationships and to illuminate the invisible women all around us.

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CHAPTER III:
THE DIVISION OF CHILDCARE:
INFLUENCES ON MEXICAN ORIGIN WOMEN'S INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

Introduction

The current paper examines the complexities of Mexican origin women's experiences in families, by answering the call for intersectional work when examining marital relations and exploring the unique social locations of respondents (Dillaway & Broman, 2001). Specifically, we explore how the division of childcare between parents affects relationship outcomes. Additionally, we ask whether associations between the division of childcare and relationship outcomes are dependent on women's gender role attitudes. Our work is truly unique because we are examining these issues in an understudied sample; consisting of low-income, Mexican origin women with little formal education, the majority of which are Mexican immigrants.

Division of Childcare

Women's disadvantaged position in society may be partially explained by men's low participation in domestic work. In his decade review of household labor, Coltrane (2000) reports that on average women still perform 2 to 3 times more housework than men. Women are also more likely to adjust their work schedule to accommodate others in the family than are men (Shelton, 1992). There is extensive research exploring the effects of division of household tasks on relationship and individual outcomes for men and women. Research shows that a more balanced division of housework between husbands and wives is associated with women perceiving fairness, experiencing less depression, and enjoying higher marital satisfaction;

however, such associations are not found for men (Coltrane, 2000). Additionally, research suggests that gender role attitudes may moderate associations between the division of household tasks and marital outcomes (McHale & Crouter, 1992; Piña & Bengston, 1993), whereby women with egalitarian attitudes may be particularly unsatisfied with a traditional household arrangement.

The division of childcare and the division of household labor are distinct, but interrelated concepts. The division of childcare can be considered a subset of the division of household labor. It is distinct in that fathers tend to proportionally contribute more to childcare than housework (Ishii-Kuntz & Coltrane, 1992). Furthermore, the division of childcare may have a greater impact on relationship outcomes due to the emotional salience it carries for parents. There are also associations between fathers' gender role attitudes and his involvement in the care of his children; specifically, research has found that egalitarian fathers are more involved than traditional fathers in the care of their children (Bulanda, 2004). Other predictors of fathers' involvement in care of his children are the hours he is employed and his work schedule. In general, fathers with fewer work hours and more flexible work schedules tend to participate more in the care of their children (Pleck, 1993).

Mexican Origin Families

Research findings on gender role attitudes and on the division of household labor within Mexican Americans families are complex. While some researchers do find traditional family arrangements, others find more progressive experiences. The lack of consensus among researchers suggests that perhaps the experiences of Mexican origin families are more diverse than previously expected.

Some researchers suggest that husbands and families continue to expect women to shoulder a greater share of housekeeping and childcare than men (Castañeda, 1996), but that traditional views and arrangements are changing. For example, Williams (1990) indicates that decision making is not shared in Mexican American households and that men continue to have more authority than wives; however he recognizes that it is less traditional than in the past. This change in gender role attitudes is also found in more recent longitudinal work by Valentine and Mosley (2000). They find a decline in traditional sex-role attitudes over an 8-year period for both Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans.

Vasquez-Nuttall and colleagues (1987) suggest three possible explanations for changes in sex-roles among Hispanic men and women: first, changes may be due to the acculturation process; second, increases in women's education have led to less traditional attitudes; and third, increases in Hispanic women's participation in the labor force are responsible for these changes. Ybarra (1982) argues that women's employment is the primary factor responsible for egalitarianism in Mexican family relationships. Others have found that highly acculturated women are more likely to have liberal attitudes towards women and engage in less sex-typed behavior than are their less acculturated counterparts (Kranau, Green & Valencia-Weber, 1982). Phinney and Flores (2002) found that being both being male and less educated predicts more traditional sex role attitudes. They also found interactive effects suggesting that a gender gap in attitudes may be most likely to produce conflict in less educated groups.

Contrary to stereotypes, Shelton and John (1993) find that Hispanic men spend more time on household labor than Anglo men; however, this difference disappears after accounting for socio-demographic variables, such as education. They also find that Hispanic men spend more

time on typical “female-typed” tasks like meal preparation, washing dishes and cleaning house than Anglo men; however, Hispanic women still do more than Anglo women. Similarly, Vega and colleagues (1986) suggest that the male provider role is less firmly entrenched in Mexican American households than it is non-Hispanic White household. This allows for more flexibility and a less rigid division of labor. Like Vega, Golding (1990) also notes that there is more flexibility in the actual household activities of Mexican-American families as compared to Whites.

Research is thus far inconclusive as to whether Mexican origin families are in fact more traditional than other families in the United State. But has found it important to consider the demographics of the population being studied as this might account for some observed differences. For example, Golding (1990) found that differences in the division of household labor between Anglo and Mexican-American men, showing that Anglo men do more, are explained by Anglo men’s higher education. However, regardless of amount of housework being done in Mexican origin households, research suggests that Hispanic women tend to be more satisfied with their arrangement than are non-Hispanic White women (Coltrane, 2000). Furthermore, Mexican origin women, like their Anglo counterparts, report less depression and more satisfaction with their marriage when husbands contribute more to household labor (Saenz, Goudy & Lorenz, 1989). We expect to find similar results for fathers’ involvement in childcare, in that we expect women who perceive more father involvement in childcare will be more satisfied in their romantic and parenting relationship with their partner.

Class

Research on social class and the division of household labor suggests that families of low socioeconomic status are less likely to divide tasks equally. Much of the research examining associations between social class and gender roles has made comparisons between blue-collar versus white-collar families. This line of research has found that blue-collar families favor more traditional gender roles; whereas, white-collar families favor more egalitarian gender roles (for a review see Rank, 2000). Similarly, Rank (1982) found that higher levels of education, income, and educational status for both husbands and wives is associated with more egalitarian power structure in terms of decision-making, with the exception those in the upper class (Daniels, 1988; Ostrander, 1984). These works suggests a U-curve association between social class and gender role attitudes, whereby middle class families have more egalitarian attitudes than both working and upper class families. Given the link between attitudes and behavior (Bulanda, 2004), we would expect these beliefs to translate to a more gendered division of labor. Research on predictors of father involvement in the care of their children has found this to be the case. Coltrane (1996) found that both mothers' and fathers' education is positively associated with fathers interacting more and taking more responsibility over their children. Although findings on class and the division of household labor point to a direct association, it is important to be wary of generalizing these research findings to all low-income families. As with any group, there is much variability within low-income families.

Mexican Origin Families and Class

There is some research that shows Mexican origin women's experiences within families vary by social class. However, it is not sufficient to consider her family's economic standing within the greater economic social structure, but necessary to analyze her economic standing

within the family. Thus it is crucial to examine not only whether she's employed, but also the conditions of her employment and her contribution to the family relative to her husband.

Mexican origin women's experiences within families are found to vary by their economic standing relative to their husbands. Pesquera (1993) illustrates this point in her research on how the distribution of household labor is shaped by women's level of economic contribution to the household. She finds differences between professionals, clerical workers, and blue-collar workers in the division of household labor. Mexican origin professionals and blue-collar workers have greater expectations and observe greater male participation in household tasks as compared to clerical workers. This, Pesquera finds, reflects not only differences in expectations held by the women, but also a greater willingness to engage in conflict with their husbands over the division of household labor. Pesquera suggests clerical women have husbands who do less household labor because of the bigger earning gap between them, which gives women less leverage in the marriage. Coltrane and Valdez (1993) have examined the allocation of household tasks in dual earner Chicano families, similar to Pesquera (1993). They suggest that couples are more likely to share both provider and homemaker roles when wife's earning and occupational prestige are equal to or exceed her husbands.

A recent study by Coltrane, Parke, and Adams (2004) examined predictors of father involvement in low-income Mexican American families. They found that higher father involvement in the care of their children is predicted by fathers' egalitarian gender roles, mothers' education, and mothers' employment hours. Predictors of higher father participation in housework included mothers' earning more, as well as families being under economic stress.

Additionally, Mexican-identified men were more likely to supervise and engage children in feminine activities more than were more acculturated men.

The Current Study

Portrayals of Mexican origin women in the media leads people to believe not only that these women have traditional family arrangements, but also that they prefer them. Similar assumptions are also made of women in low-income families. We challenge these assumptions by asking whether the division of childcare influences women's evaluations of their partner both romantically and as a parent in a sample of low-income Mexican origin women. We also explore a probable area of variability within this group and ask whether gender roles attitudes moderate associations between the division of childcare and relationship outcomes. Our research questions are as follows:

First, we ask whether women's perception of the division of childcare tasks is associated with her evaluation of the couple relationship six months later (relationship happiness and relationship conflict). We believe that women in our sample will not be content with a traditional childcare arrangement. Hence, we believe that women with a traditional arrangement will report less happiness and more conflict in their romantic relationship. Secondly, we ask whether associations are moderated by gender role attitudes, that is, is the association between the division of childcare and the couple relationship dependent on women's gender role attitudes. See Figure 1 for a representation of research questions 1 and 2.

Thirdly, we ask whether women's perception of the division of childcare is associated with the parenting relationship (satisfaction with partner's parenting concurrently and parental agreement on childrearing six months later). Again, we believe that women with a traditional

childcare arrangement will report less satisfaction with their partner's parenting and less agreement on childrearing. Lastly, we ask whether associations between the division of childcare and the parenting relationship are moderated by gender role attitudes, that is, is the association between the division of childcare and the parenting relationship dependent on women's gender role attitudes. See Figure 2 for a representation of research questions 3 and 4.

Method

Sample

Forty-nine women participated in this study. All of the women were in two-parent families that include a child enrolled in a Head Start program in Southern Arizona. The women were approximately 29 and a half years old. Additionally, all of the participants reported being of Mexican descent; 88% were born in Mexico, 6% were born in the U.S and had parents born in Mexico, and 6% were born in the U.S. and had at least one grandparent born in Mexico. Not all of the women were married, 84% were married and 16% were in cohabiting relationships. The average relationship length (based on earliest, length of cohabitation or marriage) was 8.29 years ($sd = 4.37$). Approximately 51% of the women reported no high school degree, with 27% receiving a high school education or equivalent and 21% with some college or vocational school. About 71% of the women reported being homemakers, with 16% employed full-time and 8% employed part-time.

Procedure

The present study is part of a larger research project in which mothers, fathers, and children were interviewed separately during in-home, face-to-face interviews administered by trained research assistants. The interviews were conducted in either English or Spanish;

whichever was the preferred language of the family members. About 86% of the women in the current study completed their interview in Spanish.

This study focuses only on the mothers' interviews, specifically on portions of a structured interview assessing the division of childcare between mothers and fathers, as well as gender role attitudes, relationship happiness, relationship conflict, satisfaction with partner as a parent, and parental agreement on childrearing. The control variable of acculturation was measured during the first wave of data collection. Division of childcare, gender role attitudes, and satisfaction with partner's parenting were measured during the second wave of collection of the larger project, approximately six months later. Outcome variables of relationship happiness, relationship conflict, and parental agreement on childrearing were measured during the third wave of data collection, approximately six months after the second wave of data collection.

Measures

Division of childcare. Division of childcare was measured using a scale adopted from the Child Care Activities Scale (Cronenwett, Sampselle, & Wilson, 1988). The modified scale contains 11-items on a five-point scale asking parents who performs each activity. Items include things from disciplining child, to playing with child, and taking the child to the doctor. Answers range from almost always mother (1), to almost always father (5). The mean for women's report of the division of childcare was 2.17 ($sd = .55$).

Gender role attitudes. Gender role attitudes were measured using a fourteen-item scale derived from items from two existing gender role attitudes scales (Bird, Bird & Scruggs, 1984; King & King, 1990). The items consist of questions revolving around the role of mothers and fathers in their family and work lives. The gender role attitudes scale ranged from 1 to 5, with 5

representing more traditional attitudes. A sample item is "The important career-related decisions should be left to the husband." Internal reliability alphas with this sample were adequate at .74. Women's mean score for gender role attitudes was 2.81 ($sd = .43$).

Relationship happiness. Relationship happiness was measured using a single item on a 7-point scale, ranging from individuals reporting feeling very unhappy (1) to perfectly happy (7) in their relationship. Women's mean for relationship happiness was 4.90 ($sd = 1.58$).

Relationship conflict. Relationship conflict was measured using a ten-item scale adapted from the Short Marital Adjustment Test (Locke & Wallace, 1959). Women report on the amount of disagreement with their partner on issues such as finances, friends and families, how time is spent together, and goals on a scale from 0 to 5. Greater values on the scale represent women reporting more conflict. Internal reliability alphas were good at .94. Women's mean for relationship conflict was 1.24 ($sd = 1.11$).

Satisfaction with partner's parenting. Satisfaction with partner's parenting was measured using two items on a five-point scale. The scale ranges from individuals reporting being very dissatisfied (1), to being very satisfied (5) with their partner's parenting. A sample item is "How satisfied are you with your partner's childrearing skills?" Internal reliability alphas were adequate at .76. Women's mean for satisfaction with partner's parenting was 3.64 ($sd = 1.11$).

Parental agreement on childrearing. Parental agreement on childrearing was measured using a 9-item subscale from the Marital Satisfaction Inventory (Snyder, 1981). The scale includes items concerning childrearing conflicts as a source of marital discord and disagreements about discipline. Responses range from indicating that parental agreement is not at all true for

them (0), to parental agreement being very true for them (4). Internal reliability alphas were adequate at .67. Women's mean for parental agreement on childrearing was 2.95 ($sd = .76$).

Acculturation. As acculturation may be associated with our independent variable, we controlled for it in our analyses. Acculturation was measured using a twelve-item, five-point acculturation scale (Marin, Sabogal, Marin, Otero-Sabogal, & Perez-Stable, 1987) that asks questions revolving around language usage, media usage and preferences as well as ethnic social relations. The scale ranges from 0 to 4, where greater values represent higher levels of acculturation. Internal reliability alphas were good at .91. Women's mean for acculturation was .90 ($sd = .81$).

Results

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics of all study variables, and Table 2 shows correlations among study variables. It is of interest to note that the average of women's gender role attitudes was 2.81 ($sd = .43$); where a 3 on the scale represents feeling neutral or have no opinion about traditional gender roles, and a 2 represents disagreeing with traditional gender roles.

Due to their established association with our outcome variables, prior to testing our research questions, correlation analysis were performed between both relationship status and relationship length and all outcome variables. Within the sample there were no significant associations between our outcome variables and relationship length or relationship conflict; therefore, we did not control for either relationship status or relationship length in our analyses. Thus, we only controlled for acculturation.

Table 3 shows the results for the hierarchical linear regressions testing research questions 1 and 2. Our first research question asked whether Mexican origin women's report of the

division of childcare is associated with their evaluation of their romantic relationship (relationships happiness and relationships conflict) six months later. Both models were significant, the model predicting relationship happiness explained 13% of the variance, $F(4,44) = 3.44, p < .05$. Whereas, the model predicting relationship conflict explained 25% of the variance, $F(4,44) = 7.99, p < .01$. Specifically, we found that how the division of childcare is divided in Mexican origin families is associated with women's report of happiness in the relationship ($\beta = .36, p < .05$), as well as her report of conflict in the relationship ($\beta = -.46, p < .01$). Specifically, women who report higher father involvement in the care of their children are both happier in their relationship and report less conflict in their relationship six months later.

Our second research question asked whether associations between the division of childcare and relationship outcomes are moderated by gender role attitudes. We found partial support for this research question. The model examining relationship happiness was significant, explaining an additional 9% of the variance, $F(4,44) = 4.89, p < .05$. However, the model examining relationship conflict was not significant, $p > .05$. Specifically, gender role attitudes do moderate the association between the division of childcare and relationship happiness ($\beta = -.31, p < .05$). In order to test the nature of the moderation, post hoc analyses were performed for all significant moderations as specified by Aiken and West (1991). As seen in Figure 3, post hoc analyses reveal that among women with egalitarian attitudes, the division of childcare is significantly associated with relationship happiness ($\beta = .70, p < .01$); but not among women with traditional gender role attitudes ($\beta = -.06$). We did not find evidence that gender role attitudes moderate the association between the division of childcare and relationship conflict.

Table 4 shows the results for research questions 3 and 4. Hierarchical linear regression analyses revealed support for our third research question. Both models were significant, the model examining mother's satisfaction with her partner's parenting explained 40% of the variance, $F(4,44) = 15.34, p < .001$. Whereas, the model examining parental agreement with childrearing explained 20% of the variance, $F(4,44) = 6.60, p < .01$. Specifically, Mexican origin women's report of the division of childcare is associated with concurrent reports of her satisfaction with her partner's parenting ($\beta = .56, p < .001$) and with her report of parental agreement with childrearing six months later ($\beta = .42, p < .01$). Specifically, women who report higher father involvement in the care of their children report being more satisfied with his parenting concurrently, and reported more agreement over childrearing six months later.

Lastly, our fourth research question asked whether associations between the division of childcare and the parental relationship outcomes are moderated by gender role attitudes. We did find support for this research question. The model examining mother's satisfaction with her partner's parenting was marginally significant and explained an additional 5% of the variance, $F(4,44) = 3.75, p < .10$. Whereas, the model examining parental agreement with childrearing was significant and explained an additional 11% of the variance, $F(4,44) = 8.75, p < .01$. We found that gender role attitudes do moderate the association between the division of childcare and satisfaction with partner's parenting at a trend level ($\beta = -.23, p < .10$). Specifically, post hoc analyses reveal that among women with egalitarian gender role attitudes, the division of childcare is significantly associated with how satisfied they were with their partner's parenting concurrently ($\beta = .82, p < .001$); but not among women with traditional gender role attitudes ($\beta = .26$). Additionally, gender role attitudes also moderate the association between the division of

childcare and parental agreement on childrearing ($\beta = -.35, p < .01$). As illustrated in Figure 4, post hoc analyses reveal that among women with egalitarian attitudes, the division of childcare is significantly associated with their report of agreement with their partner over childrearing six months later ($\beta = .81, p < .001$); but not among women with traditional gender role attitudes ($\beta = -.06$).

Discussion

Our study is adding important research on an understudied and growing segment of the population, Mexican origin women. Our work is further unique in that the women in our study are in low-income families, most have little formal education, and the majority of which are Mexican immigrant. Thus our study is intersectional, and is examining the unique social locations of respondents.

Our research shows that these women's relationships are negatively impacted when their partners are less involved in the care of their children. Our first research question asked whether women's perception of the division of childcare is associated with her evaluation of the couple relationship six months later. We found that when fathers' contribute more to childcare, their partner is more likely to report a more favorable evaluation of their relationship six months later, specifically in terms of higher relationship happiness and lower relationship conflict. Thus, illustrating that women in our sample are less content in their romantic relationships, when their husband contributes less to the care of their children.

Secondly, we asked whether these associations are moderated by women's gender role attitudes. We found partial support for this research question. Gender role attitudes moderate the association between the division of childcare and relationship happiness, but not between the

division of childcare and relationship conflict. Post hoc analyses revealed that fathers' involvement in the division of childcare influences how mothers with egalitarian attitudes rate their relationship happiness six months later, but that this association does not hold true for women with more traditional gender role attitudes. Thus, illustrating the diversity of family expectations among our sample. For women with egalitarian attitudes having their partner involved in the day-to-day care of their child has implications for their happiness in their relationship. Furthermore, for women with more traditional gender role values there was no association between the division of childcare and relationship happiness. Rather, the happiness they receive from their intimate relationships is derived from something other than their partner's participation in childcare. It is also significant to consider that in terms of relationship conflict, the division of childcare is important for all women regardless of their gender role attitudes.

The third and fourth research questions dealt with women's evaluations of the parenting relationship. We found that women's perception of the division of childcare was associated both with her satisfaction with her partner's parenting concurrently and with her report of parental agreement on childrearing six months later. Again we note the importance of fathers' involvement in the care of their children, for when fathers are more involved in the care of their children their partners are more likely to report being satisfied with his parenting and to report higher parental agreement on childrearing. We also found support for our fourth research question, gender role attitudes moderate the association between women's evaluations of the division of childcare and her satisfaction with her partner's parenting at a trend level. Specifically, for women with egalitarian gender role attitudes the division of childcare was associated with her satisfaction with her partner's parenting, but this was not found for women

with traditional gender role attitudes. Thus, for women with more traditional gender role attitudes the division of childcare was not associated with her satisfaction with her partner's parenting. A similar result was found for parental agreement on childrearing. Again gender role attitudes moderate the association between the division of childcare and parental agreement on childrearing. For women with egalitarian gender role attitudes, their partner's participation in childcare was associated with their report of agreement on childrearing six months later, but this was not found for women with traditional gender role attitudes.

The moderating effects of gender role attitudes illustrates that this is a crucial variable to consider when thinking about low-income, Mexican origin women and their interactions with their families. Gender role attitudes shape the expectations women have in their families. Furthermore, these expectations carry implications for how women evaluate their partner's behavior in relationships.

Our research suggests that how much fathers participate in the care of their children has repercussions for relationship and parenting outcomes for women with egalitarian values. Women with more traditional values tend to be mostly unaffected (in terms of relationship happiness, satisfaction with their partner's parenting and parental agreement on childrearing) by their partner's participation in childcare. Their relationships are neither enhanced nor hurt when their partner contribute more to childcare. This suggests that traditional women derive their evaluations of their partner from other sources, such as how he provides for his family.

As with all studies, ours has some limitations. First, our sample size of 49 women was relatively small. Thus caution should be used when interpreting results. This also points to the need for future studies in this area. Additionally, our sample was relatively homogenous. The

women in our sample were all in low-income families, with little formal education, and the majority were Mexican immigrants. Generalizations should not be made to Mexican origin women that occupy different social locations. Furthermore, there are limitations with the measure of our control variable. The acculturation measure used in this study conceptualizes acculturation in terms of one-dimension. The measure does not take into account the fact that some individuals may be bicultural.

Our study demonstrates that low-income, Mexican origin women vary in the expectations they hold of their partners. Furthermore, these differing expectations have real implications for how women evaluate their partners in both their romantic and parenting relationship.

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Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables (N = 49)

Variables	<i>M</i>	SD	Range	α
Division of Childcare T2	2.17	0.55	1-5	--
Gender Role Attitudes* T2	2.81	0.43	1-5	.74
Relationship Happiness T3	4.90	1.58	1-7	--
Relationship Conflict T3	1.24	1.11	0-5	.94
Satisfaction with Partner's Parenting T2	3.64	1.11	1-5	.76
Parental Agreement on Childrearing T3	2.95	0.76	0-4	.67

* Greater values represent more traditional values.

Table 2

Correlations Among Study Variables (N = 49)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Division of Childcare T2	–					
2. Gender Role Attitudes T2	.22	–				
3. Relationship Happiness T3	.36*	.10	–			
4. Relationship Conflict T3	-.49***	-.22	-.62***	–		
5. Satisfaction with Partner's Parenting T2	.61***	.32*	.62***	-.61***	–	
6. Parental Agreement on Childrearing T3	.45**	.19	.57***	-.70***	.72***	–

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

Table 3

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting the Couple Relationship

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
<u>Relationship Happiness</u>									
Acculturation	.14	.29	.07	.16	.27	.08	.08	.26	.04
Division of Childcare				1.02	.41	.36*	.91	.39	.32*
Gender Role Attitudes				.10	.53	.03	-.14	.52	-.04
Interaction DC*GRA							-2.54	1.15	-.31*
ΔR^2		.01			.13			.09	
F for ΔR^2		.24			3.44*			4.89*	
<u>Relationship Conflict</u>									
Acculturation	.28	.20	.21	.26	.17	.19	.30	.17	.22
Division of Childcare				-.93	.26	-.46**	-.88	.26	-.44**
Gender Role Attitudes				-.30	.33	-.11	-.18	.34	-.07
Interaction DC*GRA							1.18	.75	.20
ΔR^2		.04			.25			.04	
F for ΔR^2		2.09			7.99**			2.47	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 4

*Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting the Parenting**Relationship*

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
<u>Satisfaction with Partner's Parenting</u>									
Acculturation	-.12	.20	-.08	-.08	.16	-.06	-.13	.16	-.09
Division of Childcare				1.13	.24	.56***	1.08	.23	.54***
Gender Role Attitudes				.50	.31	.19	.38	.30	.15
Interaction DC*GRA							-1.31	.67	-.23 ⁺
ΔR^2		.01			.40			.05	
F for ΔR^2		.34			15.34***			3.75 ⁺	
<u>Parental Agreement on Childrearing</u>									
Acculturation	-.33	.13	-.35*	-.32	.12	-.34**	-.37	.11	-.39**
Division of Childcare				.57	.17	.42**	.52	.16	.37**
Gender Role Attitudes				.16	.22	.09	.03	.21	.02
Interaction DC*GRA							-1.39	.47	-.35**
ΔR^2		.13			.20			.11	
F for ΔR^2		6.74*			6.60**			8.75**	

⁺ $p < .10$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

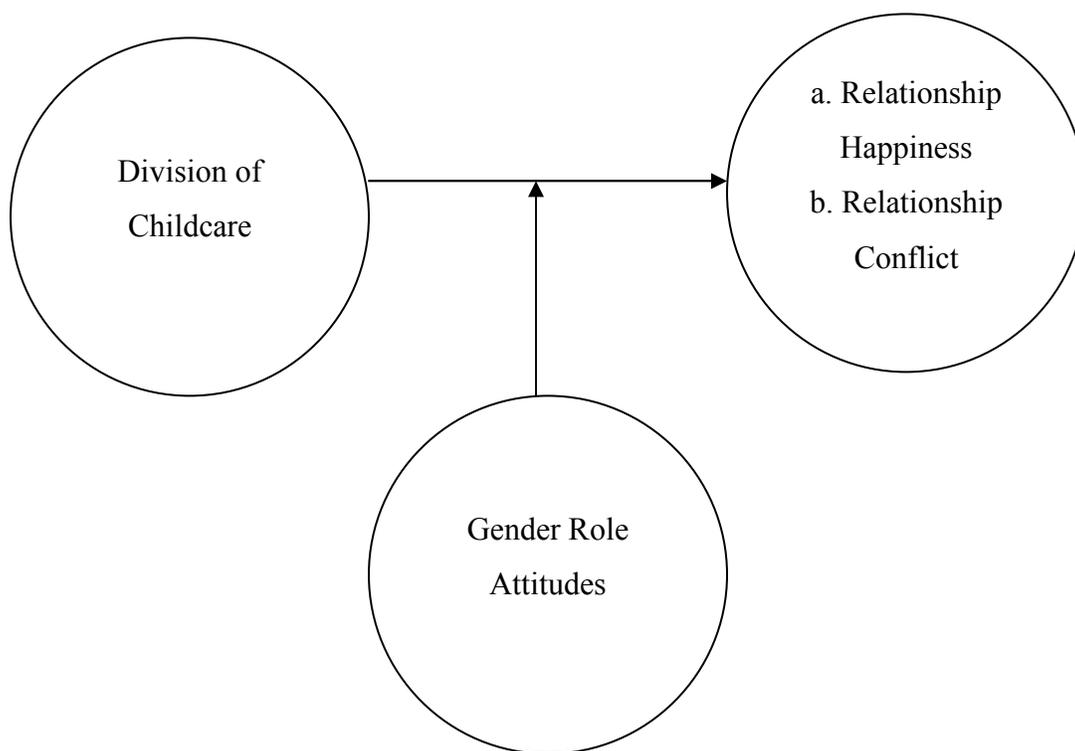


Figure 1. Research questions 1 and 2: Predicting the couple relationship

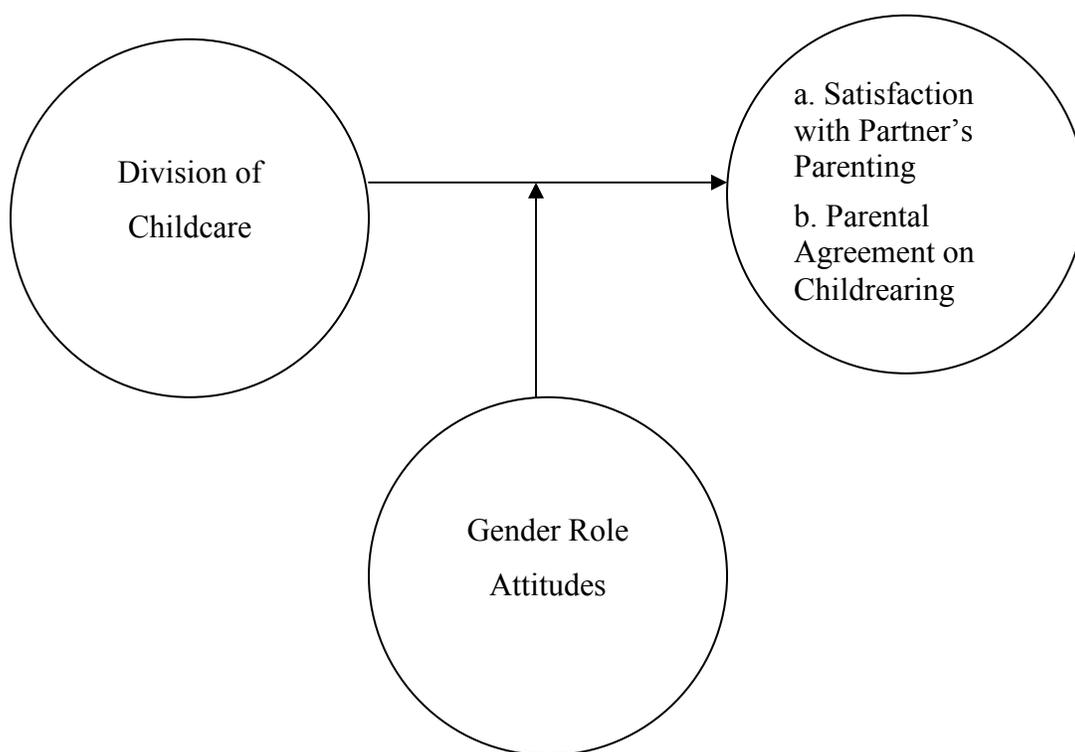


Figure 2. Research questions 3 and 4: Predicting the parenting relationship

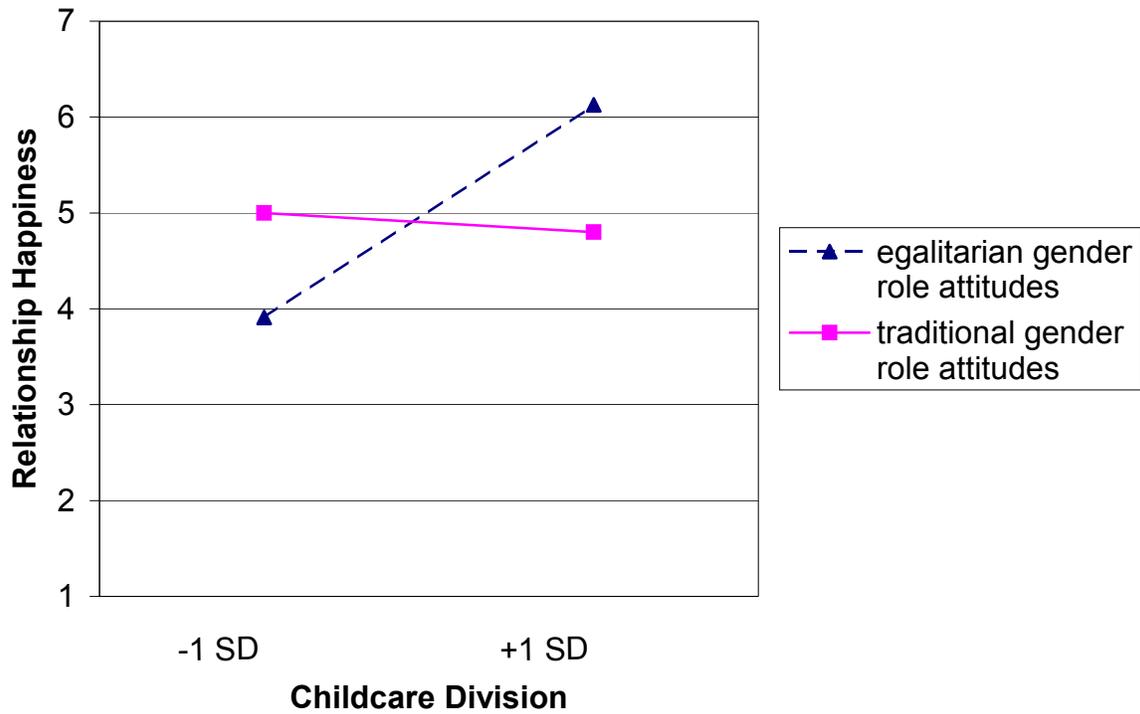


Figure 3. Association between women's report of the division of childcare and relationship happiness with gender role attitudes

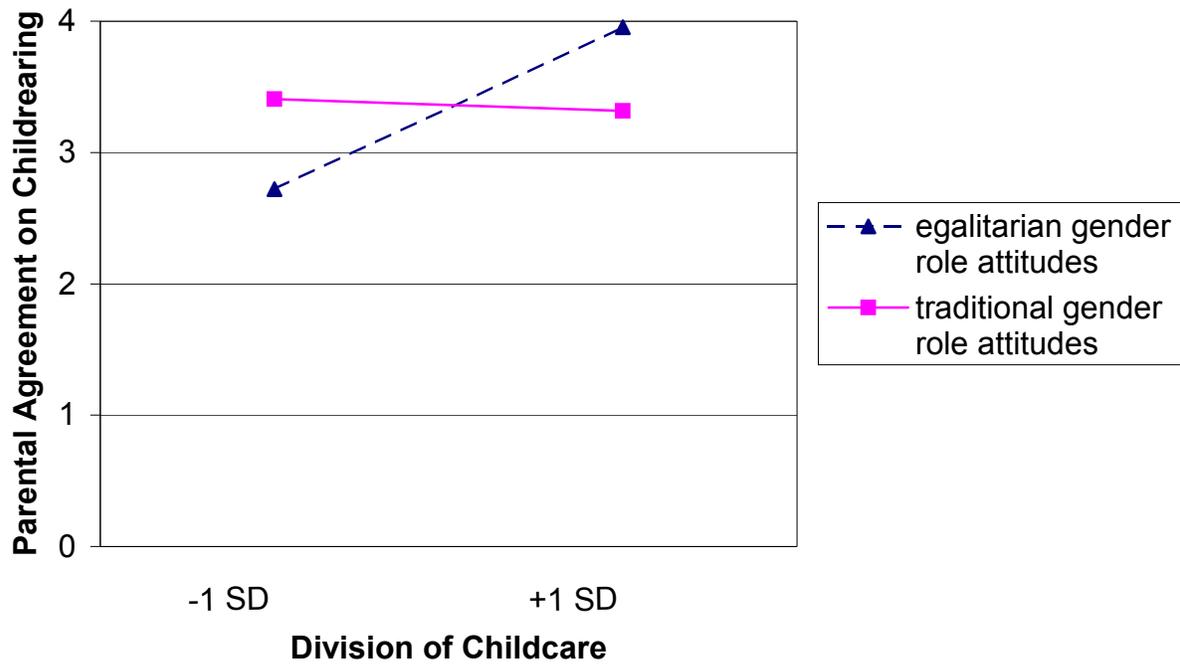


Figure 4. Association between women's report of the division of childcare and parental agreement on childrearing with gender role attitudes

CHAPTER IV
ACTOR-PARTNER EFFECTS OF STRUCTURAL, BEHAVIORAL, AND ATTITUDINAL
FAMILISM ON RELATIONSHIP CONFLICT FOR MEXICAN ORIGIN COUPLES

Introduction

The Hispanic population is the largest and fastest growing ethnic minority group in the United States, (US Census Bureau, 2003), with Mexican Americans comprising the largest segment of the Latino population. Furthermore, this segment of the population is projected to grow due to higher birth rates and continued immigration from Mexico (Suárez-Orosco & Pérez, 2002). Despite recent demographics trends in the growth of the Mexican origin population, there is almost no research examining within group predictors of relationship outcomes for this group, such as how cultural values affect marital interactions. This paper works to fill this gap in the literature by examining whether the cultural value of familism impacts relationship conflict in a sample of low-income Mexican origin couples.

Given a growing awareness of Hispanic cultural values, it is surprising that empirical studies have only begun to examine the impact of cultural values on intimate relationships (Yu et al., pending revisions). Cultural values are a group's desired principles, goals, and shared beliefs and have been found to influence what people believe, how they behave, and how they organize their social relationships (Schwartz, 1994). Cultural values influence people's daily lives and provide guidelines on how to structure relationships, including intimate relationships. From a psychological perspective, cultural values are one of the core aspects to ethnicity (Phinney, 1996). As most research on Mexican origin families and intimate relationships is comparative

there is little understanding of the variables responsible for the observed differences between groups. The inclusion of cultural values in research moves us towards understanding group processes rather than simply focusing on comparisons across groups.

Collectivism and individualism

Collectivism and individualism are the most theoretically and empirically studied constructs in cross-cultural psychology (Green, Deschamps & Páez, 2005). They have been labeled in numerous ways including as cultural syndromes (Triandis, 1996), as cultural values (Marín & Marín, 1991), and as cultural orientations (Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier (2002). In general, Western cultures are more likely to endorse individualism, while non-Western cultures are more likely to endorse collectivism. Within the United States, Latinos score higher than European Americans on collectivism (Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002).

Collectivist societies emphasize the needs, objectives, and points of view of an ingroup (e.g., family or tribe); whereas, individualistic societies emphasize personal objectives, attitudes, and values (Triandis, 1995). In collectivist societies, group identity is historically more important than the self for both men and women (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Attributes associated with collectivism include a sense of duty towards one's group, interdependence with others, a desire for social harmony, and conformity with group norms; whereas, individualism is associated with independence, autonomy, self-reliance, uniqueness, achievement orientation and competition (Green, Deschamps & Páez, 2005). Thus, the behaviors and attitudes of collectivists are determined by the norms and demands of the ingroup; whereas, the behaviors and attitudes of individualists are determined by the person's own goals and needs (Triandis, 1995).

Collectivist values are important in understanding how people approach family relationships. The attribute of collectivism emphasizing a desire for social harmony may reduce conflict with ingroup members. In fact, individualist cultures are thought to be more likely to openly engage in conflict than are collectivist cultures (Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai & Lucca, 1988). The current paper focuses on the collectivist cultural value of familism and on whether familism influences relationship conflict in intimate relationships.

Familism

Familism has been proposed to be one of the most important cultural values of Hispanics (Marín & Marín, 1991) and should influence individuals' behavior within families. It involves individuals' strong identification with and attachment to their nuclear and extended families, as well as strong feelings of loyalty, reciprocity, and solidarity among members of the same family (Sabogal, Marín, Otero-Sabogal, Marín, & Perez-Stable, 1987). Familism has also been defined as a set of attitudes that reflect the relative importance given to family membership in terms of support, sacrifice, and involvement (Freeberg & Stein, 1996). Research also holds that Hispanic cultures are mainly orientated towards the family, and the needs of the family may be more important than those of the individual (Zea, Quezada, & Belgrave, 1994). The more specific cultural value of familism has been described as falling under the larger umbrella of collectivism (Triandis, 1995).

Empirical research on familism has found that Mexican Americans, along with other Hispanics, have higher rates of most dimensions of familism than non-Hispanic Whites. For example, Mexican Americans are more likely to live near a significant numbers of relatives, visit them frequently, and exchange goods and services than are Anglos (Keefe, 1984). A recent

study by Sarkisian and colleagues (Sarkisian, Gerena, & Gerstel, 2007) found that Mexican Americans also exhibit higher rates of kin coresidence and proximity, but that they have lower rates of financial support than European Americans. Additionally, they found that Mexican American women were more likely to give household or childcare help to relatives than were European American women. There is also evidence that Mexican American, Puerto Rican, and other Hispanic parents prefer behaviors in children that encourage family closeness and interpersonal relatedness (Zayas & Solari, 1994). In terms of attitudes, adult Hispanics have been found to hold more familistic attitudes than non-Hispanic Whites (Ganies et al., 1997; Sabogal, Marín, Otero-Sabogal, Marín, & Perez-Stable, 1987), as have Mexican-American young adults (Freeberg & Stein, 1996).

While still important, the value of familism in Mexican origin individuals appears to be influenced by living in American culture. Research on familism and acculturation has established that the acculturation process produces some modifications in the strength with which certain individuals hold this cultural value. Several studies have found some aspects of familistic attitudes and acculturation to be inversely related in both adults (Cuéllar, Arnold, & González, 1995; Lugo Steidel & Contreras; 2003) and adolescents (Cota-Robles, 2002). However, other aspects of familistic attitudes, such as family support, remain strong throughout the acculturation process (Sabogal, Marín, Otero-Sabogal, Marín, & Perez-Stable, 1987). Furthermore, Rueschenberg and Buriel (1989) found that the basic aspects of internal family systems do not differ from one generation to the next as the family acculturates.

Dimensions of Familism

Familism is a multidimensional construct with at least three separate dimensions including: structural familism, behavioral familism, and attitudinal familism (Valenzuela & Dornbusch, 1994; Baca Zinn, 1982). Structural familism refers to the boundaries that separate the presence or absences of nuclear or extended family (Lugo Steidel & Contreras, 2003) and has been measured by asking how many adult relatives live within an hour's drive of the respondents home (Valenzuela & Dornbusch, 1994). Behavioral familism refers to behaviors associated with feelings about the family; such behaviors may include keeping connected with family through visits and telephone calls (Valenzuela & Dornbusch, 1994). Lastly, attitudinal familism refers to beliefs and attitudes regarding the nuclear and extended family, particularly in terms of feelings of loyalty, solidarity, and reciprocity (Sabogal, Marín, Otero-Sabogal, Marín, & Perez-Stable, 1987).

Literature also suggests that the three dimensions of familism may function differently. An individual's adherence to the different dimensions of familism may be reflective not only of personal choices, but also of external influences (Garza & Gallegos, 1985). For example, Sabogal and colleagues (Sabogal, Marín, Otero-Sabogal, Marín, & Perez-Stable, 1987) suggest that Mexican immigrants may have high attitudinal familism, but weak behavioral familism since immigrants may have few relatives in the new country thereby limiting opportunities for contact. Thus a failure to separate the dimensions of familism may lead to counterintuitive findings (Marín, 1993; Montoro Rodríguez & Koloski, 1998). Additionally, few studies have systematically studied all three dimensions of familism in one study, and of the three dimensions attitudinal familism has been the most studied. In fact, previous studies often refer to familism

globally by only specifically measuring attitudinal familism, ignoring both structural and behavioral elements of familism.

Additionally, the dimension of attitudinal familism has also been conceptualized as having different dimensions within it. In a measure developed by Sabogal and colleagues (Sabogal, Marín, Otero-Sabogal, Marín, & Perez-Stable, 1987), they found that attitudinal familism has three different dimensions: familial obligations, perceived support from family, and family as referents. Additionally, they maintain that perceived family support is the most distinctive dimension of Hispanic familism. Cuéllar, Arnold, and González (1995) constructed another measure of attitudinal familism that borrowed items from an older attitudinal familism scale developed by Ramirez (1969). They borrowed items that reflected child-rearing and gender roles. Their scale yielded three factors, including: dependence on relatives, family priority, and respect for parental authority. However, their scale suffered from low internal consistency. A recently developed measure of attitudinal familism by Lugo Steidel and Contreras (2003) revealed four factors: family support, family interconnectedness, familial honor, and subjugation of self for family. Lastly, the most recently developed measure of attitudinal familism (Villarreal, Blozis, & Widaman, 2005) has no subscales. This new measure is relatively short with only 5-items and is a more global measure of attitudinal familism. The attitudinal familism measure used in the present study is similar to that developed by Villarreal and colleagues (Villarreal, Blozis, & Widaman, 2005) in that we measure a global dimension of attitudinal familism.

Relationship Conflict

The study of relationship conflict is critical as there is extensive evidence linking marital conflict to mental, physical, and family health (for a review see Fincham and Beach, 1999). In close relationships, conflict is inevitable. It is a simple product of putting two interdependent people together (Canary, Cupach, & Messman, 1995.). Fincham and Beach (1999) propose that relationship conflict results from “perceived conflict of interest, incompatible goals, wishes and expectations, and perceived interference with goal-directed behavior” (p. 61).

Research on predictors of relationship conflict has found that individual, couple, and broader external circumstances influence relationship conflict. For example, at the individual level, attributions for relationship problems are strongly associated with marital conflict (Sabourin, Lussier, & Wright, 1991). Additionally, recent daily diary research has found that more anxiously attached people tend to perceive more frequent and severe daily conflict in their romantic relationships than do less anxious persons (Simpson, Campbell, & Weisberg, 2006). Furthermore, there may be buffers protecting couples from conflict, including religiosity (Curtis & Ellison, 2002) and participation in premarital education (Stanley, Amato, & Johnson, 2006). Examples of predictors at the couple level include perceived inequity in the division of labor (Kluwer, Heesink, & Van de Vliert, 1996), violations of trust, commitment and relationship expectations (Jones & Burdette, 1994), and a disparity between partners in religiosity (Curtis & Ellison, 2002). Broader external circumstances that influence relationship conflict include economic pressure (Conger, Rueter & Elder, 1999) and work stress (Crouter, Perry-Jenkins, Huston, & Crawford, 1989). Collectivist values, such as familism, may impact the external circumstances in which the couple operates.

Research on relationship conflict mainly comes from European American, middle class couples. The vast majority of this research has little variability in the ethnic or social class composition of its samples. Furthermore, by simply reexamining whether findings found in European American samples apply to Mexican origin couples we miss predictors that are unique to Mexican origin couples. Such unique predictors could include cultural values. Cultural values, including families, may serve a protective factor in lowering the frequency of relationship conflict.

Familism and Family Outcomes

There is research that demonstrates that attitudinal familism serves as a protective factor for Hispanic families. For example, fathers who value familism are less likely to use physical punishment when disciplining their children than are fathers who hold familism in less regard (Ferrari, 2002). Additionally, in adolescence attitudinal familism is linked to parental monitoring (Romero & Ruiz; in press) and parent-adolescent attachment (Cota-Robles, 2002). In adolescents higher rates of attitudinal familism is also associated with a lower risk for delinquency (Cota-Robles, 2002) and with lower substance use (Unger et al., 2002).

There is little research on familism and intimate relationship in adulthood. The only study that has examined the effects of familism on relationship satisfaction was conducted in the 1970s (Bean, Curtis, & Marcum, 1977), before our current conceptualizations of familism were developed. Recent work by Gaines, Ríos and Buriel (1997) suggests that familism may promote good interpersonal relationships; however, this work has yet to be empirically tested. However, it is not difficult to imagine familism affecting relationships. For example, the value of familism may have a direct effect on lower rates of divorce. This might be evidenced by findings that

Mexican Americans tend to value marriage more highly than non-Latino Whites (Oropesa & Gorman, 2000). Being that familism is a collectivist value that endorses harmonious relationships with members of the family, it is reasonable to hypothesize that familism is associated with lower rates of relationship conflict.

The Current Study

Our study is innovative in that we are the first to empirically study the effects of familism on intimate relationships. Furthermore we are exploring how the three separate dimensions of familism (structure, behavior, and attitudes) each relates to relationship conflict. Additionally, we are looking at both actor and partner effects of familism on relationship conflict, as well as accounting for the interdependence of the variables between partners.

For the current study we will be using the Actor-Partner Interdependence Model (APIM) developed by Kenny and colleagues (Kashy & Kenny, 2000; Kenny & Cook, 1999). The APIM allows us to simultaneously test the effect of each person's score on one variable on both his/her own behavior (an actor effect) and the effect on his/her partner's behavior (a partner effect). Thus in our study, we could simultaneously test whether women's familism affects both her own and her partner's report of relationship conflict; as well as whether men's familism affects both his own and his partner's relationship conflict. This approach also takes into account the interdependency of an individual's views and behaviors with that of his/her partner. In our study it takes into account the interdependence between an individual's familism with that of their partner's familism (i.e. a woman's familism may be correlated with that of her partner's), as well as the interdependence between the outcome variables (i.e. a woman's relationship conflict is correlated with her partner's relationship conflict). Testing actor-partner effects taking into

account the interdependence among the variables decreases the probability of making Type I and Type II errors (Kashy & Kenny, 2000).

Figure 1, depicts the general APIM that guided our study. Actor effects are depicted in paths *a* and *b*, while partner effects are depicted in paths *c* and *d*. Three separate models will be tested, one for each measure of familism (structure, behavior, and attitudes). As represented in the different paths in our model, our research questions ask:

1. Are women's reports of familism (structural, behavioral, attitudinal) associated with their own reports of relationship conflict (path *a*)?
2. Are men's reports of familism (structural, behavioral, attitudinal) associated with their own reports of relationship conflict (path *b*)?
3. Are women's reports of familism (structural, behavioral, attitudinal) associated with their partner's reports of relationship conflict (path *c*)?
4. Are men's reports of familism (structural, behavioral, attitudinal) associated with their partners' reports of relationship conflict (path *d*)?

As this study is the first to examine the effects of familism on relationship conflict, our research questions are primarily exploratory. However, since familism is a collectivist value that endorses harmonious relationships within families, we do expect familism be associated with lower reports of relationships conflict. Therefore we believe that stronger adherence to structural, behavioral, and attitudinal familism should be associated with lower levels of relationship conflict for both men and women.

Method

Procedure

The present study is part of a larger research project of the socialization of emotion regulation in children (the Parenting and Children's Emotion Project; PACE). The PACE sample consists of low-income families that included a 3- to 4-year-old child initially enrolled in a Head Start home-based program. Families completed in-home, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews administered separately to each family member by trained research assistants. This study focuses only on the mothers' and fathers' interviews, specifically on portions of a structured interview assessing structural, behavioral and attitudinal familism, as well as relationship conflict. For the current study, the sample was further restricted to families in which both parents were of Mexican origin. All measures in the current study were collected during the first wave of data collection of the larger study.

Trained researchers conducted the interviews in either English or Spanish; whichever was the preferred language of the family members. About 91% of the women and 89% of the men in the current study completed their interview in Spanish. To insure equivalence between the English and Spanish versions of the survey, all survey measures were translated and back-translated by bilingual members of our research staff. Additionally, in order to ensure meaningfulness of the interviews, several questionnaires were pilot-tested. Twenty families served as pilot-test participants. These families were recruited through local Head Start centers (16 families) and preschools (4 families). Seventy percent of the pilot families were of Mexican origin, while the remaining 30% were non-Hispanic White families.

Participants

Sixty-four couples of Mexican origin participated in the present study. All couples had a child enrolled in a home-based Head Start program. Seventy-three percent of the couples were married, while the remaining 27% were in cohabiting relationships. The average length of cohabiting and marital relationships was 8.04 years ($SD = 4.24$).

Demographic characteristics of the sample are reported in Table 1. The mean age of women in the sample was 29.48 years ($SD = 6.02$), and the mean age of the men was 32.48 years ($SD = 7.11$). The majority of the participants were Mexican immigrants with over 89% of the women and 90% of the men born in Mexico. Of the participants born in Mexico the average length of years living in the U.S. was 8.81 years for women ($SD = 6.90$) and 12.25 years for men ($SD = 9.10$). In terms of educational status, over 50% of the women reported having no high school degree or general education degree (GED) and over 60% of the men reported having no high school degree or general education degree (GED).

Measures

Structural Familism. Structural familism was measured with a single item taken from Valenzuela and Dornbusch (1994). The item asks: “How many relatives live within an hour’s drive of where you live?” The item response ranges on a six-point scale varying from “None” to “More than 20”. Thus, the current measure of structural familism captures the proximity of extended family.

Behavioral familism. Behavioral familism was measured with a single item slightly modified from one used by Valenzuela and Dornbusch (1994). The item asks: “How often do you see, talk on the telephone with, or email adult relatives who do not live with you?” The

modifications include making the response scale range on a seven-point scale, instead of six-point scale, varying from “Never” to “Once a day”. As well as, adding contact via email to the original question. Thus, the current measure of behavioral familism captures contact with extended family.

Attitudinal Familism. Attitudinal familism was assessed using a modified version of the FRVQ (Family Relational Values Q-sort) measure, developed by Wozniak, Sung, Crump, Edgar-Smith, and Litzinger (1996). For the present investigation, the original measure was modified when we converted items to a Likert response format. Additionally, duplicative or repetitive items were either combined or deleted yielding an eight-item familism scale. Women and men separately reported on their attitudes towards familism. Participants were instructed to rate their agreement with statements about familism using a four-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (“Strongly Disagree”) to 3 (“Strongly Agree”). Sample items from the attitudinal familism scale include: “Family members should be there in times of need” and “Family members should think of the family before they think of themselves.” Although we made some modifications to the original scale, internal reliabilities for the attitudinal Familism scale, as estimated by Cronbach’s alpha, remained adequate at .71 for women and .77 for men.

Relationship conflict. Relationship conflict was measured using a ten-item scale adapted from the Short Marital Adjustment Test (Locke & Wallace, 1959). Women and men separately reported on the amount of disagreement with their partner on issues such as finances, friends and families, how time is spent together, and goals on a scale from 0 to 5. Greater values on the scale represent more relationship conflict. Internal reliability alphas were .90 for women and .89 for men.

Results

Descriptive statistics for the study variables are presented in Table 2, as are paired comparisons between women and men. It is of interest to note that there were no mean level differences in reports between men and women for any of the study variables.

Due to probable associations, prior to running analysis, correlations were computed between the outcome variable and both relationship status and relationship length. In the current study relationship conflict was not significantly correlated with either relationship status or relationship length. Therefore we did not control for these variables in our models.

The APIMs were estimated with a series of structural equation models using AMOS 6.0 (Arbuckle, 2005). The structural model shown in Figure 1 was estimated for each dimension of familism: structure, behavior, and attitudes. All of our variables were manifest variables, thus the current procedure are essentially a constrained set of multiple regressions equations, and require the usual sample size as multiple regressions (Kenny & Cook, 1999). These requirements were met in our study.

Our unconstrained models were just identified models, meaning that there were 0 degree of freedom and we could not get fit indices. Therefore, as recommended by Kenny and Cook (1999), we first constrained unstandardized paths a and b to be equal, then paths c and d , followed by paths a and c , and finally paths c and d . We compared the model fit indices of the different models, to determine the best fitting model. For model 1, structural familism, the best fitting model was the one with paths b and d constrained to be equal. For model 2, behavioral familism, the best fitting model was the one with paths a and b constrained to be equal. Finally for model 3, attitudinal familism, the best fitting model was the one with paths b and d

constrained to be equal. All three of our models had good model fits. The fit indices for constrained Model 1, structural familism, were: $\chi^2(1) = 1.17, p = .28, \chi^2/df = 1.17, CFI = .99, IFI = 1.00, RMSEA = .05 (CI, .00-.34)$. For the constrained model 2, behavioral familism, the fit indices were: $\chi^2(1) = 1.02, p = .31, \chi^2/df = 1.02, CFI = 1.00, IFI = 1.00, RMSEA = .02 (CI, .00-.33)$. And for the constrained model 3, attitudinal familism, the fit indices were: $\chi^2(1) = .42, p = .52, \chi^2/df = .42, CFI = 1.00, IFI = 1.03, RMSEA = .00 (CI, .00-.29)$. All of the models provided good fits of the data. In our study our primary interest is not the model fits, but rather whether specific paths are significant.

Familism and Relationship Conflict

Our first two research questions ask about actor effects of familism (structural, behavioral, attitudinal) on relationship conflict. As depicted in path *a*, research question 1 asks whether women's familism impacts their own report of relationship conflict. Research question 2, depicted in path *b*, asks whether men's familism impacts their own report of relationship conflict. Table 3 presents the results of the unconstrained structural equation models answering these questions. Model 1 shows that there are no actor effects for structural familism; women's structural familism does not predict their own relationship conflict, and men's structural familism also does not predict their own relationship conflict. The results for model 2, behavioral familism, have no actor effects for women, but men's behavioral familism is significantly associated their own lower reports of relationship conflict ($b = -.12, p < .05$). Thus women's behavioral familism does not impact their own relationship conflict; however, men who report having more contact with relatives also report less relationship conflict. For model 3, attitudinal familism, there are no actor effects for either men or women. That is, women's

attitudinal familism does not impact their own relationship conflict, and men's attitudinal familism also does not impact their own relationship conflict.

Research questions 3 and 4 ask about partner effects of familism (structural, behavioral, attitudinal) on relationship conflict. Table 3 also presents results of partner effects of familism on relationship conflict. Research question 3 asks whether women's report of familism impacts their partner's report of relationship conflict, as represented in path *c*. And research question 4 asks whether men's report of familism impacts their partner's report of relationship conflict, as represented in path *d*. The results of model 1, shows that women's structural familism does not impact their partner's relationship conflict, but that men's structural familism is significantly associated with their partner's lower reports of relationship conflict ($b = -.12, p = .05$). This means that men who report having more relatives living within an hour drive are more likely to have partner's who report less relationship conflict. The results for model 2, behavioral familism shows a similar pattern. Women's behavioral familism does not impact their partner's relationship conflict; however, men's behavioral familism is significantly associated with their partner's lower reports of relationship conflict ($b = -.44, p < .001$). This means that men who report more contact with relatives are more likely to have partner's who report less relationship conflict. Finally the results for model 3, attitudinal familism, shows that women's attitudinal familism does not impact their partner's relationship conflict, and also that men's attitudinal familism does not impact their partner's relationship conflict.

Discussion

The current study is the first to examine the impact of structural, behavioral, and attitudinal familism on relationship conflict in a sample of low-income Mexican origin couples.

A strength of this work is that we are exploring the effects of the three separate dimensions of familism and how each relates to relationship conflict. Furthermore, our study incorporates data from both men and women in couple relationships. Our data is dyadic; we examined both actor and partner effects of familism on relationship conflict using the APIM. Our findings revealed that the three APIMs examined (one for each dimension of familism) are a good fit of the data.

Our research questions examined whether familism impacts relationship conflict. We hypothesized that since familism is a collectivist value that endorses harmonious relationships within the family, that it would be associated with lower reports of relationship conflict. We asked: (1) whether women's reports of familism are associated with their own reports of relationship conflict, (2) whether men's reports of familism are associated with their own reports of relationship conflict, (3) whether women's reports of familism are associated with their partner's reports of relationship conflict, and (4) whether men's reports of familism are associated with their partners' reports of relationship conflict. We examined these questions with three separate models: model 1 for structural familism, model 2 for behavioral familism and model 3 for attitudinal familism. Overall we found that both structural and behavioral familism impact the relationships of Mexican origin couples. However, we did not find evidence that attitudinal familism impacts relationship conflict. There were no significant actor or partner effects of attitudinal familism on relationship conflict were significant.

For model 1, structural familism, there were no actor effects; women's report of structural familism did not impact their own report of relationship conflict, and men's report of structural familism also did not impact their own report of relationship conflict. Additionally, women's structural familism did not impact their partner's relationship conflict. However, we

did find that men's structural familism was associated with their partner's lower reports of relationship conflict; such that, men who reported having more relatives living within an hour's drive were more likely to have partners who reported lower relationship conflict.

For Model 2, examining the effects of behavioral familism, we did not find actor effects for women, but we did for men. Men who reported having more contact with relatives also reported less relationship conflict. Furthermore, results of partner effects revealed a similar pattern whereby women's behavioral familism did not impact their partner's relationship conflict, but men's behavioral familism was associated with their partner's lower reports of relationship conflict. Specifically, men who reported more contact with their relatives were also more likely to have partners who reported less relationship conflict.

Taken together our findings suggest that, in terms of the amount of conflict in relationships, structural and behavioral familism for men may serve a protective role. These influences on relationship conflict may be due to individual, couple, or broader external factors. At the individual level, there may be something about men who live near and have contact with extended family that differs them from men who have less contact with extended family. These "family men" may differ not only in their approach towards extended family, but also in their approach to their immediate family and their intimate partner. Perhaps their commitment to family drives their behavior with both their extended and nuclear family. Additionally, it is possible that these men's unique individual proclivities affect interactions with both extended family and their intimate partners. For example, these men may engage in less risky behavior, therefore, facilitating positive relations with both their nuclear and extended family.

At the couple level, the contact men are having with their extended family may promote the well being of their intimate relationships. For example, the extended family may be encouraging relationship-enhancing behaviors. This could be done either directly, by doing things like offering relationship advice, or indirectly, by modeling positive relationship behavior. Lastly, the extended family may also be influencing the external circumstances under which the couple operates. The support offered by the extended family, whether it is financial, behavioral, or emotional, may alter the circumstances affecting the couple. Through the extended family's help the couple's environment might become one that is less conducive to conflict. All these possibilities remain to be explored.

The current study also points to the importance of studying cultural values in examining couple relationships. Cultural values affect people's behavior within families and in intimate relationships. This study is one of the first to empirically test the impact of cultural values on relationships. Our study suggests that, collectivist values, such as familism, impact individuals' behaviors in relationships. Other within group predictors of relationship outcomes also remain to be explored, such as how the experience of racism and discrimination impact couple relationships. Continuing the exploration of within group predictors suggests, that one must be cautious about drawing conclusions about Mexican origin relationships from research conducted primarily with Caucasian samples with little variability in ethnic makeup (Karney & Bradbury, 1995). Thus, the implications drawn from current relationship research is limited. In order to be mindful of other populations it is necessary to investigate other lines of research that focus on ethnic minorities.

Our findings also suggest that as researchers, we need to reconsider examining only attitudinal familism in our studies. In the research literature, there is currently much more work on attitudinal familism than there is on structural or behavioral familism. This may be due to the assumption that because of external influences, the Mexican population in the United States may have less control over structural and behavioral aspects familism than the attitudinal aspects. However, our work suggests that structural and behavioral familism both have real consequences for the relationship well being of people of Mexican origin. Further exploration is also needed to determine which aspects of men's structural and behavioral familism impacts relationship conflict, and whether contact with his family versus his partner's family impacts relationship conflict differently. Research also needs to investigate whether which family members he has contact with matters.

Lastly, our paper demonstrates the benefits of using the actor-partner interdependence model in examining couple relationships. By using the APIM we were able to simultaneously examine men's and women's actor and partner effects. This method is also less vulnerable to Type I and Type II errors than regression analyses, as it accounts for the interdependence between partners. Couple research should continue its move towards utilizing this method.

Some limitations of the current study involve the measurement of our familism variables. The measures of structural and behavioral familism were each one item. More fully developed measures of structural and behavioral familism are needed in the field. Additionally, our measures of structural and behavioral familism mainly capture the presence of and contact with extended family; whereas, the measure of attitudinal familism could be capturing either nuclear or extended familism. Disentangling nuclear and extended familism should be tackled in future

work. Another limitation involves our measure of attitudinal familism, which has not been previously validated with a Mexican origin sample. Furthermore, we measured a global measure of attitudinal familism and did not examine the separate dimensions within it. Additionally, the measure of attitudinal familism had little variability, thus findings for Model 3 should be interpreted with caution.

Our sample consisted primarily of low-income Mexican immigrant couples, thus our findings should not be generalized to other Mexican origin couples occupying different social locations. Additionally, it is important to remember that there is much diversity within Mexican immigrant couples. Families that share a common culture often differ from one another in substantive ways.

In order to serve the needs of the growing Mexican origin population, future research should continue to explore more unique within group predictors of family and relationship well being. As a field, we are just beginning to understand how cultural values impact couple relationships. More research on the impact of cultural values on relationship well being is needed.

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Table 1

Summary of Demographic Variables (N = 64 couples)

Variable	Women		Men	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
Generational status				
First: Born in Mexico	57	89.1	57	90.5
Second: Either parent born in Mexico	3	4.7	5	7.9
Third: All grandparents born in Mexico	1	1.6	0	0
Fourth: At least one grandparent born in Mexico	2	3.1	1	1.6
Fifth: All grandparents born in U.S.	1	1.6	0	0
Marital status				
Married	47	73.4		
Cohabiting	17	26.6		
Employment status				
Employed Full-time	11	17.2	56	87.5
Employed Part-time/ Seasonal	5	7.8	2	3.1
Homemaker	45	70.3	4	6.2
Full-time student	2	3.1	20	3.1
Other	1	1.6	2	3.1
Educational Level				
No degree	31	50.8	37	60.7
High School Degree	15	24.6	11	18.0
General Education Degree (GED)	2	3.3	2	3.3
Vocational Training	7	11.5	1	1.6
Some College	5	8.2	10	3.3
BA/BS degree	1	1.6	0	0
Missing	3	3.5	3	3.5

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and Paired Sample T-tests for Study Variables (N = 64 couples)

Variable	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>
Women's Structural Familism	0-5	1.63	1.41	
Men's Structural Familism		1.78	1.57	
				-.74
Women's Behavioral Familism	0-6	4.39	1.40	
Men's Behavioral Familism		4.16	1.56	
				.87
Women's Attitudinal Familism	0-3	2.13	.32	
Men's Attitudinal Familism		2.23	.36	
				-1.65
Women's Relationship Conflict	0-5	.95	.72	
Men's Relationship Conflict		.96	.73	
				-.16

Table 3

Summary of Unconstrained Structural Equation Models with Familism predicting Relationship

Conflict

		Actor Effects					
Model	Familism	Path <i>a</i>			Path <i>b</i>		
		β	b	SE	β	b	SE
1	Structure	.14	.07	.07	-.11	-.05	.06
2	Behavior	-.07	-.03	.06	-.25	-.12*	.06
3	Attitudes	.12	.28	.28	-.13	-.26	.25

		Partner Effects					
	Familism	Path <i>c</i>			Path <i>d</i>		
		β	b	SE	β	b	SE
1	Structure	.17	.09	.07	-.26	-.12*	.06
2	Behavior	-.04	-.02	.06	-.44	-.20***	.05
3	Attitudes	.14	.31	.28	-.05	-.10	.25

* $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$

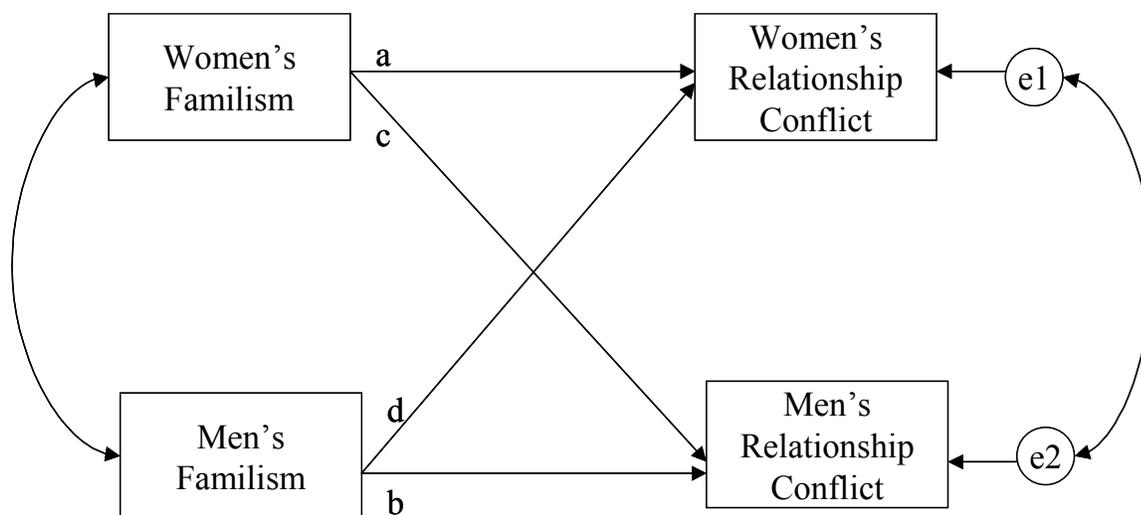


Figure 1. General Actor-Partner Interdependence Model of familism and relationship conflict

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

The three works presented in this dissertation address the need of incorporating the specific experiences of Mexican origin women into our thinking about relationships. This research works to provide a guide that elucidates how to conduct research that more fully incorporates Mexican origin women into our thinking. The framework presented is guided by Chicana feminism and informs both theory and methods. An underlying assumption of this work is that Mexican origin women are a diverse group and that through studying the intersections in which they are located, we can uncover their unique experiences in relationships and families.

Overview of the Three Manuscripts

The conceptual paper presented in Chapter II provides an overview of how experiences within marriage vary by gender, ethnicity, and class. Several directions for future study were addressed from these analyses including the need for within group predictors of relationship outcomes, such as how cultural values or racism affect marital interactions. As informed by Chicana feminism, Chapter II recognizes that examining gender, ethnicity, and class separately does not fully capture Mexican women's experiences in marriage. Hence, Chapter II also integrates and examines the intersecting effects of gender, ethnicity, and class. New directions for future research also arise from an examination of these intersections. Examples of new questions include: whether the meanings that men and women ascribe to cultural values differ and whether the stresses of work-family balance may be exacerbated for families with a strong familistic orientation.

The manuscripts in Chapter III and Chapter IV present empirical works collected from a truly unique and understudied population. The samples in Chapter III and Chapter IV consisted of low-income, Mexican origin women, the majority of which had little formal education and were Mexican immigrants. These two manuscripts work to inform researchers how to be more mindful of the complexities of conducting empirical research within Mexican origin families.

Results from Chapter III revealed that women's perception of the division of childcare is associated with their evaluation of their romantic and parenting relationship (in terms of relationship happiness, relationship conflict, satisfaction with partner's parenting, and parental agreement on childrearing). Specifically, we found that Mexican origin women were more likely to evaluate their romantic and parenting relationship with their partner favorably when their partner contributed more to childcare. Additionally, we found that gender role attitudes moderated most of these associations. Significant positive associations between the division of childcare and relationship happiness, satisfaction with partner as parent, and parental agreement on childrearing were found for women with more egalitarian gender role attitudes, but were not for women with more traditional attitudes. In terms of relationship happiness, father's greater participation in childcare was important for all women. Results from Chapter III illustrate how Mexican origin women's differing gendered expectations have real implications for how they evaluate their partners and their relationships.

Using the Actor-Partner Interdependence Model, Chapter IV explored how the cultural value of familism influences relationship conflict. Data from married or cohabiting couples revealed actor effects for men's behavioral familism; men who reported more contact with extended family were less likely to report relationship conflict. Partner effects for men's

structural and behavioral familism were also found. Men who reported having more relatives live within an hour's drive had partners who reported less relationship conflict. Similarly, men who reported more contact with relatives had partners who reported less relationship conflict. No actor or partner effects were found for women. Results imply that men's structural and behavioral familism may promote healthy relationships.

Implications for Theory and Methods

Together these three manuscripts point to a need to expand our current thinking about relationships and families. If we are to serve the needs of ethnic minorities, relationship and family research needs to incorporate the unique qualities of ethnic minorities into mainstream thinking. Currently relationship research is primarily conducted with White, middle-class samples. Questions that arise from current research miss the unique experiences of ethnic minorities, including the experiences of Mexican origin families, and the experiences of women within those families. As illustrated in Chapter IV, one such unique factor is the cultural value of familism. However, many other factors remain unexplored, including the effects of other cultural values, along with issues revolving around acculturation, immigration, racism, and prejudice. This is a new area of research that is much needed in family studies. These new research questions will not solely arise from family and relationship research; we need to look outside of the field to search for questions, including reading Chicana scholarship, ethnic minority research, and research being conducted outside of the United States. We need to look outside of our field to understand the growing ethnic minority population. Furthermore, it is necessary to be intentional about incorporating women's voices into this new dialogue. Diversity mindfulness involves the process of perceiving and processing a multiplicity of

differences among individuals, their social contexts, and their cultures. It also incorporates the feminist values of diversity, egalitarianism, and inclusiveness into critical analyses (Russo & Vaz, 2001).

The work presented in this dissertation expands Chicana feminism theory by bringing it into and applying it to family social science. Chicana feminism acknowledges that many Mexican origin women lead lives with substantially different experiences than that of men or White women. For example, U.S. Census data shows that Mexican origin people tend to live in larger households than non-Hispanic Whites and that Mexican origin people also tend to marry earlier (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002). Furthermore, within their families, Mexican origin women's experiences differ from their husbands. For example, some research suggests that Mexican origin women continue to have less family decision making authority than their husbands.

The current work also informs Chicana feminist theory. Chapter II demonstrates the need to study the intersections in which Mexican origin women are situated. The questions that arise after examining these intersections are critical in the advancement of theory. One of these questions is exemplified in Chapter IV. The cultural value of familism has differential effects, in terms of relationship well being, for men and women. This illustrates that culture is important in understanding the nature of relationships. Furthermore, culture may have unexpected effects on the gendered aspects of relationships. In Chapter IV, men's structural and behavioral familism were found to serve a protective factor for relationships. Perhaps, men who hold the collectivist value of familism are more in tune with women's ways of doing relationships and family. We are just beginning to understand the interplay between cultural values, gender, and intimate relationship; more of this research is needed.

Chapters III and IV add empirical knowledge about the family lives of low-income, Mexican origin women, with little formal education, the majority of which are Mexican immigrants. Current knowledge of women located at this intersection mostly comes from literature, poetry, and songs, along with other non-empirical sources of knowledge. These works add empirical knowledge about women located at this intersection. For family science, this work reveals the significance of the interplay between gender, culture, and class in affecting the experiences of Mexican origin. A lesson of this work is that we cannot make assumptions about women situated in other social locations.

The three manuscripts also suggest implications for the methods we employ in conducting family and relationship research with ethnic minorities. First, within group analyses are necessary, for the unique issues of marginalized persons are often lost when studies with large samples collapse across gender, ethnicity, or class. For example, the results obtained in Chapter IV may not have been found with a large representative sample with both White and Mexican origin couples, as structural and behavioral familism are likely not salient variables in the relationships of White couples. Thus, the effect that familism does have for Mexican origin men could have been lost.

Conducting within group research also carries some implications. There is a need to disentangle the effects of structural characteristics of families from cultural factors (Baca Zinn, 1982). Thus, it is essential to recognize the diversity within Mexican origin families. It is not appropriate to generalize to all Mexican origin people from one research study; key variables need to be taken into account. Betancourt and López (1993) suggest controlling for socioeconomic status and acculturation, but warn that by over controlling a researcher may

wrongly assume that culture does not play a role. Chapters III and IV illustrate a way of doing disentangling these effects, the samples in these studies contained little variability in both acculturation and socioeconomic status. Thus, these studies should only be generalized to individuals occupying similar social locations.

The study of minority populations requires change not only within ethnic minority research, which is often marginalized (Baca Zinn, 1996), but also within mainstream methods. True change needs to take place in development of measures, so that they may be used cross-culturally (Betancourt & López, 1993). Better measures are also needed for cultural values. For example, there are now better measures of attitudinal familism (for an example see Villarreal, Blozis, & Widaman, 2005), but better measures for the other dimensions of familism are needed.

Relationship and family research with Mexican origin couples is a difficult endeavor, especially if approached through a feminist lens. For this area of research not only requires consideration about the unique issues in conducting relationship and family research, but it also requires consideration about the study of ethnic minorities. Furthermore, feminist theory is a critical theory that requires careful scrutiny of the status quo. Therefore, as a Chicana feminist, it is difficult to find a balance between searching for sources of gendered inequalities, within our own communities and fighting the perpetuation of ethnic or racial stereotypes. Chicana feminists cannot be afraid to discuss sources of oppression within our own community. By not doing so we are doing a disservice to Chicanas that are oppressed in their relationships.

The ultimate purpose of this work is to find strengths within the Mexican origin community, with the goal of highlighting women's experiences and noting sources of empowerment. Such strengths of Mexican origin people may include a strong sense of altruism

and a dedication towards improving their communities (Delgado Bernal, 2002). The current work demonstrates that sources of empowerment that enhance women's experiences may come from within Mexican culture. For example, Chapter IV found that men's structural and behavioral familism serves a protective role for families, as they are associated with lower relationship conflict. Through these common bonds and shared strengths we can continue empowering Mexican origin women within their families and relationships.

APPENDIX A

DIVISION OF CHILDCARE MEASURE

For the following questions, please circle the number that best represents who does each of the following tasks.

		Almost always mother	Mother more than father	Mother and father equally	Father more than mother	Almost always father
1.	Preparing meal for child	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Playing with child	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Disciplining child	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Setting limits for child's behavior	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Taking child on outings outside of house	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Bathing and dressing child	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Putting child to bed	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Helping child to learn	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Caring for child when sick	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Taking child to doctor	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Meeting with Head Start Family Educator and attending center meetings.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX B

GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES MEASURE

Below you will find a series of statements about men and women. Read each statement carefully and decide the extent to which you agree or disagree with each. We are interested in your personal opinions. For each statement, circle the number which seems to best describe your opinion.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. A married woman's most important task in life should be caring for her husband and children.	1	2	3	4	5
2. A wife should give up her job whenever it interferes with fulfilling her roles as wife and mother.	1	2	3	4	5
3. A wife should have equal authority with her husband in making family decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
4. An employed mother is able to establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her child(ren) as a mother who is not employed.	1	2	3	4	5
5. A mother of young children should work only if the family really needs the money.	1	2	3	4	5
6. A married man's chief responsibility should be his job.	1	2	3	4	5
7. A married man's most important task in life should be providing economic support for his wife and child(ren).	1	2	3	4	5
8. The husband should be the head of the family.	1	2	3	4	5
9. A husband should have final authority in making family decisions.	1	2	3	4	5

10. If both husband and wife are employed, he should be willing to share household tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
11. A husband should be just as willing to stay home from work and care for a sick child.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Things are best in a marriage if a husband leaves his hands off domestic tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
13. A husband should leave the care of young babies to his wife.	1	2	3	4	5
14. The important career-related decisions should be left to the husband.	1	2	3	4	5

8.	Our goals and what we think is important	0	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Amount of time we spend together	0	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Employment and career decisions	0	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX D

PARENTAL AGREEMENT ON CHILDREARING MEASURE

We'd like to know more about the extent to which you and your partner agree about issues related to parenting. Read the following sentences and circle a number beside each sentence which you think best represents your thinking about how much you agree or disagree with your partner.

		Not at all true for us	Not very true for us	Not true or untrue for us	Somew hat true for us	Very true for us
1.	My partner and I don't argue about our child.	0	1	2	3	4
2.	My partner doesn't spend enough time with our child.	0	1	2	3	4
3.	My partner and I agree on when or how to discipline our child.	0	1	2	3	4
4.	Our child often manages to drive a wedge between my partner and me.	0	1	2	3	4
5.	My partner doesn't display enough affection toward our child.	0	1	2	3	4
6.	My partner and I agree on what rules to set for our child.	0	1	2	3	4
7.	My partner doesn't assume his or her fair share of taking care of our child.	0	1	2	3	4
8.	Our relationship has never been in difficulty because of our child.	0	1	2	3	4
9.	My partner and I agree on how to split our responsibility for rearing our child.	0	1	2	3	4
10.	My partner and I agree on how to respond to our child's demands for things.	0	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX E

ACCULTURATION MEASURE

This set of questions asks about the language you speak. Circle the number that corresponds to your answer to each question.

		Only Spanish	Spanish more than English	Both equally	English more than Spanish	Only English
1.	In general, what language(s) do you read or speak?	0	1	2	3	4
2.	What was the language(s) you used as a child?	0	1	2	3	4
3.	What language(s) do you usually speak at home?	0	1	2	3	4
4.	In which language(s) do you usually think?	0	1	2	3	4
5.	What language(s) do you usually speak with your friends?	0	1	2	3	4
6.	What language(s) are the T.V. programs you usually watch?	0	1	2	3	4
7.	In what language(s) are the radio programs you usually listen to?	0	1	2	3	4
8.	In general, in what language(s) are the movies, T.V., and radio programs you <i>prefer</i> to watch and listen to?	0	1	2	3	4

This set of questions asks about the ethnicity of people you tend to associate with. Circle the number that corresponds to your answer to each question.

		All Latinos/ Hispanics	More Hispanics than Non-Hispanics	About Half and Half	More Non-Hispanics than Hispanics	All Non-Hispanics
1.	My close friends are:	0	1	2	3	4
2.	I prefer going to social gatherings/ parties at which the people are:	0	1	2	3	4
3.	The people I visit or who visit me are:	0	1	2	3	4
4.	If I could choose my child's friends, I would want them to be:	0	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX F

FAMILISM MEASURES

A. How often do you see, talk on the telephone with, or email adult relatives who do not live with you?

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Never | 5. Once every other week |
| 2. 1 – 2 times a year | 6. Once a week or more |
| 3. 4-6 times a year or every other month | 7. Once a day |
| 4. Once a month | |

B. How many relatives live within an hour's drive of where you live?

- | | |
|------------|------------------|
| 1. None | 5. Between 10-15 |
| 2. 1-3 | 6. Between 15-20 |
| 4. About 5 | 7. More than 20 |

C. Please read the following sentences and decide how each sentence describes your feelings about how families should get along and act. Please choose a number that represents how you feel about that description and whether you agree or not.

In my family, we believe:

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	Family members should think of the family before they think of themselves.	0	1	2	3
2.	Family members should be there in times of need.	0	1	2	3

3.	Family members should keep family harmony.	0	1	2	3
4.	If a family member is in need, family members are expected to help financially or in any way they can.	0	1	2	3
5.	Family members should do all they can to keep family traditions alive and pass them on.	0	1	2	3
6.	The family should present a united front to others outside of the family.	0	1	2	3
7.	Family members should be able to rely on one another.	0	1	2	3
8.	Nothing should be more important than family	0	1	2	3

APPENDIX G

HUMAN SUBJECTS EXEMPT STATUS APPROVAL FORM

Human Subjects Protection Program



1350 N. Vine Avenue
P.O. Box 245137
Tucson, AZ 85724-5137
(520) 626-6721
<http://www.irb.arizona.edu>

26 September 2006

Ana Lucero-Liu, Ph.D. Candidate
Advisor: Donna Hendrickson Christensen, Ph.D.
School of Family and Consumer Sciences
FCS Bldg., Room 205
PO Box 210033

RE: EXPLORING INTERSECTIONS IN THE INTIMATE LIVES OF CHICANAS

Dear Dr. Hendrickson Christensen:

We received documents concerning your above cited project. Regulations published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(4)] exempt this type of research from review by our Institutional Review Board.

Exempt status is granted with the understanding that no further changes or additions will be made to the procedures followed (copies of which we have on file) without the review and approval of the Human Subjects Committee and your College or Departmental Review Committee. Any research related physical or psychological harm to any subject must also be reported to each committee.

Thank you for informing us of your work. If you have any questions concerning the above, please contact this office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rebecca Dahl".

Rebecca Dahl, R.N., Ph.D.
Director
Human Subjects Protection Program

cc: Departmental/College Review Committee

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