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Individualism or (inter)dependence? Familism and acculturation among low-income Latina mothers and its links to child wellbeing

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Introduction

Despite facing a multitude of developmental risks, many children in immigrant families are faring well and surpassing expectations for their achievement (Fuligni, 1997; Guttmannova, Palacios, Valdovinos D'Angelo, Berhie, & Chase-Lansdale, 2009; Palacios, Guttmannova, & Chase-Lansdale, 2008). This may be due to family strengths that are not captured through existing large-scale U.S. surveys and may be better explored through qualitative data. This study uses ethnographic data to unpack the cultural concept of familism and to explore its complex role in relation to acculturation in Latino families.

Familism, which is characterized by high family cohesion, keeping the family's best interests above one's own, and completion of family role obligations, is often named as a key strength of Latinos, and its decline is associated with a worrisome move towards unstable family such as single parent families (Landale, Oropesa, & Bradatan, 2006). Traditionally, most research has recognized an inverse relationship between acculturation and familism within a generation, where an increase in one is related to a decline in the other and vice versa (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007; Cortés, 1995; Landale et al., 2006; Rogler & Cooney, 1984). However, the literature is mixed about the stability of familism across generations with some suggesting a drop-off across generations (Gil & Vega, 1996), intergenerational stability (Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam, 1999), and declines depending on acculturation and not generational status (Rumbaut, 2005).

The present study uses ethnographic data collected over two years on a low-income sample of Latina mothers in Chicago. More specifically, chapter three examines three questions that drive the research. How do we characterize the relationship between mother's acculturation and familism? What strategies emerge for using family support based on the intersection of acculturation and familism? And finally, in a resource-scarce environment, does an independent or (inter)dependent emphasis on family relationships relate to child wellbeing? This paper will investigate the claim that the relationship between acculturation and familism is an inverse one and evaluate whether familism can be viewed as a protective characteristic.

Theoretical Framework

Unifying a Transactional Model of Development and Acculturation Theory

Many theories of human development tend to be agnostic with respect to culture, and they emphasize the developing child in a family context. Conversely, acculturation theories, developed by sociologists and cross-cultural psychologists, stress culture and use adults as their primary unit of analysis. Yet, discussion on how to think culturally about the family system and consider how acculturation shapes family functioning for both adults and children has only recently emerged (Chase-Lansdale, Valdovinos D'Angelo, & Palacios, 2007; García Coll & Magnuson, 1997). Therefore, for this paper it is necessary to frame the findings in light of both transactional theory and acculturation theory. To understand immigration in the family it is crucial to have a multidisciplinary view to identify where the theories overlap and where one theory fills gaps in the other.

Acculturation Theory

Two contrasting perspectives have dominated the view of how immigrants incorporate into the American "mainstream." Assimilation theory once shaped the intellectual landscape of

immigrant research, where minorities were thought to abandon their own cultural identities in favor of the "American way," and this change was thought to occur in a unidirectional way (Alba & Nee, 1997; Park & Burgess, 1922). The idea was that each generation, after contact with the host society, is a step further from their original ethnic baseline and a step closer to complete assimilation (Alba & Nee, 1997; Park & Burgess, 1922).

Recently, acculturation theory has been favored in lieu of assimilation theory. Acculturation theory contends that immigrants both influence and are influenced by the new environments (Szopocznik & Kurtines, 1980). Recent acculturation work has not strayed far from the seminal definition given by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936) which indentified acculturation as "those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups" (p.149). In recent work, Berry (2007) again challenges the assumptions of assimilation theory and argues that it is improbable that all cultural groups would assimilate and be absorbed into the dominant group. Berry (1997; 2007) goes on to echo and extend the classic definition of acculturation by suggesting that assimilation is but one type of acculturation and that acculturation can occur psychologically, where the change happens within an individual's psyche. Psychological acculturation takes place when a person is in a "culture-contact situation" meaning that immigrants are dually influenced by the dominant culture, or the one they are entering, and the changing culture, or the one of which they are a member (Berry, 1997; 2007).

Acculturation strategies. Berry (1997; 2007) provides a useful framework for understanding how individuals acculturate and how their acculturation strategies are derived from a set of complex factors. Four distinct strategies emerge by asking two questions

simultaneously (see Figure 1). These issues are considered from the point of view of the "non-dominant" group or the group of immigrants entering a society. The first issue asks "Is it considered to be of value to maintain one's identity and characteristics?" and issue two poses the question "Is it considered to be of value to maintain relationships with larger society?" (Berry, 1997, p.10). The four categories that emerge are *Assimilation, Separation, Integration,* and *Marginalization*. A strategy of assimilation applies to immigrants who do not wish to retain their individual culture and seek frequent contact with the dominant culture. In contrast, separation pertains to those non-dominant individuals that wish to retain their cultural identity and want no contact with the broader society. Integration, which is often the most natural and efficient strategy to pursue implies that (Berry, 2007), immigrants have a dual interest in maintaining their own culture while also seeking to participate meaningfully in the dominant group. Finally, marginalization is defined when individuals have little interest in pursuing their own cultural identity or interacting with the dominant cultural group. Marginalization can lead to adopting the oppositional culture which may be detrimental to development and school success over the life course (Ainsworth-Darnell & Downey, 1998; Ogbu, 1978). Berry's typology can be useful in understanding why immigrants acculturate differently as goals and values change.

A Transactional Model of Human Development

Classic, universalistic models of human development are based upon the pioneering work of Bronfenbrenner (1977), who argued that child development should be viewed in context and not as a process that moves forward independent of environmental cues. Bronfenbrenner (1977) termed his theoretical perspective the *ecology* of human development, which he identified as the study of the growing human organism over their life span and interaction with their environments, as well as how these environments interact with and are embedded within one

another (p.514). Linking to this work, Sameroff (1994) posits his transactional developmental model that combines an active developing person with a constantly changing environment. This theory argues that child developmental outcomes result from interplay of the child and environment *over time*. These dynamic interactionist models show that not only is there a constant reciprocal interaction occurring between the child, the environment, and individuals (i.e. parents) within that environment, but that the outcomes of the child are also due in part to continuity in the child's behavior, their inherent predispositions, and continuity in the organization of the environment (i.e. parenting) (Sameroff & Fiese, 2000). In sum, it is the way a child transacts with the context, in this case the family, that produces patterns of functioning that can be either adaptive or maladaptive. This transactional model provides a framework for understanding how families work as systems that are interdependent over time and how child development occurs in and across contexts (Sameroff, 1994; Sameroff & Fiese, 2000).

How do these theories relate to one another?

Though derived from different disciplinary views, both acculturation and transactional theories echo each other in one key way – the individual's adaptation to the environment depends upon their own inherent characteristics (i.e. emotions, psyche, genes) and the way they interact with the context. An ecological approach or transactional model of development provides a life course perspective on human development and emphasizes the centrality of family life. It supplements acculturation theory by clarifying how the individual has a role in nested systems and provides the consideration of change *over time* that acculturation theory lacks. Transactional models show that the individual is not locked into one acculturation strategy, but that changing the strategy over time is also inherently related to past strategies and acculturation experiences. Conversely, acculturation theory provides the needed cultural lens to

study development. It shows that all individuals do not prioritize interaction with the environment equally, but instead decisions to engage with society are *moderated* by the values, goals, and ideals of their culture. Taken together, these two theories provide a framework for understanding complex developmental processes in families.

Linking Acculturation to Familism

It is necessary to cover the definitions and conceptualizations of familism, how it links to acculturation, and finally what implications this relationship may have for the wellbeing of children.

Familismo/Familism

Familismo (familism) has been conceptualized in a multitude of ways. Yet, the literature seems to concur on two points – that it involves the subjugation of individual interests for the family as a whole and that it is complex, multifaceted, and variedly measured. For example, Baca Zinn (1982) was one of the first to conceptualize familism in Latino families as a complex construct that moved beyond the two key indices, the extended family household, and attitudinal preferences towards helping out family members. Baca Zinn (1982), argued for four major facets of familism – demographic familism, structural familism, normative familism, and behavioral familism.

Most work in this area stresses either the attitudinal dimensions (Bean, Curtis, & Marcum, 1977; Oropesa & Gorman, 2000) or the behavioral ones (Tienda, 1980). For instance, a measurement of attitudinal familism was developed recently for use as a quantitative scale (Steidel & Contreras, 2003). This scale stressed four dimensions of attitudinal familism including familial support, familial interconnectedness, familial honor, and subjugation of self for family. Familial support is a measure of the belief that family members have an obligation to give

emotional and financial support to each other. Familial interconnectedness is the idea that family members must keep in close emotional and physical contact with each other according to the family hierarchy. Familial honor is the belief that one must uphold the family name and not engage in any acts that may bring shame to the family. Finally, subjugation of self for family highlights the idea that individual interests must defer to the greater needs of the family as a whole.

More recent research has posited at least a three dimensional conceptualization that highlights structural/demographic familism, behavioral familism, and attitudinal familism (Landale et al., 2006; Sabogal, Marin, Otero-Sabogal, Marin, & Perez-Stable, 1987; Steidel & Contreras, 2003). This paper will emphasize the attitudinal and behavioral dimensions of familism. Though not highlighted in this study, the structural/demographic dimension, which mirrors and combines Baca Zinn's (1982) first two categories, emphasizes the strength and cohesion of kin and fictive kin networks and includes macro constructs like fertility and family size. The behavioral dimension describes the actual contact among kin as well as monetary and emotional support received from kin. Finally, the attitudinal (or normative) dimension is measured by the importance people place on the family, loyalty, solidarity, and reciprocity (Landale et al., 2006; Sabogal et al., 1987; Steidel & Contreras, 2003).

Relationship between Acculturation and Familism

As previously mentioned, most research has acknowledged a decline in familism as acculturation increases (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007; Cortés, 1995; Gil, Wagner, & Vega, 2000; Landale et al., 2006; Rogler & Cooney, 1984; Rueschenberg & Buriel, 1989; Sabogal et al., 1987; Szopocznik & Kurtines, 1980). This may seem to be a natural progression as families take on a more individualistic focus congruent with U.S. ideals in lieu of a collectivistic (i.e.

familistic) approach to family life (Landale et al., 2006). In a sample of Puerto Rican parents and children living in New York City, Cortés (1995) found that as education increased familism decreased, while higher levels of familism remained among children and adolescents who had spent less time in the U.S. Education moved them away from the traditional beliefs of their culture and towards a more individualistic belief system. Likewise, in a generational study of Puerto Rican families, first generation parents were more familistic than their second generation adult children (Rogler & Cooney, 1984). Similarly, in samples of Latinos of various decent (South American, Cuban, Mexican, etc.), increases in acculturation and concomitant acculturation stress were linked to a decrease in familism beliefs (Gil & Vega, 1996; Gil et al., 2000; Rueschenberg & Buriel, 1989).

Familism as a Protective Factor

Early work on familism regarded it as a risk factor for socioeconomic disadvantage in Latino families because it emphasizes interdependence and collectivism in the face of a U.S. society that rewards individualism and competition (Landale et al., 2006; Valenzuela & Dornsbuch, 1994). However, more recently researchers have overturned this notion, and familism is now generally viewed as a protective factor (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007; Fuligni et al., 1999; Gil et al., 2000; Landale & Oropesa, 2001; Landale et al., 2006; Rumbaut & Weeks, 1996; Zambrana, Scrimshaw, Collins, & Dunkel-Schetter, 1997). This association of familism with positive outcomes is well documented in the health literature where increased social support, family cohesion, and endorsement of ethnic identity among both Mexican and Puerto Rican origin mothers reduced the odds of poor birth outcomes and poor health behaviors (Landale & Oropesa, 2001; Zambrana et al., 1997). In addition, endorsement of familistic values in a cohort of Latino adolescents was linked to a decrease in delinquent behavior, such as alcohol

and drug use (Gil et al., 2000). Familism can also be protective in the academic realm. In a sample of 800 American born youth from various ethnic backgrounds, including Mexican and Central and South Americans, those students who strongly endorsed family obligations had more positive family and peer relationships and increased academic motivation (Fuligni et al., 1999). The high value placed on family did not seem to erode over successive generations and did not prove to be a detriment to their development (Fuligni et al., 1999).

The Current Study

In sum, research in this area has proceeded in two ways: either in the association of acculturation and familism, or by connecting familism and adult and child outcomes. Few studies have situated the acculturation/familism relationship in terms of the overall effect on the family system (for exceptions see Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007; Parra-Cardona, Bulock, Imig, Villarruel, & Gold, 2006; Rueschenberg & Buriel, 1989). The studies in this area neglect to include foreign- and native-born Latinos (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007; Parra-Cardona et al., 2006), or do not link acculturation and familism to child development (Rueschenberg & Buriel, 1989). This study extends previous work by examining a low-income sample of women and children living in an urban city, considering differing generational and acculturation status, and situating the familism and acculturation relationship in light of the family system.

Methods

Data

This study uses ethnographic data collected as a part of Welfare, Families, and Children: A Three-City Study (Winston et al., 1999). The main survey component of the Three-City Study followed 2,402 randomly sampled households with children in low-income neighborhoods in Boston, Chicago, and San Antonio from 1999 to 2006 to see how children and families were

faring after the implementation of welfare reform. Each household had at least one child between the ages of 0 to 4 years or 10 to 14 years at the time of the study. Interviewers randomly selected one child in the household, which became known as the focal child, and interviewed the child's primary female caregiver. The first wave of data collection was conducted between March and December 1999, with the second wave collected between September 2000 and May 2001, and the final third wave of data collected between February 2005 and January 2006.

The ethnographic component was a key aspect of the design of the Three-City Study and also began in 1999. The ethnography included 256 non-randomly selected families, who did not participate in the main survey, but who lived in the same low-income neighborhoods as the main study participants. Families were recruited between June 1999 and December 2000 from local community settings such as Head Start classes, welfare offices, churches, neighborhood community centers, and adult education classes. Of the participating families, 212 were selected because they had a child aged 2 to 4, while the other 44 families were included because they had a child aged 0 to 8 with a moderate or severe disability.

A method of "structured discovery" was used to collect that data which allowed interviewers to conduct in-depth interviews and observations that were focused on particular topics but also allowed for room to capture unexpected stories and findings as they got to know the families. An interviewer conducted home observations or visits with the family once or twice a month for 12 to 18 months and followed-up with the families every six months up until 2003. Interviewers also became participant observers as they accompanied mothers to errands such as welfare offices, doctor's offices, children's schools, or workplaces.

This study uses data on 39 Latina mothers in Chicago who have at least one child aged 2 to 4 years with no significant disability. These mothers are primarily from Puerto Rican or

Mexican decent, yet several are of unknown Latino origin or mixed Latino origin. Interviews, participant observation, and interviewer field notes are used in the analyses. Interviews were typically tape-recorded by the ethnographer in a location of the respondent's choosing such as her home, school, or a restaurant in the neighborhood. Mothers were interviewed on a wide range of topics including: health and health access; experiences with TANF, SSI, Medicaid, WIC, and other public assistance programs; education and work experiences and future plans; family economics; child development, parenting, intimate relationships; support networks; family routines; and home and neighborhood environments. The interviews varied in length depending on how much a mother wanted to discuss on any particular topic, ranging from 30 minutes to over 1 ½ hours. Then, the tapes of these interviews were usually transcribed by an outside agency and/or summarized by the ethnographer. Field notes arose from observational visits with the family, where ethnographers were able to watch the action and take notes. Ethnographers then formally summarized these visits with the families, which typically lasted anywhere from 30 minutes if the observation involved a quick task to over 2 hours if the ethnographer accompanied the mother on a lengthier errand such as a visit to a welfare office. In total, approximately 175 pages of field notes and supporting data were collected per respondent.

Analytic Approach

The data were analyzed using a "grounded theory" approach (Charmaz, 2000; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This data analytic technique involves inductively building a theory from a body of data by discovering categories, concepts and their interrelationships through the sequential steps of open, axial, and selective coding. It is of note that though this study utilizes grounded theory, that this methodology is used as more of a guide to analysis rather than a strict formula.

First the data were open coded, which means the data were read (and reread), in an attempt to identify, name, categorize, and describe phenomena found in the text. In this step, open coding was conducted by marking-up interviewer observations, transcripts, and field notes by hand. As grounded theory suggests, this should be conducted with openness about what the data tells the reader and not what the reader imposes on the data. These analyses deviate from this proposition for two main reasons. First, due to the volume of data (an average of 20 observations, notes, or interviews per case) it was necessary to narrow the scope of the inquiry by developing research questions proposed above. Second, since this was a secondary data analysis of only a subset of all cases collected in the ethnography, the sample was best suited to answer more specific questions speaking directly to the experiences of Latina mothers. Therefore, given the theoretical frameworks of acculturation and a transactional model of development, open coding proceeded to identify codes that were of theoretical interest to acculturation, familism, and child development broadly construed.

After developing an extensive list of codes and concepts arising from the data, axial coding was conducted. Axial coding is the process of relating these codes to one another, by a process of inductive and deductive reasoning. These codes are fit into a basic frame, like a codebook. Five major categories were created to cover all codes that emerged during open coding (see Appendix A). Three categories arose, unsurprisingly, from the preexistent theoretical frameworks and major questions – *Acculturation, Familism,* and *Child Outcomes*. Two categories, however, arose spontaneously from open coding – *Ethnic identification* and *Type of family (inter)dependence*. These codes formed the basis for closed coding, or a re-reading of the text to identify the specific categories and codes identified in the codebook. This involved scoring each case on the three categories of acculturation, familism, and ethnic identification

depending upon their endorsement of certain subcodes. For familism, 9 sub-codes were identified. Each case was scored with a 0 or 1 on each subcode depending on their endorsement of each code (see Appendix A). For example, under familism a subcode would be *financial help* consisting of whether a mother "*Can count on or be counted on for financial help*." If there was use of financial help in the family it would be scored a 1 and a 0 otherwise. This was repeated for each code, and then the positive responses were summed creating a score of 1-9, with those scores of 1-4 indicating low familism, 5 neutral, and 6-9 high familism. This was repeated for acculturation (scored 1-9) and ethnic id (scored 1-5). Child outcomes were noted along the dimensions of *health*, *behavior*, and *school success*.

Finally, categories emerged for the type of family dependence the mothers employed in their survival strategies. Each case was classified as *not dependent*, *emotionally dependent*, or *financially dependent*. Mothers classified as not dependent emphasize a "go it alone" attitude due to the lack of a family network or an unwillingness to engage with extended kin. Mothers categorized as emotionally dependent often went to family members for advice, support, and encouragement and also used their families as financial supports. Finally, those mothers noted as being financially dependent were clearly dependent on their families only in a financial sense and were often logistically dependent on family for child care. These classifications were determined during closed coding and based on an appraisal by the coder after reading all of the text relevant to the case.

Finally, according to a grounded theory approach, selective coding was conducted to decide what one category will be the core category from which all else is derived and related. This involved building a storyline around which everything else is framed. In this study, it became evident that the story would not be formed around one central category, but instead

around the intersection of acculturation and familism. One of the primary concerns of this paper was to replicate or repudiate the inverse relationship between acculturation and familism so it was essential to consider both of these as central categories. The story emerged around how these mothers clustered into certain types of family dependency and how their children fared in relation to their acculturation and familism.

Results

The Respondents

The mothers and children interviewed for this sample represent one of the most disadvantaged segments of the population, low-income Latinos with young children. Overall, 17 percent of U.S. children in live in families whose income is below the poverty line as of 2003 (Hoynes, Page, & Stevens, 2006). Yet, these numbers get alarmingly higher when viewing only the Latino population. Data from the Current Population Survey show that 40 percent of first generation immigrants with minor children live in poverty, compared to 33 percent for the second generation, and 27 percent for non-immigrant Latinos (Reimers, 2006).

Latina mothers in this sample reflect this disadvantage with approximately 70 percent without a high school diploma or GED, 25 percent receiving cash benefits or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and over 25 percent of the sample receiving Food Stamps and publicly funded health insurance such as Medicaid (see Table 1). Despite the TANF use, the majority also seem to be working very hard, with almost 60 percent of mothers working at baseline, when their children are still very young (2 to 4) and not yet of school-age.

Of these Latina mothers 41 percent are immigrants (n=16), 41 percent are nonimmigrants (n=16), and 18 percent (n=7) are of unknown immigrant status. The majority of the mothers are Mexican (59 percent) or Puerto Rican (26 percent), though two mothers (5 percent) are a mix of

Mexican and Puerto Rican decent, and four mothers (10 percent) are of unknown Latino origin. Overall, these Latinas are young and have a mean age of 28, yet the range of ages varies from the extremely young mothers at 16 years of age to the oldest mother in the sample, who was 45 years old at baseline. Most mothers are either married (41 percent) or single (45 percent), with few mothers in the divorced, separated, or engaged categories. However, marital status does not seem to differ as a function of age, with both younger and older mothers falling into the single and married categories. These mothers also have about 3 children under their care, and live in households composed of approximately 5 family members.

While these mothers all appear to be in disadvantaged situations with varying degrees of governmental support, they also have informal support networks. However, the use of these social support networks varies greatly and is highly dependent on cultural aspects. This discussion will now turn to examining how the concepts of acculturation and familism relate to one another, what it means for dependence on family, and how this may link to child wellbeing.

The Intersection of Acculturation and Familism

As previous studies suggest, if acculturation and familism are inversely related, then only two categories of mothers should emerge from these analyses – those with low acculturation/high familism and high acculturation/low familism. To evaluate the validity of this claim, the mothers' acculturation and familism scores were graphed using a scatterplot with acculturation on the x-axis and familism on the y-axis (see Figure 2). From left to right on the x-axis, acculturation moves from low to high. From top to bottom on the y-axis, familism goes from high to low. If this inverse relationship exists, one would expect to see the points clustered in only the upper-left quadrant (low acculturation/high familism) and the lower-right quadrant (high acculturation/low familism). However, for these respondents this does not seem to be the

case. While mothers are clustered in the upper-left and lower-right quadrants, they are also clustered in the upper-right (high acculturation/high familism) and lower-left (low acculturation/low familism) quadrants.

These findings suggest that the relationship between familism and acculturation is more complex than a simple, linear one. For the Latina mothers in this sample 10 are classified as low acculturation/high familism, 7 are high acculturation/high familism, 4 are low acculturation/low familism, and 18 are high acculturation/low familism. Furthermore, there appears to be a significant association between mother's immigrant status and quadrant classification (see Table 2), where nonimmigrant mothers seems to fall in either the upper-right and lower-right quadrants and immigrant mothers cluster in the upper-left and lower-left quadrants, with some minimal overlap in the lower-right quadrant χ^2 (3, N= 32) = 22.57, p<.001. These clusters seem natural as nonimmigrant mothers will tend to be more acculturated while immigrant mothers will tend towards low acculturation. As their stories will show, the intersection between acculturation and familism for these mothers is associated with different uses of family support and different child wellbeing outcomes.

Strategies for Using Family Support

What strategies emerge for the use of family support among these low-income women? A major feature of familism is the way that family members support one another (e.g. financially or emotionally). Therefore, the next logical step in the present study is to categorize how use of family dependency varies as a function of acculturation and familism. There seems to be a significant association between mothers' choice to be independent, dependent or interdependent on their families based upon their acculturation and familism status (see Table 3), but is not

related to their generational status (see Table 4). The discussion will now turn to exploring how mothers use (or do not use) their families for support.

Interdependent: "A better wife, a better mother, a better student"

An emphasis on interdependence of family is evident among the mothers of low acculturation and high familism. They uphold family as the most important thing above all else and depend on family for emotional, financial, and logistical support. Typically children in these families are protected closely, with strict rules, and are exclusively in parental or kin care due to low trust for the broader society. These interdependent mothers have a strong emphasis on education, both their own and their children's, and see it as the only true way towards advancement.

Lucia, a 36 year old Mexican immigrant, is a married mother with only one child. She relies primarily on her husband, brother, and aunt to provide child care to her son José, while she takes her citizenship and English classes and sells Mark Kay cosmetics to earn some extra money for the family. Lucia is quick to point out that when she is not working or studying, her son is her top priority. She does not trust other people with José's care and comments that "Siempre estoy al lado de el [I'm always at José's side]" and even at the grocery store "siempre lo tengo cerca [I always have him near]." Lucia comes from a large family, six sisters and three brothers, and lives within 3 to 4 blocks of her brothers, though she maintains close contact with the sisters who live in the U.S. Both of her parents live in Mexico and will not move to the U.S. until Lucia's youngest sister has finished school. Lucia has very few friends presumably because she can rely on her family for financial or emotional support. She says "puedo contar con mi familia y ellos tambíen pueden contar conmigo [I can count on my family and they can count on me]" and consequently she needs little outside help. Lucia may borrow money from her siblings

during really tough times or call them for advice, but she carefully points out that this behavior is reciprocal and she is there for them whenever she is needed. Lucia is extremely optimistic about the future and strives to improve herself for the good of her family. Lucia wants to "mejorarme como esposa, madre, estudiante [be a better wife, a better mother, a better student]" for the good of her whole family.

Yasmin, Graciela, Anna, and Adriana are also low acculturation/high familism Latina mothers who share many of the sentiments Lucia expressed. These mothers clarify how family is not only central in an attitudinal way, but also express this through their actions. They can be counted on in financial *and* emotional ways to care for their families. These Latinas show that the family is held above all else in terms of importance and there are values such as education, respect, and togetherness that Latinos share.

Yasmin, a 37 year old married Mexican immigrant, thinks that as children grow, it is up to her as a mother to teach them the proper behavior and demeanor expected in their culture. She tells her son, James, that "over there in Mexico the girls and boys respect their parents and that [he] has to do the same." She wants to teach him that just because they are in the U.S. they should not abandon their cultural ways. Yasmin wants James to know that "because he is Mexican he has to […] respect [his] parents a lot." She recognizes that education is also the only path to success and remarks that "in order to succeed, he has to study. There's nothing like school." She is very protective of her children and she says, "I don't let them associate with anybody except for the good kids I know are good. And I also don't let them go to other people's homes." Yasmin has a strong emphasis on family as the central place where her children should be socialized, taught, and disciplined. She also places no emphasis on the material things in life and remarks that feeling at home has nothing to do with being in a certain location or holding

certain possessions. Yasmin says that home is "where we are all together, with my husband and the kids. The fact that we are all together, not separated [means we're home]."

Graciela, Anna, and Adriana, three Mexican immigrants, are all examples of another generally held sentiment of the low acculturation/high familism mothers, which is that there is a commonality in their culture about the importance of family that is absent from the American "mainstream" attitudes. Graciela, a 30 year-old mother, says that "marriage is probably the most important value" for her and "keep[ing] the family united is essential." She thinks that most of her neighbors "share the same values" because they "all come from Mexico […] from the same generation." Likewise, Anna, a 31 year-old mother, disapproves of the lack of family unity in her neighborhood. She says, "Honestly, I have not seen that [the neighbors] unite or help each other." This is very different from her family life where everyone helps each other, and she gives as much as she receives. "Our sharing is balanced," she says to describe the way her family network is united and supports one another. Anna, a 35 year-old mother of five, echoes the sentiments of the other women. Anna does not trust anyone to watch her children and wants to move back to Mexico to be near the kin she left behind. She thinks that in the U.S. "people don't like to help each other." Anna values her family so much that she would prefer to move back to Mexico and be poor but near family, than to be in the U.S.

These mothers are clearly interdependent with their families, where they share as much as they get, in both emotional and financial terms. Their low acculturation makes them much closer to their Latino culture and this plays out in their familistic orientations. These mothers are often in stark contrast to those mothers characterized by high acculturation and low familism.

(In)dependent: "Too much dependence and debt" and "I depend on me"

Mothers who are high acculturation and low familism waiver between a state of independence and dependence where they are often financially dependent on the family, have little to offer in return (e.g. in terms of money or emotional support), and do not consider family to be above their own wellbeing. These moms display a "go it alone" attitude, utilizing their support network only when they cannot make ends meet. They rely almost exclusively on outside sources for childcare, have loose rules with their children (e.g. no set bed time), and are often out to care for their children and themselves in whatever way they can.

Ivonne is a 16 year-old nonimmigrant Puerto Rican mother of one daughter. Ivonne was very young when she got pregnant with her daughter Jade. She currently lives with her mother, step-father and two brothers because Jade's father is in prison, where he tends to cycle in and out of due to his gang affiliations. During the course of the study Ivonne gets back together and breaks up with her daughter's father many times, even though she considered him a "loser." Ivonne is trying to complete her GED and as a result is almost completely dependent on her parents to pay for almost all of her expenses. Her extended kin lives either nearby or in the same apartment building. Ivonne dislikes her current situation and is desperate to get her own apartment and be independent. She exclaims "I got to move out because I'm already an adult," but this is proving to be challenging because everything is out of her price range. Ivonne really thinks of herself as independent but she is actually very dependent on her family financially.

For example, Ivonne truly believes in the American way of life. She says that "I think I'm more like [people] over here. People [in Puerto Rico] they settle for what they have and that's it, and I'm like no, I want more." She strives to be more individualistic, driven and associates more with the American mentality of independence. Ivonne tries not to ask her own mother for too

much because sometimes her mother complains about it and she does not "want to hear her mouth." She acknowledges that her mother is a tremendous resource and if she did not have her she "would be struggling" and "probably wouldn't be [in school]." However, Ivonne says this help "comes at a price" sometimes of "too much dependence and debt."

Despite the huge amount of financial help she gets from her family, Ivonne is steadfast in her view of herself as independent:

> I am type of person that some things do bother but I don't care […] whatever they are saying, and I'm just like ignorant, I'm like whatever. […] I'm the type of person, I work, and people tell me, what happened to all your money? I am independent, I depend on me, I buy my clothes, my shoes. I'm the type of person, I don't wanna give no one a sad story, I can't eat or I can't go out, or I can't go because I don't have any money, I wanna do for me, if I don't, I don't go. That's it. I won't be like borrow me 5 bucks. Or I need gas or something. NO, I'm not like that. It's me and that's it. My daughter, she has her pampers, her wipes. I don't bring her to school and say 'oh my baby doesn't have pampers.' I don't do that.

Ivonne asserts her independence by actively rejecting some of the fundamentals of attitudinal familism like familial honor and maintaining the family name. She disagrees with the view that what she does reflects on the family as a whole:

> Once [Jade] hits, you know, probably seven, probably five more years, she won't be the same, and I know it. [Jade] will be more, like, more confident and I'm the type that I'm not like my mom and my sisters are a lot like my mom, too. They try to avoid things you know you can't say or you can't hide or you gotta live up to the family way, and I'm like, I don't care if I'm the black sheep, I think just like this and that's it."

Ivonne is a more extreme case in the amount that she depends on her family financially. However, she displays a vital characteristic of this group of mothers which is that independence from family is more of a state of mind than anything else. Her rejection of attitudinal familism is reflected in the way she raises her own child and looks after her own interests before her family's interests. She views herself as separate from her family and as capable of pursuing her own goals.

Likewise, Irma, another 16 year-old Puerto Rican mother, explains that "it is important to [her] to have [her] family close by" because this means her resources are nearby. Irma shows the importance of using her network not only for financial help, but for in-kind help. She gets rides from her mother to work, has her babysitter on the block, does laundry in her boyfriend's mother's building. Yet, she makes it very clear that currently she only lives with her boyfriend and daughter in their own apartment and so far "nobody [in the family] has lived with her" and she "hopes to keep it that way." She "does not want people, with their problems, coming to stay" with her. Her boyfriend offers little to no financial help. Irma has most of the decision making power because she does not trust her boyfriend to make decisions and prefers not to rely on him at all. Irma and her boyfriend's mother "help each other out financially" but she does not take her relationship with "mother-in-law" beyond an occasional babysitter or as help to get out of a rough patch. Like Ivonne, Irma depends on some financial help in her life to make ends meet, however, she has a very cautious attitude towards getting involved beyond that level.

However, some women in this group eschew help from their families entirely. Lola, a 43 year-old nonimmigrant Mexican mother, does not rely on anyone outside of herself to provide for her young child. Lola has two adult children from a previous relationship who live on their own and whom she rarely sees. Her younger two children are from a second relationship that she

recently ended because her former boyfriend was abusive. Lola constantly moves from place to place and often struggles to find childcare. Yet, she does not like to "bother anyone" for help and prefers to "take care of things on [her] own." Lola does not help her adult daughters out with anything, and even says that she "needs it more than they do." Lola is typical of the other high acculturation/low familism mothers in the study who have little family interaction and rely on public assistance to make ends meet. Their lack of dependence or even interaction with family seems to stem from generally poor or distant relationships with family members and a preference for doing it all alone. There is also a suggestion that many of their family or romantic relationships are dysfunctional due to alcohol or drug use.

Ivonne and Irma both "depend" on their families in major ways, yet neither really "interdepends," (i.e., promoting the cohesiveness of the family, or wanting to be emotionally supported by their family members). Instead they require financial help mainly because being a low-income mom often requires some level of monetary support in order to "make it." Yet, it is not clear that they would be involved at all with their families if they did not need childcare, or financial support from them. Instead they might be more like Lola, who completely rejects family help or even interaction. Regardless of the type of help they are receiving, these mothers have a preference for "going it alone."

Rejecters: "Strong, not fragile"

Mothers who are low acculturation/low familism are outliers in the relationship between acculturation and familism. It is assumed that because they are not acculturated then they must uphold traditional cultural aspects of their identity which includes familism. This group runs counter to that notion in many ways. These Latina women often suffer from a lack of networks both in the U.S. and in their native country (if they are immigrants), which sometimes results

from their distrust of anyone outside the home. However, unlike the interdependent mothers who also have low trust for society, these women's distrust borders on paranoia. Mothers in this group are fiercely independent and reject any social or family support. They rely on their own doing to make ends meet for their families and use local agencies sparsely. While they keep their children very close and monitor them constantly, they have very tempered expectations for their children's futures. They lack the immigrant optimism that most of the interdependent women possess.

Joséfina is a 30 year-old married mother of three who came to the U.S. from Mexico in 1988. Despite being in the U.S. 13 years at the time of the interview, she still cannot speak English fluently and has trouble finding jobs that do not require English. Her husband is not very supportive of Joséfina with the children because he is usually at work trying to support the whole family. As a result, Joséfina is left largely to handle all of the parenting duties by herself. She does not know the boundaries of her neighborhood or the name of the neighborhood. Joséfina does feel that her neighborhood is "feo y malo [ugly and bad]" and most of her neighbors "están pobres [are poor]." Joséfina has a large family, but none of them are very close and so she does not see them often and never asks them for financial help. She makes it clear that receiving welfare is not the ideal situation and likens it to "vivir del gobierno [living off the government]." However, she has had to receive TANF in the past because she has no one else to lean on financially.

Joséfina does not lend money to friends or relatives and does not babysit other people's children. She prefers not to ask for help, not even from her husband. The only two people she trusts to watch her children are one family friend whom has known for 14 years and her sister. However, Joséfina makes it clear that she makes sure to pay her sister or friend whatever she can

afford because she does like asking for favors. Her mistrust of the outside world is clear in the way she keeps a close watch on her children. Joséfina does not let her children "salir de la casa [leave the house]," except to do recreational activities like go swimming or to the park under her supervision. When she finally finds a job, she is glad that it has an opposite schedule to her husband's job so that the kids "están controlados [are controlled]" so that they cannot do anything they are not supposed to be doing. Joséfina feels that it is important to depend only on herself in hard times and hopes that her family views her as "fuerte, no frágil [strong, not fragile]."

Likewise, Lorena, a 37 year-old Puerto Rican immigrant mother of four of her own children and a custodial parent to a nephew, strives to do as much as she can on her own and "stays away from family." Few people in Lorena's life can help her, but instead only want help from Lorena, which she is not in a position to give. As a result, Lorena makes the best of out her situation, does not work so she can stay home with the children, and tries to keep her family a "two-parent" family despite not being legally married to her partner. Her "husband's" predilection towards being abusive does not keep Lorena from taking him back each time they break-up. She struggles to find childcare and often relies on her 14-year-old daughter to watch the younger children. Lorena has moderately low expectations for her children. She just hopes that despite their bad neighborhood, that "all of the children finish high school and do not get involved in a gang." She and her "husband" tell the kids that they "must earn a [high school] diploma or they will end up working in a factory like [their father] does."

These women, despite being closely tied to their heritage in the forms of language, immigrant status, and some cultural ways, they are disconnected from any dependence on or connection to their families. They prefer to depend on themselves and no one else to make ends

meet. Perhaps the association with family would only be an added burden to them, but they go beyond that to disassociate with even their communities. These women may be pursuing an acculturation strategy of separation (Berry, 1997; 2007), where they have some interest in maintaining some aspects of their own cultural identity but also reject the broader culture around them.

Moderated Interdependence: "It's the whole family's problem"

Mothers who are high on acculturation and high on familism are very similar to those mothers who are interdependent. This group of mothers is highly acculturated while simultaneously endorsing an interdependent focus on the family. The key difference is that high acculturation among these mothers is moderated by also maintaining a strong emphasis on ethnic identification with the Latino culture. Mothers stress many of the high familism ideals by having an emotional and often financial dependence on their families, keeping their children close to them by placing them in kin care, and maintaining high optimism and high aspirations for their children. However, these mothers in this group concurrently have many of the markers of acculturation such being nonimmigrants, having good command over the English language, using Spanish a little or not at all, interfacing with agencies such as public aid offices and schools, and experiencing fluid relationships with partners. While this mix of high familism with high acculturation runs counter to the notion of an inverse relationship between these two characteristics, the vital component is that mothers simultaneously preserve a close identification with Latino culture keeps them from becoming too "Americanized." These cultural activities and attitudes include stressing ethnic traditions and holidays, placing importance on the Spanish language (even though they may not speak it), living in ethnic enclaves, and eating more foods that are traditional to Latinos.

Juanita is a 23-year-old Puerto Rican nonimmigrant mother to one son, John. John's father is usually living with them, though he and Juanita have broken-up several times in the past. Juanita lives in the basement apartment of the same building where her mother and brother live. Most of her family is within walking distance of each other, and she visits her aunt whom she is very close to almost everyday. Juanita received her high school diploma from the alternative high school she was attending while she was pregnant with John. She really wants to continue her education and is currently attending classes at the Puerto Rican Cultural Center to become a "Computer Operations Specialist."

In addition to her nonimmigrant status, Juanita has many other markers of acculturation including the lack of stigma surrounding use of public aid. Like many mothers who utilize government help, Juanita finds the process to be aggravating but ultimately useful. She says, "I hate [making all the appointments] but it's still a big help, so I try to keep up with it because I don't want them to cut me off, it is still a big help, even though I am working and [John's] father is working." Juanita also does not feel that there should be shame associated with using public aid, an attitude that is quite different from low acculturation mothers. She reports "I never thought that [welfare] made me less of a person...because I've always worked, I never felt like I was being slick or getting away with it." Another prominent marker of acculturation is Juanita's masterful command of English. She knows English is her best subject in school and declares "I don't wanna brag but I'm good, I'm excellent at English." Juanita is prototypically acculturated in some ways yet still maintains a strong sense of familism and a parallel love of and commitment to her Latina heritage.

Juanita shows that in her family their bonds are driven less by pure need and more by the desire to be around one another. She describes their closeness by saying, "We're so close that,

you know, that I couldn't really pin-point when exactly or how exactly we are there for each other, because it's like on a daily basis, with everybody." She explains that everyone in the family contributes in their own way and each of them has their own "duty." She loves having such a close-knit and supportive family. They have always lived physically near one another within same neighborhood. Juanita would want a new apartment to be in the same neighborhood because she cannot imagine not being able to visit with her family everyday.

If Juanita could afford to buy her own apartment building she would invite her whole family to live there and not charge them rent. She says she would "want to buy houses for my mother and all my aunts or something […] then the family from Puerto Rico will come and 'oh where's our place, where's our room?' It'd be nice though." Juanita identifies strongly with being Puerto Rican and associates her ethnic identity with the cultural importance of family. She says "Puerto Ricans are family-oriented. Family is number one. The most important thing in your life is your family." Juanita believes that because her family is so close, that when "[she] has a problem, it's the whole family's problem."

Likewise, Blanca, a 23-year-old nonimmigrant Mexican mother of one, shares how close her family is and how they help her stay true to her ethnic origin. Blanca is a single mother who lives with her daughter, Georgia, rent-free in an apartment building owned by her father. Her parents, younger sister, grandmother, and aunt all live in the building, spread out among three different apartments. Besides being a nonimmigrant, Blanca's high acculturation is noticeable from her excellent English skills. However, she reports that she did not always speak English well. When Blanca entered school, she spoke primarily Spanish but quickly became English proficient through an ESL class. Georgia, her daughter, is now bilingual, showing how Blanca incorporates both languages prominently into her parenting. In addition, much like other highly

acculturated mothers, Blanca experiences a very fluid relationship with Georgia's father. During the course of the study, he moves in and out with Blanca, ultimately leading Blanca to break things off permanently with him and begin to see other men. However, throughout this instability with her partner, Blanca's family remains steadfast in their support of each other.

Blanca shares during an interview how her close family is a benefit:

> Well, we are all very close so when we need help if it's financial, or babysitting, taking me to places, we're there for each other. Uh-mm, the advice, you know, like everybody within that...the people that I mentioned to you […] we are all very close. […] I think that's always a good thing [that my family knows everything that's going on]. I don't think...it doesn't bother me because I'm the one who told them. If I didn't want them to know I wouldn't tell them anything.

Blanca also makes note that her family makes a point to preserve their cultural heritage by celebrating many Mexican holidays together such as Mexican Independence Day, Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead), and Rosca de Reyes (Three Kings Day). They also gather together almost every Saturday. Blanca explains that "it kinda varies every Saturday it is not always the same thing. We'll go to my family's house, like in the summer time we'll have cook out like at my [Aunt's] house. So everyone kinda goes to her house."

Like many other mothers in this group, Blanca has strong feelings towards her ethnic neighborhood and tries to see the positive about where she lives, and subsequently the positive things about Mexican people. Blanca says that "people say I live in a ghetto" but she does not view her neighborhood that way. She wants her daughter Georgia to know that "she should be happy" because "there are a lot of great things happening in [their] neighborhood." Blanca does sometimes worry about the safety of the neighborhood but thinks that she is safe "because I have

family here, yeah. My family [...] it's very safe, for me it is." She feels that being at home means being "close to my family" and she can still remember how she "jumped when I knew that there was an apartment here available and am like 'we are going over there'" because it meant living in the same building as her mother.

These mothers all have close relationships with their families and use them not just as a means of interdependence but also of emotional support. While, they are all highly acculturated, many do not even speak Spanish, they also have deep ethnic pride and make effortful attempts to connect with their culture. This connection with their culture is often made by keeping intergenerational ties alive, relying on their own parents to teach their children about their culture (or speak Spanish to them), and connecting with their ethnic neighborhoods.

Links to Child Wellbeing

There is some evidence that type of family dependence may be associated with certain patterns of behavior among the children of mothers in the sample. Mothers often have more than only the "focal child" in the household, so they sometimes provide a window into the behavior, academic, and health outcomes of all children in their care. While mothers were asked specifically to talk about the health of the young focal child, very often other outcomes arose during the conversations. The discussion will now turn on linking the child outcomes to the type of family dependency in the data.

Rejecters and In(dependent)

The patterns of child outcomes look very similar for children of mothers who reject family support (low acculturation/low familism) and for children whose mothers are financially dependent on their families (high acculturation/low familism). For mothers who are "rejecters" and those who are "dependent" the outcomes for children are almost completely unknown. No

women discuss how their children are faring cognitively or make a point to make the child the focal point of the conversations. At most, Lorena, a family rejecter, says that a sibling of the focus child, her 12-year-old daughter, is "on the honor role and makes straight A's." However, the focal child Avery, aged 3, is now living with his grandmother because he was "too hyper" for Lorena to handle. Aside from this mother the other mothers in this group do not reference their children much and as a result their outcomes are fairly unknown. There is a hint from a couple of these mothers that some behavior problems exist. For example, Margarita, a financially dependent mom, says that her son "can act up" but does not discuss his behavior (or much else about him) beyond that. Another financially dependent mother, Inez, says her son, aged 4, gets into fights a lot, but she is clear that it is "not his fault" but instead she knows that the other child "who is bad" provokes the fighting. However, the ethnographer is careful to make note that Inez's son does not listen, does whatever he wants and is not disciplined for his behavior.

For the children of mothers who are independent of their families (high acculturation/low familism), the story is quite clear. These children exhibit some serious behavior problems that either go ignored or are not viewed as a problem. For example, Irene was suspicious when the teachers told her that her 9-year-old son needed Ritalin to control his behavior in class. Irene did not believe he needed anything and thought that teachers use Ritalin as a "sit down and shut up drug." As a result, Irene sent her son to school with some Tic Tacs instead of his medication, then contended that the school officials could not tell the difference with his behavior when he was not on the drug. Since then Irene lost custody of her son who is now living his grandmother.

While Irene may be more of an extreme, many of the women have children with problems in school such as Socorro reports. Socorro says that her son's classroom tracks behavior by sending home a sheet with either sad or happy faces to indicate how the child did

that day. Her son, who is 3 years old, has received many "sad faces" from school lately, but she brushes this off and says that it is hard to get "happy" faces from the teachers. Furthermore, Socorro tells the interviewer that her son seems to cry a lot. She says that when people come to visit and they leave, that her son cries and cannot be consoled for long periods of time. These mothers tend to minimize poor behavior or ignore it all together. This may be due to having little room in their lives to deal with additional burdens of bad behavior, or the lack of support to provide them with knowledge about the nature of these problems. It could also be that these children experience more behavior problems than the other kids because they face a lot of instability and low social support.

Interdependent

Children with interdependent mothers live in households with high expectations for achievement and plenty of emotional support for their education. These children also have generally good behavior, are obedient to their parents, and are disciplined. For example, Lucia's son, 3-year-old Jake, is noted by the ethnographer to be a "well-behaved child who always listen[s] to his mother when she asks him to do something." He regularly helps his mother get breakfast ready and cleans up afterwards. Jake appears to be an even-tempered child who sticks closely to his routines and rarely acts out. His mother explains that there are no problems at bedtime because Jake knows his routine and does not complain about it. Jake had been "accepted into the bilingual program [at school] and is looking forward to it." To Lucia, education is important and she stresses it in her parenting practices. Jake is clearly a well-behaved, obedient child. Lucia thinks education is important, and spends extra time reading and writing with her son. This mother is seeking more education for herself because if Jake asks her a question she does not want to have to tell him that she does not know the answer. Lucia is exemplary of these

families who have young children initially doing well in school, when they are learning basic skills. However, the problem with these children seems to be the inability of their parents to help them as they move through the educational system and encounter more difficult skills.

For example, Maria, a mother of four, is a perfect example of a mother who has a young child who is excelling and has older children who are performing poorly. Maria struggles to help her older two daughters with their homework. As a result, her oldest daughter might be moved back from the 8th grade back to 7th grade because she does not complete her homework and is failing classes. Maria's 7-year-old daughter still cannot read or write and has no support at home to teach her these skills. Conversely, the 4-year-old focal child, Javier, is excited for kindergarten and knows all of his colors, shapes, and alphabet. He looks forward to doing the "assignments" his preschool gives him to complete. While Maria can support Javier's learning because it is basic, she cannot support her daughters' due to lack of English language knowledge.

Yasmin also notes that parental skills are necessary to help her children make it through school. However, like Maria, Yasmin's older children are experiencing many schooling difficulties. Her older son Martin, a 12-year-old fifth grader, is seriously delayed in school because he is failing math and cannot read at grade level. Likewise, her second grade daughter who is 8 years old, is failing out of school because she continually neglects to complete her homework. However, Yasmin is optimistic about education being the only way for her children to advance and that as she "betters" herself by learning the language and taking courses that she will be able to help her kids. She says "Well, now that I'm bettering myself [by taking classes], right? I think that maybe I will be able to give him educational help until where he wants to, by studying myself." These women hold the value of their children's education high, but lack the skills to help their children themselves.

Moderated Interdependence

Children of high acculturation/high familism mothers are perhaps faring the best cognitively despite poor socioeconomic circumstances. These kids are doing well at school, according their mothers. Dina and Maribel both have children that are excelling at school. Dina's 5-year-old son has already been placed in a gifted class and Maribel works on school projects with her children and uses educational toys (e.g. flashcards) to help her children learn more. However, while these children do well in school, they appear to have more health problems, especially being overweight, than the other children. Paula's 5-year-old son Miguel, who is the focal child in the study, has several health problems stemming from being overweight. He has asthma, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol resulting from the excess weight. The doctor cautions Paula that he is in risk of becoming diabetic. His younger brother Albert, aged 2, is also looking like he might have similar issues because at his young age is already overweight. This may be due to the large amounts of McDonald's and pizza Miguel eats, the result of an acculturated (westernized) diet. The parents have started to hide junk food from the two boys so that they will not eat it and go off the diet ordered by the doctor.

Similarly, Blanca's 4-year-old daughter Georgia is overweight for her age. She currently weighs 45 pounds and should be at maximum 35 pounds according to the doctor. Blanca's doctor recommended putting her on a diet, but Blanca does not see this as a problem. She feels that Georgia will grow out of her weight problem. However, this problem has not caused Blanca to change Georgia's eating habits. Georgia likes to have hot dogs and eggs, hates vegetables, will only drink chocolate milk, and Blanca allows her to have a bowl of sugary cereal before bedtime. Mothers in this group have clearly acculturated to poor eating habits and are passing along these habits to their children. As a result, while the kids are faring well cognitively and behaviorally, it

seems that poor health is a problem. The children's eating habits may reflect a more permissive parenting style in these families and overindulgence or spoiling by extended kin (such as grandmothers).

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of familism in the lives of low-income Latina mothers, from immigrant and nonimmigrant backgrounds, who have young children in their care. By situating the analysis in acculturation theory and a transactional model of child development, this paper was able to understand how mothers interact with their receiving communities, maintain or abandon familistic strategies for making ends meet, and how their children develop in response to these family processes. This analysis revealed that mothers employ different strategies for family support and dependency according to their acculturation level and endorsement of familistic values. The findings also discredit the idea that the acculturation/familism association is strictly an inverse one, and showed that endorsement of familistic values can be high even among highly acculturated mothers who maintain an emphasis on their ethnic identity. Support for familism as a protective characteristic for child development was mixed, as children showed a range of troubling outcomes on school achievement, behavior, and health.

The Nonlinear Relationship of Acculturation and Familism

This study revealed that this relationship is not two-dimensional in a low-income sample of Latina mothers. Furthermore, beyond the two usual categories of low acculturation/high familism and high acculturation/low familism, this work shows that mothers could also be high on both acculturation and familism or low on both.

The mothers in the *moderated interdependence* and *rejecter* categories are exemplary of interactions of individual and the environment that are occurring at two different levels – at the macro level of individual in a society and the micro level of the individual within the family. Acculturation theory can account for the changes happening to the individual as they interact with a new cultural society, hence controlling "how acculturated" a person becomes. Transactional theory of development gives the view of how the individual transacts with their family environment across the lifespan, hence controlling "how familistic" they are. Conceptualizing the acculturation/familism relationship as an inverse one does not leave room for individuals who are incongruent in respect to these two concepts. The individuals who are high or low on both acculturation and familism are often the most important to recognize because that preference has major implications for the whole family system including the developing child.

The mothers in the high acculturation/high familism group are often second generation immigrants who simply cannot escape the pervasive influence of the dominant culture because they were schooled in the U.S. and were born here so exposure to broader society is inevitable. For instance, characteristics like their command of English, generational status, view of themselves as Americans, and interactions with institutions (i.e. schools) make these women highly acculturated. Yet, their preference for high value of family, giving and receiving emotional support, in-kind help, and financial assistance within the family also make them highly familistic. However, these women "make sense" of this dissonant situation because they make conscious efforts to maintain a sense of ethnic identity and uphold aspects of Latino culture that influence their and their children's development over time. This degree to which one emphasizes both the American and Latino culture simultaneously is known as biculturalism

(Buriel & De Ment, 1997; Szopocznik & Kurtines, 1980), which is akin to Berry's construction of the integration strategy of acculturation (1997; 2007). Furthermore, biculturalism is commonly associated with positive outcomes for children and adolescents (Coatsworth, Maldonado-Molina, Pantin, & Szapocznik, 2005). Therefore, it is likely that women who both acculturate and maintain familistic values are pursuing the most adaptive strategy and creating a constructive family environment in which to rear their children.

Conversely, the mothers in the low acculturation/low familism group may be pursuing the most maladaptive strategy for raising children and for advancing themselves. On the societal level, they simply are not interested in what the broader culture has to offer, suffer from low English language ability, and as a result are often cut-off from institutional forms of support (i.e. TANF or basic schooling for themselves). On the family level, they also reject kin networks and their low trust for society leaves them with no friend support. These women are pursuing an acculturation strategy of separation (Berry, 1997; 2007), on both the macro and micro level, where one simultaneously rejects the outside society and family support in lieu of maintaining one's culture and keeping family members at arms length. These women do not end up pursuing this particular strategy randomly. They may have a negative experience with interacting with the culture around them which causes them to pursue a strategy that is self-preservationist in nature. Similarly, they may choose not to participate with their family networks because they find themselves giving more than they receive or their family networks are simply low in social capital (Domínguez & Watkins, 2003; Menjivar, 1997). While this strategy may be most efficient to these mothers in the present moment, it may have negative consequences for the socialization of their children, causing them to eschew their culture in favor of an oppositional

one (Ainsworth-Darnell & Downey, 1998; Ogbu, 1978), or lead them to develop maladaptive coping strategies for stress due to low family cohesion and low social support.

Family Support as Means to Survival not Advancement

The strategies that emerged resulting from a mother's level of acculturation and endorsement of familistic values highlighted two points about the use of family support. First, and most important to the study of a low-income population, is that family support in the financial, logistical, or emotional form is not a way out of poverty but instead is a survival strategy. Most of these women have very low education, work low-wage jobs, and struggle from day to day to make ends meet. Having family support them does not dramatically change their life circumstances, but its absence seems to be damaging. Evidence from this study shows that the women who have financial, emotional, and logistical help from their families can buffer their children from some of the adverse consequences of poverty better than those women who reject family support. Children of highly familistic mothers rarely go hungry, lack clothes, of feel emotionally unsupported. However, these children, regardless of family support, still go to low-quality schools, live in dangerous neighborhoods, and their parents continue to struggle financially. However, families who are well-supported and stabilized by extended kin networks should translate to better outcomes for children. The most tenuous family networks are those built on financial obligations only. Those networks can begin to erode over time as inability to reciprocate financially grows and undermines the trust upon which these relationships are built (Menjivar, 1997).

Second, family support is largely based on the way a mother psychologically perceives her network and less on the actual material objects her family provides. For example, those mothers that are financially dependent on their families for survival often perceive themselves as

being independent. Ivonne, for instance, is solely dependent on her parents for nearly all financial aspects (e.g. housing, food), but is adamant about the view of herself as independent. As a result, this dissonance constantly has Ivonne searching for a way to break away from her family. This may be detrimental to her mental health and consequently have negative implications for her ability to parent (Parke et al., 2004). Conversely, those highly familistic mothers (either low or high acculturation) perceive their family support to be strong, both financially and emotionally. This is despite having people in their family who are just like them socioeconomically. "Being there" for each other in these families sometimes has nothing to do with finances, but instead rests on the idea that everyone in the family is in it together. This heightens psychological wellbeing in these families, and can act to build confidence in the children. The endorsement of attitudinal familism, or the way one psychologically experiences/values their family, can be just as important (if not more important) than the behavioral familism, or what actions a family member carries out to show interdependence.

Child Wellbeing

The evidence for familism as a protective characteristic is mixed in these low-income families. Children in highly interdependent families experience the least instability, are emotionally supported, and have mothers with high expectation for achievement. On the contrary, children in low familism families experience high levels of parental and residential instability, stress, and tempered expectations for achievement. The children can exhibit behavior problems, but their outcomes are largely unknown.

While interdependent families appear to be the most protective environments, they are not without their drawbacks. Children in highly familistic families with low acculturation mothers fare well behaviorally and tend to have few health problems. However, these children,

while expected to perform well in school, are doing quite poorly academically. This is due in large part to the mother's inability to support their learning, through checking or helping with homework or meeting with teachers. Yet, mothers in this group also want to improve their own education and learn the language. Children with highly acculturated and familistic mothers are faring well cognitively and behaviorally, but abandoning more traditional foods in favor of processed and fast foods leave these kids with problems of being overweight or obese. Many very young children in the sample are already on diets as recommended by their doctors. Overall, familism seems to be protective for behavioral issues. However, health and academic outcomes are largely moderated by mother's acculturation. If she is acculturated then she usually has the language skills to help her child with homework or advocate on their behalf to school officials. This higher level of acculturation also comes with more relaxed eating habits, causing children health problems very early in life. Those children with low acculturation mothers need more cognitive support at home if they are to overcome the disadvantaged school system and neighborhoods.

Limitations

This study is one of the first to investigate the association of familism and acculturation on child wellbeing in a very low-income sample, though it is not without limitations. Of course, the first is the generalizability of the sample. First, since it is a sample of low-income Latina mothers in Chicago, their experiences may not represent those of all low-income mothers or those of Latinas. It is a small sample that allows a more nuanced look at some of the cultural concepts presented here, but the size of the sample also limits the generalizability.

Second, the qualitative data presented here was an in-depth examination of these families through interviews, field notes, and observations, but it could have further benefitted from data

collection that centered on the child in the home, day care center, or other child care setting. The data available on the children instead, rose organically from a general discussion of parenting or day-to-day routines of mothers.

Third, this study lends limited understanding to what these relationships look like over time. It provides a window into a two year period in the lives of these mothers, but the cultural and family variables are constantly changing and evolving over time. These findings bring into question the stability of the characteristics captured here. Theoretically, it would be expected that the women in this study would shift categories over time. For example a low acculturation/high familism mother would naturally become more acculturated over time causing her to shift her quadrant classification (as coded in these data) through prolonged exposure to U.S. culture. However, while acculturation status is a fluid process it is possible that familism does not fluctuate quite as much. Once a mother settles into a pattern of family interdependency, for instance, it seems less plausible that the mother becomes less familistic over time. Familism may be a characteristic that is highly influenced by the changing dynamics within a family and how a family responds to the co-occurring contextual factors of the environment. This is not to say that it is impossible for a low acculturation/high familism mother to become a high acculturation/low familism mother or for a low acculturation/low familism mother to become more familistic, but it is improbable. Furthermore, this study acknowledges that mothers are active participants in the environment and not simply passive recipients. Mothers could self-select into the categories described here based on unobserved or unmeasured characteristics. For example, limited opportunities to engage with the environment through prejudice or segregation could lead a mother to choose not to acculturate quickly or a difficult relationship between the father and the extended family could lead a mother to choose a less familistic orientation. This study does not

have the range of data to explore these mechanisms of selection into groups, but it acknowledges that dynamic interactions with the environment (both measured and unmeasured) are responsible for the associations described in the findings.

There is also limited understanding of how the nature of the mother-child relationship is bidirectional. Most of the focal children were very young and consequently had few chances to influence the mother's acculturation and familism attitudes. This study acknowledges the bidirectional influence of parents on children and children on parents, but could not capture these changes over time.

Implications for Measurement of Familism

Three general lessons arise about the measurement of familism in survey research. First, there is a lack of consensus in the literature about which dimensions of familism are most important to measure and how to measure them. Qualitative research is well-poised to discover organically which aspects of familism are vital to families and which are protective for children. If reliable aspects of familism can be identified and developed it is possible that quantitative scales of more than one type of familism (i.e. behavioral, attitudinal, and demographic) could be incorporated into large scale surveys. Second, researchers need to begin to realize that sub-populations, such as Latinos, differ in important ways from the rest of a longitudinal sample. Taken together, acculturation and transactional theory highlight the way an individual's interaction with the environment produces development. Yet, this development is punctuated by culture. To field a study that does not take into account culturally different groups in the sampling frame or in the data analysis stage may produce bias in research. Third, the lesson that extends beyond the measure familism is that researchers should be careful to consider the construct validity of any measure, but those of particularly used on under-researched

populations. Psychologists, demographers, and sociologists are all responsible for fielding studies that consider how a particular measure may or may not work in a subpopulation. It is no longer possible to march into data collection armed with measures once thought to be robust, without first thinking about the way a changing research population will respond to a measure normed on a middle-class or white sample. Just as vital lessons about measurement were learned when studies on low-income populations started to emerge, the same considerations need to be implemented in surveys of immigrant and minority samples.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Several important considerations for policy and practice arise from these findings. First, mothers' education is a vital component for child wellbeing. It is a way for immigrant mothers to make contact with the broader society in a positive way, while simultaneously helping their own children achieve their educational goals (Kalil & Crosnoe, 2008). By improving their own education, mothers can also improve work situations that may put them on the road out of poverty. It can serve as a positive influence to other young women in their kin networks to continue or pursue further schooling.

Second, mothers and children need to be educated on eating habits to reduce the health problems rampant in this population of young Latino children. This may include helping them preserve more traditional ways of eating or giving them the skills to help themselves and their children make better food choices.

Third, for practitioners it is important to recognize the interaction of the individual with the dominant culture and also considering that individual's transaction with the family. Getting these mothers integrated to the mainstream is not always the best approach. Instead, teaching

mothers and children biculturalism may be the best way to balance cultural strengths with mainstream skills needed to overcome the socioeconomic disadvantage these families face.

Finally, the aims of current immigration policy and the wellbeing of immigrant families are at odds with one another. Immigration raids, border enforcement, deportation, fines, and imprisonment are the consequences faced by illegal entrants to the U.S. (CBO, 2006). These penalties hurt and often sever family ties, disrupt family cohesion, and undermine the bonds of existing family units. The findings of the present study suggest that this could be potentially devastating for children as familism declines and the effects of poverty, low parental education, and poor housing opportunities shock the family system. For legal immigrants, family reunification policies have long been in existence, meaning family members already living in the U.S. can sponsor other family members to join them (CBO, 2006). This particular immigration policy favors the wellbeing of immigrant families, ensures relationships remain intact, and enhances family cohesion. The challenge for U.S. immigration policy is to come to terms with the number of illegal immigrants and find a way to protect family systems as parents and children seek a better life in America in a way similar to the provisions made for legal families. At this juncture, it does not appear the tide of illegal immigrants, particularly from Mexico can be stemmed. Therefore, the path to legal immigration needs to become more attainable, and the families already existing in the U.S. need to be properly documented. Immigrants, both legal and illegal, already face tremendous adversity in the U.S. therefore maintaining and establishing laws that foster the major strengths of familism should be considered as part of immigration policy.

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Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for Chicago Latina Mothers at Baseline, N=39

	All Latina Mothers	
	Frequency/ Mean	Percentage/SD
Demographics		
Immigrant Status		
Immigrant	16	41%
Nonimmigrant	16	41%
Missing	7	18%
Ethnicity		
Mexican	23	59%
Puerto Rican	10	26%
Mexican/Puerto Rican	2	5%
Latina origin unknown	4	10%
Age of Caregiver	28.31	(8.27)
Marital status		
Single	18	46%
Married	16	41%
Divorced	2	5%
Separated	2	5%
Engaged	1	3%
Cohabitation Status		
Nonmarital Cohabitation	24	61%
Noncohab or Married	15	39%
Socioeconomic Status		
Education Level		
No High School Diploma	26	67%
High School Diploma/GED	9	23%
Missing	4	10%
Work Status		
Working	22	56%
Not Working	16	41%
Missing	1	3%
Household Characteristics (n=38)		
# of Bio Children	2.74	(1.45)
# of Bio Children Living in Household	2.58	(1.45)
# of Children Caregiver Responsible for	2.58	(1.45)
Total # of Members of Household	5.03	(1.97)
Welfare Use		
TANF Status		
Not receiving	28	72%
Receiving	10	25%
Missing	1	3%
Food Stamp Status		
Not receiving	25	64%
Receiving	13	33%

Missing	1	3%
Health Insurance Status		
No Insurance	2	5%
Private Insurance	8	20%
Medicaid/Publicly funded	12	31%
Missing	17	44%

Table 2 Crosstabulation of Mother Immigrant Status by Quadrant Classification (familism by acculturation), n=32

	Quadrant Classification				
Mother Immigrant Status	UL[1]	UR	LL	LR	*Total*
Nonimmigrant[2]	0 0%	5 100%	0 0%	11 79%	*16* *50%*
Immigrant	10 100%	0	3 100%	3 21%	*16* *50%*
Total	*10* *100%*	*5* *100%*	*3* *100%*	*14* *100%*	*32* *100%*

[1] UL (upper left) = Low acculturation/High Familism; UR (upper right) = High acculturation/High Familism; LL (lower left) = Low acculturation/Low familism; LR (lower right) = High acculturation/Low familism

[2] Note: Significant differences on classification depending on immigrant status; χ^2 (3, N= 32) = 22.57, p<.001; φ = .840, p< .001

Table 3 Crosstabulation of Dependence on Family by Quadrant Classification (familism by acculturation), N=39

	Quadrant Classification				
Dependence on Family	UL[1]	UR	LL	LR	*Total*
Not Dependent[2]	0 0%	0 0%	4 100%	11 61%	*15* *38%*
Emotionally	10 100%	7 100%	0 0%	0 0%	*17* *44%*
Financially	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	7 39%	*7* *18%*
Total	*10* *100%*	*7* *100%*	*4* *100%*	*18* *100%*	*39* *100%*

[1] UL (upper left) = Low acculturation/High Familism; UR (upper right) = High acculturation/High Familism; LL (lower left) = Low acculturation/Low familism; LR (lower right) = High acculturation/Low familism

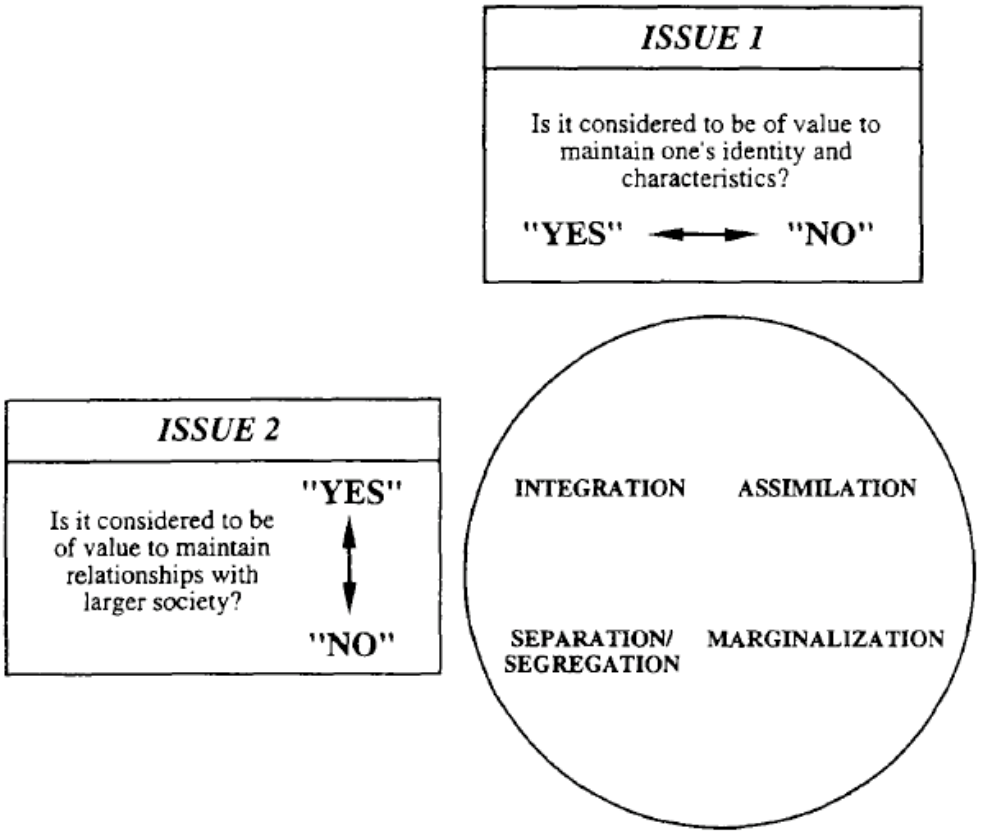
[2] Note: Significant differences on classification depending family dependence; χ^2 (6, N= 39) = 43.04, p<.001; φ = 1.50, p< .001

Table 4 Crosstabulation of Mother Immigrant Status by Dependence on Family, n=32

	Dependence on Family			
Mother Immigrant Status	Not dependent	Emotionally	Financially	*Total*
Nonimmigrant[1]	8 62%	5 33%	3 75%	*16* *50%*
Immigrant	5 38%	10 67%	1 25%	*16* *50%*
Total	*13* *100%*	*15* *100%*	*4* *100%*	*32* *100%*

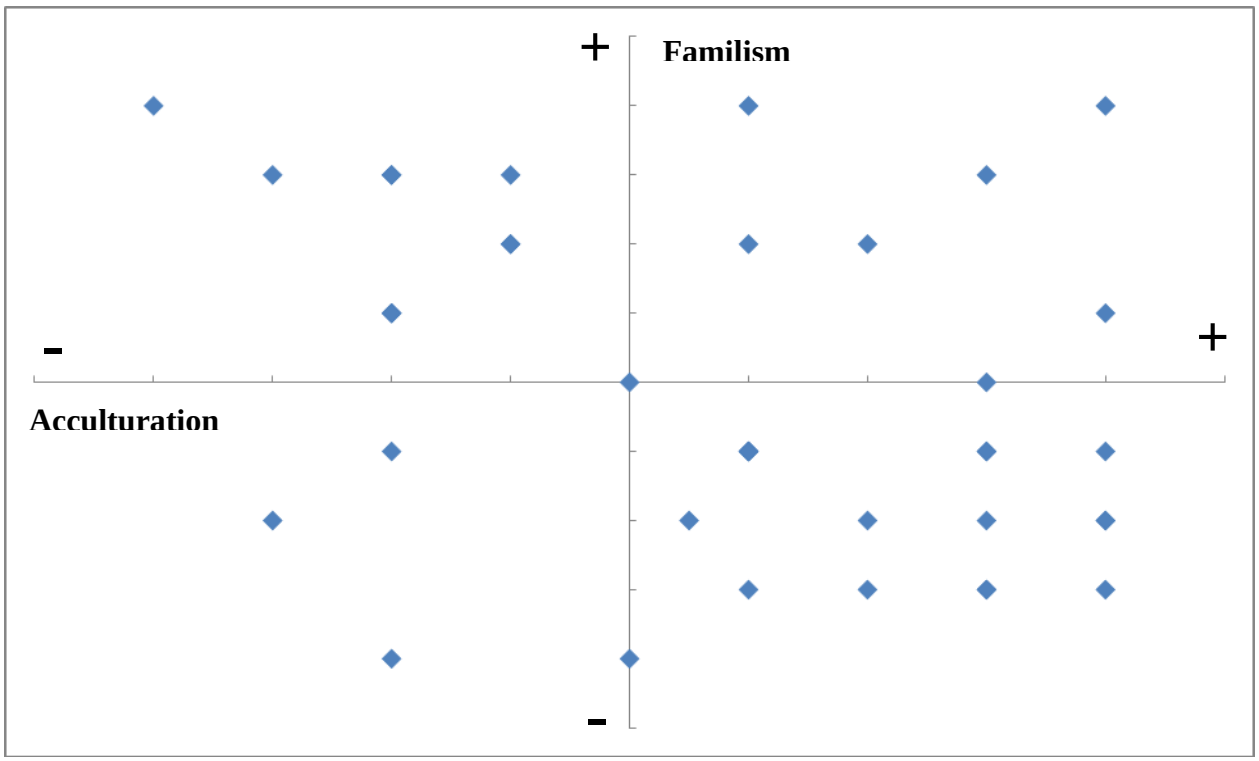
[1] Note: No significant differences on dependence depending on immigrant status; χ^2 (2, N= 32) = 3.36, p>.05; φ = .324, p>.05

Figure 1 Acculturation Strategies



Model taken from: Berry, J. W. (1997). Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation. *Applied Psychology, 46*(1), 5-34.

Figure 2 Scatterplot of the Relationship between Mother's Familism and Acculturation, N=39



Appendix A: Closed coding scheme for Acculturation vs. Familism

1. Acculturation

1a. Immigrant status

1a1. Immigrant versus nonimmigrant (0=immigrant; 1=nonimmigrant)

1a2. Recent arrival (0=recent; 1=not recent or born in US)

1a3. 1.5 generation: *This includes arriving in early childhood but mainly raised in U.S.* (0=not 1.5 generation; 1=1.5 or born in US)

2a. Language use

2a1. Command of English: *Can include if they conducted the interview in Spanish; comfort with English* (0=not good command; 1=good command)

2a2. Spanish use: *Is primary language; frequency of use* (0=use it primarily; 1=infrequent or don't know Spanish)

3a. Interface with agencies/schools: *Especially TANF use* (0=use it minimally/have stigma against use; 1=use it, no stigma)

4a. Two-parent family: *Fluidity of relationship with partner* (0=stable; 1=fluid)

5a. Trust: *This includes for outside world; where you leave children; who you can trust outside social networks; how you view goals of society* (0=little trust; 1=general trust)

6a. Desire to stay/leave: *This refers to a desire to return to their country of origin or how much they identify with being an "American" (i.e. desire to stay). This is also what they consider to be home.* (0=want to return to home country; 1=want to stay, identify as American)

Sum all endorsements on a scale of 1-9 (1-4 = Low acculturation; 5 = Neutral; 6-9 = High acculturation) ***Note: Can be given score of 5 if information is insufficient to make determination***

2. Familism

1f. Tight-knit family, interconnectedness: *This is an attitudinal dimension; how you feel about your family; can be psychological connectedness; doesn't necessarily have to include extended kin network; or preferring independence from family* (0=prefer independence; 1=tight-knit)

2f. Financial help: *Can you count on or be counted on for financial help; do you mind helping/being helped; behavioral familism* (0=do not use; 1=use)

3f. In-kind help: *Food; clothes; transportation; behavioral familism* (0=do not use; 1=use)

4f. Child care: *Does anyone care for your children besides you; can you count on family to reliably provide child care; do you have to pay family for child care; behavioral familism* (0=do not use; 1=use)

5f. Value of family: *View of family; importance placed upon family; attitudinal familism* (0=family not central; 1=family central)

6f. Keeping tabs, reciprocation: *Do you have to pay back favors; keep track of what is owed; view of favors (i.e. time, child care, money) as communal;* (0=keep tabs; 1=do not keep tabs)

7f. Live in spatial proximity: *Relatives live with you; in same apartment; on same block; preference towards living away from kin* (0=do not live near/not important; 1=live near/important)

8f. Parenting goals/priorities: *Want to teach children "traditional" values respect and moral education* (0=no emphasis on traditional values; 1=emphasize traditional values)

9f. Optimism: *Sometimes referred to as immigrant optimism; making most out of available resources; high expectations for achievement for children; think formal education is the only way to make it* (0=not optimistic; 1=optimistic)

Sum all endorsements on a scale of 1-9 (1-4 = Low familism; 5 = Neutral; 6-9 = High familism) ***Note: Can be given score of 5 if information is insufficient to make determination***

3. Ethnic identification

1e. Importance of knowledge of Spanish: *Think it's important to keep Spanish alive intergenerationally; force children to use it; think it's important to use it even if not primary language* (0=not important; 1=important)

2e. Ethnicity/heritage: *Want children to be proud of ethnicity; clearly identify with one group; attribute positive features to ethnicity; view co-ethnics positively* (0=not central; 1=important)

3e. Food: *Adhere to more traditional diet from country of origin; less processed foods* (0=processed foods/do not adhere; 1=adhere more traditional foods)

4e. Holidays Traditions: *Clear family traditions; celebrate those holidays pertinent to country of origin (i.e. Mexican independence day)* (0=do not celebrate; 1=celebrate)

5e. Neighborhood boundaries: *Understand and can name neighborhood boundaries; understand that they do/do not live in an ethnic enclave; attribute mostly positive features to living in an ethnic enclave* (0=do not know/cannot identify; 1=identify)

Sum all endorsements on a scale of 1-5 (1-2 = Low ethnic id; 3 = Neutral; 4-5 = High ethnic id) ***Note: Can be given score of 3 if information is insufficient to make determination***

4. Child outcomes (Note: this may apply to more than one child in household, since focal child was not always the only feature of these conversations)

1co. Health: *Does child seem in good health*

2co. Behavior: *Complaints of this from teacher, interview, parent*

3co. School success: *How are they doing in school or daycare settings; knowing basic skills; not delayed or being held back; how are adolescents in this family doing*

5. Type of family (inter)dependence

1fd. Not dependent: *Emphasize a "go it alone" attitude; this may be due to lack of family network or unwillingness to engage with extended kin; emphasis on being independent*

2fd. Dependent emotionally: *Emotional dependence and often financial dependence; this is clearest case of going to family for advice, support, encouragement; interdependent on each other; sometimes but not always unidirectional (mother to daughter)*

3fd. Dependent financially: *Clearly dependent in financial sense; often logistically dependent on family for child care; often these are adolescent mothers with few resources; do not have the means to break completely away from family even if they would like to; keep tabs on the giving and want to repay favors*