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Disagreements between Mexican-origin mothers and their adolescent daughters:

A video-observational exploratory study

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Education

by

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December 2016

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ABSTRACT

Disagreements between Mexican-origin mothers and their adolescent daughters:

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Magali Bravo

Normative patterns of parent-adolescent in European American families has been established, but little is known what conflict looks like among Mexican-origin families. This study explores the topics Mexican-origin mothers and their adolescents daughter disagree about and how much assertiveness is displayed while discussing the conflict topics. A total of 130 mother-daughter pairs were included in this study. The mothers were either born in Mexico or were first generation born Mexican American between the ages of 28 and 62 years old ($M = 38.8$). The daughters were between the ages of 13 and 16 years of age ($M = 14.3$). The majority of the girls were born in the United States (77%) and the remainder were born in Mexico. The dyads were videotaped conversing with one another about things they disagreed about. The videotaped conversations were then coded and analyzed. The results indicate that the pattern of topics of conflict discussed follow similar trends found among European American families with the exception of a couple. The topic of sibling relationships was a prevalent topic discussed as an area of contention among mothers and daughters in this study. Additionally, the topic of media use was a novel topic of conflict among this group of participants.

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Adolescence is perceived by many parents to be a challenging stage of childrearing. Over 100 years ago, Hall (1904) described adolescence as a time period characterized by tumultuous relationships, conflict with others, and chaos, which he referred to as *storm and stress*. In this scenario, healthy adolescent developmental outcomes were dependent on relationships with parents becoming distant and disruptive. Moreover, serious parent-adolescent conflict was necessary in order for adolescents to develop normally.

The characterization of tumultuous and chaotic relationships between parents and adolescents as normative is not accepted by prominent developmental scholars. Instead, many researchers are in agreement that moderate levels of adolescent-parent conflict reflect normative processes of autonomy development (e.g., Arnett, 1999; Holmbeck, 1996; Steinberg & Silk, 2002). The development of behavioral autonomy is defined as adolescents being able to make more decisions and take action on their own. Adolescents may have different expectations from their parents about when behavioral autonomy should be granted and in what areas. Conflict serves as an individuating function in autonomy development as adolescents negotiate independence from their parents (Holmbeck, 1996; Smetana, 1995).

For many parents and their adolescents in mainstream American culture, conflict tends to rise in early adolescence around 13 years of age. For the most part during late childhood, parents have been making unilateral decisions about household rules, the kinds of activities that their children can participate in, and who they can spend time with. By 13 years of age, adolescents believe they should have more input in the decision-making process

(De Goede, Branje, & Meeus, 2009; Kim, Conger, Lorenz, & Elder, 2001; Laursen, Coy, & Collins, 1998). Conflict often arises because parents and adolescents have differing viewpoints on whether a 13-year-old is able to make appropriate decisions and act on his or her own.

It seems that 15-years of age is a meaningful age for autonomy granting in European-American culture and African American culture (Gutman & Eccles, 2007; Wray-Lake, Crouter, & McHale, 2010). Wray-Lake et al., (2010) found that decision-making gradually increases from being solely the parents making all of the decisions in late childhood to decision-making becoming more collaborative as the child gets older. Most noticeably, they found that there is a sharp increase in decision-making after the age of 15 years, similar to findings obtained by Gutman and Eccles (2007). Around this age, European American and African American parents seem to grant more decision-making authority to adolescents in areas such as appearance, household rules and social activities (Bulcroft, Carmody, & Bulcroft 1996; Gutman & Eccles, 2007; Wray-Lake et al., 2010). As a result, conflict rates decrease from early adolescence to mid-adolescence. Conflict rate continues to decline over late adolescence as many parents relinquish direct control over their adolescents' behaviors.

A relatively unexplored question is to what extent developmental trends of conflict among Latino parents and their adolescents is similar to, or different from, that of mainstream European American parent. It may be surmised that adolescent-parent conflict would be relatively muted in Latino families compared to European American families because of differences in cultural values. According to Grau, Azmitia, and Quattlebaum (2008), there are three values that are especially important for understanding parenting and

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family relationships among Latino families: (1) *familismo* (familism), a set of beliefs that emphasize the importance of interdependence and solidarity among family members; (2) *respeto*, a concept that emphasizes proper demeanor, obedience, and respect for authorities and elders (Cauce & Domenech-Rodriguez, 2002; Harwood, Layendecker, Carlson, Asencio, & Miller, 2002); and *educación*, a set of values that emphasize proper demeanor and moral upbringing. These cultural values dictate the types of behaviors that would be considered appropriate in the family.

The goal of this study was to gain a better understanding of conflict trends in Mexican-origin mother-daughter relationships in terms of topics of importance and the girls' willingness to assert their opinions while disputing them. Although Latino adolescents may not agree with their parents about decisions that impede on their behavioral autonomy, it seems they are less likely to assert themselves than European American adolescents (Phinney, Ong, & Madden, 2000). Research suggests that Latino adolescents value their duty to respect their families more so than do their peers from European American backgrounds (Dixon, Graber, & Brooks-Gunn, 2008; Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam, 1999) which may affect the ways in which they discuss areas of disagreement with their mothers. To date, the literature on conflict between Latino parents and their adolescents has largely focused on its detrimental effect on deviant adolescents in troubled relationships with their parents. We know very little about conflict trends that would be considered normative in healthy parent-adolescent relationships with this population.

This study focused only on the mother-daughter relationship because adolescents report more conflict with their mothers than with their fathers (Montemayor, 1982; Savin-

Williams & Small, 1986; Steinberg, 1987). In addition, conflict seems to be more prevalent between mothers and daughters than mothers and sons (Fuligni, 1998; Laursen, 2005; Smetana, Daddis, & Chuang, 2003). It seems that girls have more contentious relationships with their mothers than do boys, but also closer relationships. Dixon et al. (2008) suggest that because mothers and daughters typically experience close interdependent relationships, they may also be especially prone to conflict.

This thesis is structured as follows. In Chapter 2, I first review the literature on discrepancies between parents and adolescents about the ages at which they should be granted autonomy in various behaviors and activities. Secondly, I review research on age-related trends associated with parent-adolescent conflict, in terms of frequency and intensity. Thirdly, I review research on the types of topics that elicit the most conflict between parents and adolescents. The chapter ends with a description of the goal of the study and relevant research questions. The method is presented in Chapter 3 and results obtained through both qualitative and quantitative methods are presented in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 concludes with a discussion of the findings and relevant interpretations.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Discrepancies in behavioral autonomy age-expectations between parents and their adolescents

Why do parents and their children engage in conflict in the adolescent years? Judith Smetana suggests that parents and adolescents do so because they assign different meanings to conflict issues in terms of whether the matters are within purview of parental authority (Smetana & Asquith, 1994; Smetana, Campione-Barr & Daddis, 2004; Smetana, Crean & Campione-Barr, 2005). Drawing on Social Domain theory as a framework, Smetana explains that parents and adolescents have disputes over different types of social norms or regulations: (1) moral issues (prescriptive judgments about how one should behave; acts that have consequences for others' rights and welfare); and (2) social conventional issues (agreed upon rules that structure social behavior in different contexts, like manners and etiquette). Parents' appeal to social conventions make up a large proportion of disputes with adolescents, because of parental concerns about helping adolescents acquire the social competencies needed to thrive in society. In comparison to conflicts over social conventions, moral issues (such as disputes with siblings) are less common among European American parents and adolescents. In addition, parents and adolescents have disputes over: (3) personal issues (preferences and choices pertaining to privacy, control over one's body, styles, activities, and friends); (4) prudential issues (pertaining to harm to the self, safety, comfort, and health) and (5) multifaceted issues (issues containing both conventional and personal components, such as the child's room, which can be seen as either the child's personal territory or part of the household). Conflicts over prudential issues tend to be the least common. For example,

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parents may have disputes with adolescents over going to bed late because they would be tired the next day. They also express concern about their health in relation to activities, viewing some activities as harmful. Parents also typically frame prudential issues in terms of their concerns about a lack of supervision and about knowing where their adolescents are. Parents also engage in disputes over pragmatic issues which focus on practical needs and consequences such as the need to do well academically.

Conflict arises when adolescents and parents define issues of disagreement very differently (Smetana, 1995; Smetana et al., 2004) especially in terms of whether the issues are defined as personal by the adolescents. Parents treat some issues (such as when the adolescent's bedroom should be cleaned, whether the adolescent should get a tattoo or get his or her body pierced, whether the adolescent should see undesirable friends, or when the adolescent should date) as social-conventional (or prudential), whereas adolescents treat them as personal (Smetana, 1989). For example, a girl may choose to wear a short dress to school because she perceives it as a personal choice. However, a mother may impose restrictions on this because she perceives that it violates social conventions.

Parents do understand and believe that it is important for their adolescent to have autonomous choices in order to develop independence, adolescents, for the most part, give themselves more personal autonomy than their parents are willing to permit. For example, in longitudinal study, Smetana et al. (2003) examined the changes that occur in the beliefs in the legitimacy of the parent's authority in a sample of African American adolescents and their parents regarding moral, conventional, prudential, multifaceted, and personal issues. The first wave of data was collected when the adolescents were around 13 years of age. The second

wave was two years later at around 15 years old. Finally, the third wave was three years after

the second wave when adolescents were about 18 years old. Adolescents and parents judged

the legitimacy of parental authority ("*Is it OK or not OK for parents to make a rule*?")

regarding twenty-four hypothetical moral (e.g., hitting siblings), conventional (e.g., not doing

assigned chores), prudential (e.g., smoking), multifaceted (e.g., staying over a friend's

house), and personal issues (e.g., choosing own clothes or hair styles). Results showed that

the adolescents and their mothers strongly affirmed parental authority on moral,

conventional, and prudential issues, and there was no change over time. In addition, the

mothers continued to view themselves as having more legitimate authority over the above

issues much more than their adolescents did. Nonetheless, the adolescents would object to

their parents having authority to have a say in their personal issues. Additionally, their

judgements did not change significantly over time. Therefore, parents and adolescents engage

in conflict due to the meaning that they ascribe to their disputes in that adolescents may

perceive certain behaviors as areas of autonomy whereas parents view them as areas that they

should have control over.

Parents from different cultures may have different expectations when behavioral

autonomy should be granted and in what areas. The literature on parent-adolescent age-

expectations for autonomy-granting has focused primarily on middle-class European

American families and African American families with little information on Latino families.

One study suggests that Latina early adolescents perceive that they should be granted more

autonomy over social activities when they reach mid-adolescence. Romo, Mireles-Rios, and

Lopez-Tello (2013) interviewed 20 Mexican immigrant mothers and their daughters, ages 13

and 14 years, to understand their perspectives on how much autonomy should be granted to

the girls when they reached the age of *La Quinceañera*, an event that symbolizes the coming

of age at 15 years. A sample question was "*Do you think the rules will change at home once*

she/you turn 15? If so, what rules will change?" The researchers found that the daughters

hoped that their mothers' rules over how much time they spend with their friends would

become less strict but many of the mothers expressed that their daughters' independence in

this area would continue to be monitored. The mothers and daughters seemed to disagree as

to how much personal freedom the girls should have. Findings from this study suggest that

many Latina girls hope that their mothers' strict rules about their social activities can be

negotiated in mid-adolescence.

A similar conclusion can be derived from a related study conducted by Bámaca-

Colbert, Umaña-Taylor, Espinosa-Hernandez and Brown (2012a). The researchers examined

discrepancies in behavioral autonomy age-expectations between Mexican-origin mothers and

their adolescent daughters who were in 7th and 10th grade. The girls were asked to indicate at

what age they should be able to engage in various behaviors, for example "*at what age do*

you think you should...go out on dates." The mothers completed the same measure with the

questions worded in such a way that tapped into their personal viewpoints about appropriates

ages. The options were: (1) *before age 12*, (2) *between 12 and 14*, (3) *between 15 and 17*,

(4) *18 years or older*, and (5) *never*, with greater scores indicating later behavioral autonomy

age-expectations. The researchers found that the mothers reported significantly later ages for

age-expectations than did the girls. Moreover, the gap between the age expectations was

larger for Mexico-born mothers and their daughters compared to US-born Mexican mothers

and their daughters, suggesting an acculturation effect. Findings from this study support the

notion that Latina adolescents, much like mainstream American adolescents, yearn for

greater autonomy than what their mothers are willing to grant.

One question that arises is whether discrepancies in autonomy age-expectations

contribute to conflict between Latina youth and their mothers. Bámaca-Colbert, Umaña-

Taylor, and Gayles (2012b) conducted another study with mothers and adolescents girls from

the same backgrounds and ages. The same survey utilized in the Bámaca-Colbert et al.,

(2012a) study to measure behavioral autonomy age-expectations was used in this study. In

addition, the participants were asked to rate on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *never*, 5 = *most of*

the time) how often they had disagreements and conflicts with their mothers about various

issues (e.g., chores, schoolwork, curfew, dating, and family obligations). The researchers

found that, among early adolescents, expectation discrepancy scores were positively

associated with mother-daughter conflict, but not so for middle adolescents. This finding

suggests that, like European American and African American families, differing expectations

of when behavioral autonomy should be granted can contribute to conflict in Latino parent-

adolescent relationships, at least in early adolescence.

The developmental trajectory of parent-adolescent conflict

   Conflict frequency and intensity. As mentioned, for many families, parent-

adolescent conflict increases as children move into adolescence. The rise in conflict from late

childhood to early adolescence as a normative developmental trend is supported by several

studies. For example, McGue, Elkins, Walden, and Iacono (2005) had 1,200 Caucasian twins

complete a parent–child relationship questionnaire at two points in time: first, when the

adolescent was approximately 11-years-old and 3 years later, when the child was approximately 14-years-old. The participants completed a scale consisting of items that assessed the extent to which the parent–child relationship is characterized by disagreement, tension, and anger. A sample item included "*My parent often criticizes me.*" The researchers found that compared to their ratings when they were age 11, the now 14-year-old adolescents perceived greater parent–child conflict, suggesting that conflict frequency increases from late childhood to early adolescence.

Research suggests that it is normative for conflict rates to decline from early adolescence to mid-adolescence. Laursen, Coy, and Collins (1998) conducted a meta-analysis to examine age trends in parent-child conflict across adolescence. The majority of the studies included in the analysis consisted of European American samples. Effect sizes were computed for three different comparison groups: (1) early adolescence to mid-adolescence, (2) mid-adolescence to late adolescence, and (3) early adolescence to late adolescence. Separate analyses were computed for two types of conflict trends: conflict rate and conflict affect. In age meta-analyses, the researchers found that conflict rate declines from early adolescence to mid-adolescence and from mid-adolescence to late adolescence; conflict affect increases from early adolescence to mid-adolescence. In other words, parent-child conflict frequency peaks in early adolescence and then declines over time. However, conflict intensity *increases* from early adolescence to mid-adolescence which then declines by late adolescence. Early adolescence is time period in which conflict between parents and adolescents is more frequent, but the emotional intensity of conflicts is highest in mid-adolescence.

Kim, Conger, Lorenz, and Elder (2001) obtained a similar pattern in terms of the rise of negative affect from early adolescence to mid-adolescence. Parents and their adolescents (from 7th to 12th grade) participated in structured interaction tasks that were videotaped. The tasks were designed to elicit variations in family interactions. The participants were asked to discuss topics such as whether the adolescents perceived that their parents' rules were fair and which issues caused the greatest conflict within family members. The videotapes were later coded for expressions of negative interaction such as anger, defiance, and insensitivity. Adolescents were coded separately from their parents. The researchers found that on average, negative affect increased over time, although it demonstrated a slight decline by late adolescence. More specifically, the mean scores associated with the adolescents' expressions peaked at 10th grade and decreased by 12th grade. The expression of negative affect may decline as parents grant their adolescents more autonomy during the late high school years.

Taken together, these studies suggest that in European American families, normative parent-adolescent conflict is characterized by an increase in conflict frequency in early adolescence, an increase in negative affect in mid-adolescence, and a drop in conflict frequency and affect by late adolescence. Conflict declines by late adolescence perhaps because parents have become more supportive of their adolescents' bids for independence and because many of these issues have been resolved through negotiation. However, it is unclear whether these conflict trends are representative of families from ethnic minority backgrounds. In a longitudinal study conducted by Smetana et al. (2003), the researchers examined developmental changes in mother-adolescent conflict in African American families. A sample of 85 African American families with middle adolescents (M = 15.5 years)

reported on their conflict frequency (scale from "not often" to "very often"), intensity (scale from "calm" to "angry"), and number of topics. The participants had been tested on the same measures when the daughters were about 13 years of age. In contrast to the results of Laursen et al.'s (1998) meta-analysis, which found that the rate of conflict declined from early to middle adolescence, they found that both ratings of conflict frequency and the number of conflicts endorsed did not change significantly from early to middle adolescence, although they did find a trend suggesting that conflict intensity increased. The extent to which Latino parents and adolescents follow the same developmental patterns described by Laursen et al., (1998) is largely unknown.

Areas of contention. Research suggests parents and adolescents typically do not argue over "big issues," but what they fight about are everyday things like curfews, clothing, and chores. The topics they argue about tend to be trivial. They pertain to personal choices and decisions on how the adolescents use their time. Conflicts over religious or social issues occur less frequently (Steinberg, 1990), as do conflicts concerning other potentially sensitive topics such as substance use, drugs, and sexual relationships. Adolescents and parents generally affirm parents' legitimate authority to regulate prudential issues (Smetana and Asquith, 1994).

For example, Renk, Liljequist, Simpson, and Phares (2005) examined differences in the topics of parent-adolescent conflict in male and female adolescents, across the different stages of adolescence (i.e., early, middle, and late adolescence). One hundred fifty mother-father-adolescent triads from mostly European American families participated. The adolescents completed a questionnaire in which they listed issues that they and their mothers

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and fathers disagreed upon most frequently. The three most commonly reported topics among the daughters were household rules, separation-individuation (i.e., ways in which adolescents attempt to differentiate themselves from their parents; examples: clothes, music, appearance), and peer groups. The daughters also mentioned that independence was an area of conflict with their mothers. For daughters and sons, values were the least commonly discussed topic with mothers and fathers. These findings suggest that mundane topics are the most common issues adolescents and parents disagree on and there is very little conflict over more serious issues like values (Smetana, 1995).

Similar findings were obtained by Galambos and Almeida (1992) among a sample of 6th to 8th graders and their parents in regard to topics they typically disagree about. Doing household chores was the most frequent topic reported by the adolescents and their mothers and fathers. The least frequent topic area of conflict was substance use. Similarly, Riesch et al. (2000) found that the most common topics reported by European American 7th and 8th grade adolescents were cleaning up their bedroom, helping out around the house, fighting with siblings, putting clothes away, and doing homework. Smoking, and drinking beer or liquor, and drugs ranked last. This study supports the idea that parents and adolescents have disputes over day-to-day issues, and not about more serious issues related to values, with the most frequent topic being household responsibilities.

Work by Allison and Schultz (2004) further supports this trend. The researchers gave a group of 6th to 8th graders from mostly European American backgrounds a checklist listing potential areas of conflict and asked them to indicate whether they and their parents had talked about these issues in the past month. For each identified issue, they were asked to

report on the frequency and the intensity of the conflict. The most frequent areas of conflict were household chores, care of room, and homework and school performance. The area of least conflict was substance use. There were also gender group differences. Parent-daughter conflict occurred more frequently than parent-son conflict over household chores, personal appearance, personal autonomy and bothersome behavior (e.g., fighting with siblings). Moreover, parent-daughter conflict was more intense than parent-son conflict on issues related to household chores, care of room, personal appearance, and personal autonomy, supporting the literature that girls have a more contentious relationship with their parents (at least with their mothers). Interestingly, conflicts in the moral domain (e.g., lying, cursing) were reported less frequently but were reported as more intense, while issues over household chores, room care, inconsiderate behavior, and television viewing were reported to happen more often but were less intense. These findings suggest that conflicts over independence may be more heated (although less frequent), and day-to-day issues such as household responsibilities may carry less emotional intensity.

The study by Renk et al. (2005) suggests that there are developmental trends associated with the emergence of different topics. Compared to middle or late adolescents, early adolescents report more conflict frequency with their mothers over household rules and responsibilities. Young adolescents may protest their mothers' expectations that they participate in more household tasks because of the change of responsibilities from late childhood. Not surprisingly, both early and middle adolescents engage in more conflict with parents regarding individuation in the personal domain (e.g., clothes, music, appearance) compared to late adolescents. In addition, middle adolescents report that they engage in

conflict over peer group issues with their mothers more frequently than the late adolescents

do, perhaps because at older ages parents relinquish control over their adolescents' friendship

choices.

According to the literature, topics of disagreement tend to be similar across ethnic

groups. There were two separate studies, one of which was conducted with lower-middle-

class African American mothers and their daughters in 7th and 8th grade (Cauce et al., 1996).

The second study, was done with middle-class African American families (mothers, fathers

and daughter or son in early adolescence) (Smetana & Gaines, 1999). Both of these studies

found that everyday issues are the most prevalent type of conflict among the sample of

African American adolescents and their parents. These mundane issues included, cleaning up

their bedroom, helping with chores around the house, and fighting with siblings. These topics

are similarly found in European American families (Montemayor, 1986; Smetana, 1989).

Similarly, among a sample of African American mothers with middle adolescents Smetana et

al. (2003) found through a content analysis of interviews that the most intense conflicts were

about chores (19%), followed by interpersonal relations (15%), the adolescent's room (13%),

schoolwork and academic achievement (13%), choice of activities (10%), and use of the

telephone, TV, and music (9%). As with European American families, conflict occurs over

the mundane, everyday details of family life.

Barber (1994) found similar findings for Latino families in terms of conflict content.

He analyzed a sample of 1,828 European American, African American, and Latino families

utilizing data from the 1988 National Survey of Families and Households. Parents with a

child between the ages of 12 and 18 years had been interviewed. The parents reported the

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frequency of conflict with adolescents on 10 issues during the past year: helping around the house, family relations, school, dress, money, how late child stays out, friends, boyfriend/ girlfriends, substance use, and sexual behavior. Barber (1994) found that conflict over helping around the house was the most frequent topic for each group, and conflict about family relations, school, dress, and money were listed in decreasing order of importance. Around 90% of European American, African American, and Latino parents reported never having an open disagreement with their adolescent over sexual behavior or substance use during the past year.

Another study supports the notion that Latino parents and their adolescents have disagreements over topics that are similar to parents and adolescents from other cultures. Roblyer, Bámaca-Colbert, and Cervantes (2015) analyzed focus group data from adults who had immigrated from Latin America. The participants had been recruited from local community-based organizations in California and Massachusetts. A number of questions were presented to the groups and follow-up probe questions were included as well. A sample question was, "*What are the three main reasons why you and your child/ren argue or disagree*?". The researchers analyzed the transcripts to identify themes that emerged in the discussion: daily activities (media use, school arrival punctuality, homework, chores, and tidiness of their bedroom), apparel (clothing inappropriate), materialism (desire to own expensive clothing), dating and sexuality (when to and whom to date and permissiveness of sexuality), friendships (peer influences and time spent with friends), and education (discrepancies in the aspirations of their children's education and their choices of selecting a

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job over education). These findings suggest that Latino parents have similar socialization goal as parents from other ethnic groups .

Potential sources of conflict between Latino adolescents and their parents

The literature suggests that ethnic minority parents tend to engage in less autonomy-granting than European American parents. For example, Bulcroft et al., (1996) conducted a study with 1,729 parents of adolescents between 12 and 18 years of age from various ethnic backgrounds. The parents were asked a series of questions tapping into the ages and in what areas the parents were willing to grant their adolescents more independence. The researchers found that Latino parents who had a daughter were less willing to leave her at home unsupervised, regardless of age, than did European American parents. Additionally, Latino parents were more inclined to have earlier curfews for both their daughters and sons when compared to European American families. These and related findings have led researchers to conclude that controlling parenting styles are more common in Latino families, in that they exhibit more control over their adolescents' activities.

A growing question of interest is whether adolescent girls from Latino families express their objections to the strict rules parents impose which limit their social freedom (Ayala, 2006; Gallegos-Castillo, 2006) as is typical in families from mainstream American backgrounds. In a retrospective study conducted with Latina college students, Raffaelli and Ontai (2004) found that women reported that they had a lack of freedom at home in terms of when they could leave the house and where they could go. Raffaelli and Ontai (2001) found that Latina women reported that in adolescence there were strict rules about when they could start dating and have male friends. Additionaly, parents of Latina adolescents value having

close supervision of their daughters and in limiting their social activities more than with their sons (e.g., McKee & Karasz, 2006; Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004). McHale, Updegraff, Crouter, and Killoren (2005) found that Latina adolescents had comparatively less privileges, like being able to assist to parties or go to their friend's house, than their younger brothers. Restrictions on out-of-home activities may be a source conflict but it is unclear to what extent Latina girls protest these strict rules.

Another potential source of conflict is that girls are often given greater household responsibilities than their brothers. Ayala (2006) conducted a qualitative study and found that the participating Latina adolescents reported how communication with mothers were centered around household responsibilities such as cleaning, taking care of the family, and learning to cook. In some households, boys enjoy privileges not granted to their sisters in the home. For example, daughters are expected to help around the house more so than sons (Bulcroft et al.,1996; McHale et al., 2005; Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004). However, it is not clear whether girls would engage in these disputes over these issues given that family connectedness among immigrant Latino families is strongly tied to the obligation of aiding the family (Hardway & Fuligni, 2006). Therefore, values of familismo, respeto, and educación may all play a role in how Latina girls respond to their parents' rules, expectations, and restrictions.

The present study

The goal of this study was to gain a better understanding of normative conflict trends in Mexican-origin mother-daughter relationships. To date, there is little specificity regarding the content of actual disagreements that transpire between them. The current study was

designed to extend previous literature by videotaping mothers and daughters having one-on-one discussions on areas of disagreement about and later coding the videotaped conversations. The literature on parent-adolescent conflict trends has relied heavily on survey data. Although survey research has its benefits in its ability to tap into the frequency of conflict through global rating systems, this form of data collection misses the richness of parent-adolescent conflict and fails to capture the true dynamics of the interactions. In addition, when reporting on the frequency and the nature of their communication, the participants' perceptions may not be entirely accurate. Mothers and daughters may have different perceptions on how they communicate and what topics they perceive are of mutual concern.

One observational coding system consisted of a content analysis to capture what topics were most prevalent in the conversation as a measure of topic importance. The second coding system measured the intensity of the discussions through a rating coding system that captured how opinionated the daughters were during conflict episodes. The sample consisted of two groups: early adolescents (ages 13 to 14) and mid-adolescents (ages 15 to 16) to examine developmental trends.

The following research questions were addressed:

(1) What types of topics did the mothers raise in the conversations?

(2) Which topics were more or less important in the conversations as measured by the percentages of mother-daughter dyads discussing particular topics?

(3) Were there age group differences in which topics were classified as more or less important?

(4) For each topic, were there age group differences in how assertive or opinionated

the girls were during the conflict episodes?

III. METHOD

Participants

Mothers and their adolescent daughters from Mexican backgrounds were recruited through flyers distributed throughout the community and information tables set up at a local youth-based organization, schools and school parent meetings to attend a mother-daughter communication program about sensitive topics surrounding sexuality and HIV transmission. As part of their participation, they took part in an initial research session where they were videotaped conversing with one another about dating and sexuality and things they disagreed about. Only the observational data collected on conversations about disagreements were analyzed in this study.

The participants were 130 mothers and their daughters. The daughters were between the ages of 13 and 16 years of age ($M = 14.3$, $SD = .1.2$). About 27% of the daughters were in the 8th grade, 27.5% in 9th, 18.1% in 10th, and the remainder in 11th grade. The majority of the girls were born in the United States (77%). A little more than half of the girls (54%) reported they had a preference for speaking in both English and Spanish and only 25% reported a preference for English only.

The mothers' ages ranged between 28 and 62 years of age ($M = 38.8$, $SD = 6.8$). All mothers were born in Mexico or were first generation born Mexican American. For the mothers, the language spoken at home was reported to be mostly Spanish (65%), and another 26% indicated that they spoke both English and Spanish. The mothers' completed years of education was a mean of 9.6 years ($SD = 3.9$). Only 28% had completed high school or beyond. About half of the mothers reported they were single or had never been married, 21%

were married or living together with a partner, and the remainder were divorced, separated, or widowed. The self-reported income was between the range of $15,000 – $30,000 per year. Eighty-nine percent of the mothers reported their families were of Catholic religion.

Procedure

The data collection was conducted at a university laboratory and at a local non-profit organization, depending on convenience for the participants. An observational task was conducted first. The mother–daughter dyad was taken to a private room with a videocamera present. All dyads first participated in a warm-up activity without the researcher present in which they were asked to talk for three minutes about characteristics of an "ideal vacation." The researcher then returned to the room and said, "For the next 7 minutes, I would like for you to talk about things you disagree about." The mothers and daughters were asked if they had any questions which the experimenter addressed before leaving the room. No instructions were given about what topics to address. Additionally, the topics of conversation were counterbalanced in order to control for the effects of order. (Gravetter & Forzano, 2015). The conversation took place without the experimenter present and was videotaped. The same procedure was repeated for the dating and sexuality conversation task, but only the conflict conversation was analyzed in this study. After the conversations, the mother and daughter were separated to fill out questionnaires in their preferred language. The dyads were paid $40 for their participation.

Questionnaire Measures

Demographic. The daughters were asked to complete a questionnaire asking questions about their age, place of birth, birth order, preferred spoken language, current

school grade, and religious background. The mothers were asked questions about their age, place of birth, preferred language, religious background, marital status, years of education, and income (measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from $5,000 to over $60,000 per year).

Observational measures

An advanced software program, The Observer (Noldus Information Technology, XT 11.0) for observational analysis was utilized to analyze the conversations. Two coding systems were devised.

Conversation content coding system: A content analysis was applied to record the types of topics that emerged in the conversations (Auer-Srnka & Koeszegi, 2007; Krippendorf, 2013). I first developed a category scheme based on findings in the literature related to major topics of disagreement between mothers and daughters (Allison and Schultz, 2004; Barber, 1994; Galambos and Almeida, 1992 ; Renk et al., 2005; Romo et al., 2013; Smetana, 1995). I applied the category scheme to 20 videotapes. In doing so, I also identified new categories as they emerged in the discussion using an inductive procedure.

Table 1 lists the coding categories along with brief definitions. Only topics that were discussed by at least 20% of the dyads are included. Topic pertaining to money, family time, boyfriends, sexuality, substance use, and religious values were not analyzed due to their low prevalence.

Table 1: Definitions of topics of disagreement listed in alphabetical order

Topic	Examples of conflict issues
Appearance	Type of clothing, makeup, hair styling, piercings, and tattoos
Friend/peer relationships	Concerns about friend choices, concerns about friends who may have negative influence related to drug/alcohol use
Health-related habits	Poor sleeping habits and unhealthy eating
Household responsibilities	Expectations for chores, cooking, and caretaking of siblings
Media use	Time spent on computers, cell phones, TV, social media, and MP3 player
Disobedience/ disrespect	Inappropriate behavior; noncompliance with rules; disrespect; lack of manners
Outside-of-home activities	Liberty to go out; independence
Privacy/separation	Need for privacy, space, and alone time
School issues	School work, grades, attending classes
Sibling relationships	Sibling conflict, exclusion of siblings from activities, and differential treatment of siblings

Assertiveness ratings: Another coding system was created to capture how assertive the daughters were in expressing their opinions in the conversations. Each time a topic was identified in the content analysis, the beginning and end times of the discussion were marked to create conversations "episodes." For example, a mother might say, *"I don't like how you do not help me clean the house."* This statement and any further discussion ensuing from this statement was recorded. The duration of time was considered a conflict episode. A research assistant later reviewed the episodes and applied a rating scale to capture how assertive the adolescents were in their interactions with their mothers. Assertiveness was defined as the extent to which the adolescent expressed her point of view in response to her mothers' comments, defended her position on various matters, and raised matters of her own. Each episode was assigned a rating ranging from 0 - 3 (0 = *not at all assertive*, 1 = *somewhat assertive*, 2 = *assertive*, 3 = *very assertive*).

To establish reliability of the rating scale, a research assistant and I initially trained together on 20% of the videos. After the training was completed, another 10% of the videos were coded separately for reliability. Intraclass correlations were performed in order to establish how reliable we were in our independent ratings. On our first attempt, the intraclass correlation was below .70 which required us to meet again to resolve discrepancies and refine our understanding of the definition of each point on the Likert scale. Another 10% of the videotapes were coded separately for reliability and we established agreement. The intraclass correlation for the assertiveness rating scale was .83. The research assistant independently coded the remaining videotapes on her own.

IV. RESULTS

Transcribed excerpts from the videotaped conversations

The percentage of dyads discussing various topics was computed. Transcribed excerpts from the videotaped conversations are provided in the next section to illustrate examples of the conflict episodes. All excerpts have been translated from Spanish to English. (M = mother, D = daughter, age).

Household responsibilities. The mothers communicated their expectations for the girls to be mindful about household responsibilities. This was the most prevalent topic discussed by 85% of the dyads. Many of the mothers communicated their desire that the girls take more responsibility in completing assigned household chores, particularly in relation to cleaning their bedrooms. Some girls expressed frustration about having to do more than what they considered to be their fair share. For example, two mother-daughter dyads stated:

(*Ana, age 13*)
M: What we argue most about is that you do not help me with your room.
D: But I clean the kitchen. I helped you clean the kitchen the other day.
M: But I'm only (looking at) the room, why don't you like cleaning your room?
D: [interrupts mom] I didn't make the mess! If I don't make the mess, I won't clean it. M: Oh, then I shouldn't clean the house at all?
D: I didn't make the mess in the house, so I won't clean it either.

(*Rebeca, age 15*)
M: Cleaning... do you disagree with me? You have to participate. Both of us, the three of us.
D: I am not going to clean anything on Saturdays because I clean in the morning and then in the afternoon, the house is a disaster. Also on Sundays, there is nowhere to even start. The house is turned upside down. Look, I am going to wake everybody up early and have them get up to clean.

The mothers also discussed the importance of their daughters participating in food preparation, especially because of the need for their daughters to learn to cook. This is consistent with the value that mothers place on teaching their daughters homemaking ways so they can successfully run their households someday (Vargas-Benítez, n.d.) For example, one mother-daughter dyad stated:

> *(Elsa, 15)*
> M: You have to learn how to cook.
> D: I know how to cook. I know how to make the rice, the beans.
> M: But you don't help me make the food.
> D: You never ask me to (help you).
> M: Well, you have to learn how to cook.

An expected obligation in Latino families for daughters is sibling caretaking (Gándara, 1995, 1999; Valenzuela, 1999). Latina daughters are often socialized into a caretaker role within their families. The topic of caretaking emerged as area of contention in that the mothers expressed to their daughters to importance of them being more proactive in taking care of their siblings. Some of the girls responded with complaints of how caretaking interfered with time they needed for themselves. For example, one mother-daughter dyad discussed:

> *(Mariana, 14)*
> D: That she (sister) asks for help with her homework because I have homework too. Then
>   I get in trouble because I don't finish my homework because I'm helping my sister.
> M: At school?
> D: No, at home.
> M: Yes, you can make time to tell your sister. You can be there at the table doing your homework and helping her too by telling her, "hey, do this". That way, when she asks you for help you can help her. You can do both things. Just explain to her how to do things.

Sibling Relationships. Another prevalent topic that emerged from the conversations was getting along with siblings. Some mothers communicated their concerns about their daughters engaging in physical altercations with their siblings, largely because they could not control their temper. Another mother discussed how engaging in physical altercations was gender inappropriate and was concerned that her daughter would get hurt. They stated:

> (*Lydia, age 13*)
> M: I don't agree with you just hitting Janet.
> D: Well, she has a hard mouth.
> M: But she has to count to ten.
> D: Sometimes if you get mad you get mad and that is how I am.
> M: Your dad has told you to change. You get mad at everything and if you don't like something then you cry, then you hit. You need to change your way of being. I don't even know what to do anymore. You are impulsive.

> (*Angela, age 14*)
> D: And when I and Norman are fighting, you think that we are going to kill each other-- no, no we are just playing.
> M: It is not good for you two to be behaving in that way because he is bigger. He is bigger than you and you are also a woman. That is not good.

The mothers were also concerned about the extent to which the girls ignored their siblings or excluded them from activities. One mother and her 14-year-old daughter discussed the following:

> (*Sonia, age 14*)
> M: When you want Eva to take you something, you tell her "I am your favorite sister", "you are my favorite sister" and this and that. But when you can't stand that poor little girl, then no. That is the problem, because only when you need her is when, "I'm your favorite sister," "You are my favorite sister." And when you don't need her and when she needs a bit of attention then she is no longer your favorite sister. And you mean more to her than Andrea.
> D: No, she prefers Andrea.
> M: Eva prefers you more and always does want you want and it is not the same with Andrea. She does not do what Andrea wants to do all the time, but with you she does.
> M: That's why you have to pay attention and give her attention.

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Gender composition of one's siblings is one of the earliest social contexts in which interaction is embedded. Some girls voiced their frustrations about possible differential treatment of children by gender. For example, Laura (13) expressed her dismay at her brother receiving more money than she did from her father:

(*Laura, 13*)
D: Another thing that dad does not care about and gets mad about it is when we ask him why he gives more money to my brother. Seriously, man. With that money I can get something pretty.
M: It's his house. I don't know. It's his thing.

Media use. Given how common cell phones and music devices are in the lives of adolescents nowadays, it is not surprising that media use emerged as a major topic of disagreement, discussed by 44% of the dyads. Themes included the amount of time the girls spent on social media. For example, two dyads discussed:

(*Linda, age 13*):
M: I don't agree with you using text. I don't understand the point of having a phone to call and be texting. I know that you like it, and that you would love doing it, but I do not agree. Also, I do not agree that when you see the messages come in and you open them. I know you do, your dad told me you opened one, when Daisy sent you one.
D: Daisy? Daisy did not send me a text!
M: He [your father] told me.
D: Daisy sent me voicemail.
M: Oh, that is different then. But I know that you like it [texting] and I don't agree that. And also that you chat on the computer.

(*Irene, age 15*)
M: Why is it that you are always texting on the cell phone?
D: Well, I am going to do it, if they send me a message I am going to respond.
M: No, you can say that you are busy.
D: Doing what?
M: Doing any other thing like reading or studying…And not be on the computer so much and that is way too much.

Some mothers expressed concern that media use affected their daughters' sleep habits or interfered with them meeting their responsibilities such as completing homework and doing chores. For example:

> (*Cristina, age 13*):
> M: Aracely sometimes is watching the TV and it is midnight or something. And she does not go to sleep
> D: The other day we did homework.
> M: And why do you guys have the TV on? When one is doing homework, one is not watching the TV, how can you concentrate? You cannot concentrate watching TV and doing homework.

Disobedience/disrespect. In the Latino culture, there is a high expectation for obedience placed on daughters (Vargas-Benitez, 2016). A little over one-third of the mothers brought to their daughters' attention that they do not comply with their rules. A common issue that surfaced in the conversations was the mothers' concerns that their daughters were engaging in deceptive behaviors to spend more time with their friends. For example, three dyads stated:

> (*Angela, age 13*):
> M: For me, what I do not like is that when you get out of school, you go with your friends without letting me know.
> D: (laughs with eyes looking downward)
> M: No. There have been several times that you did not let me know.
> D: When?
> M: You let me know when you are already with your friends. You have to let me know ahead of time so that I can tell you if it is okay or not.

> (*Cynthia, age 14*):
> M: I disagree about you arriving late.
> D: Oh my God! [rolls eyes]
> M: Look Sweetie. You get out at 2:45 in the afternoon and come home very late.
> D: I don't know. I stay to talk to different people and then the bus. Like today, I stayed to talk to Diego and then Lindsey was talking to another boy, and then I

had to go get my binder, and it was upstairs and then I got it. The bus was going
to come but Lindsay didn't want me to go by myself, and I said okay but I have
to go get my book. And then we were waiting for the bus but it didn't come. We
were there for about 15 minutes and so I told her let's walk and so we went
walking.

M: In any case, Cynthia, you come out of school at 2:45 and why don't you come
quickly.

D: I don't know [laughs]…because I stay for the gossip.

(*Liliana, age 16*)

M: First of all, I am not in agreement with the fact that sometimes you come home
so late from school. You spend some time over there and then you say you
haven't.

D: Well, yes I go to the store or something, but only for Cheetos.

M: You know that the rule is for you go from school to home. It is different if one is
worried about not getting here and one is looking and looking at the clock. One
worries.

Latina mothers also value respect from their daughters (Dixon et al., 2008). In addition, they
consider it to be necessary that their daughters, it is important that they display proper
demeanor or are "buen educada" (well-educated in respectful manners) which encompasses
an understanding of courtesy (Harwood, Miller, and Irizarry, 1995). Not surprisingly then,
the mothers discussed their disapproval about their daughters violating rules of respectful
interaction such as answering back, using inappropriate language, or engaging in rude
behavior towards them or other family members.

For example:

(*Aida, age 13*):

M: I have asked you to please watch your attitude and your language in the house.

D: Well, I can't change it.

M: Yes, you can. In things you never say "I can't."

D: Well all I hear is how am I supposed to change.

M: If for example, you go to a house and you overhear someone using that language
and there are girls there, what do you think the girls think in that moment?

(*Ines, age 16*):

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M: I have told you many times to change your attitude. Sometimes I feel that everything is fine for a little while but then you start. It rubs me the wrong way that you slam doors.

Friend/peer relationships. Latino parents may impose greater restrictions on time with friends to protect their daughters from negative peer influences. Latino immigrant parents report how they perceive their daughters to be more vulnerable and at higher risk for peer influences compared to boys (Azmitia & Brown, 2002). Thus, in many instances, the mothers and daughters engaged in conflict over their daughters' choice of friends.

(*Anita, age 16*):
M: You cannot have friends that drink
D: I know but…
M: [interrupts] I disagree because you are young, you are at a young age. Drinking is bad. I disagree with you because you have always been with the same girls. [shakes head]
D: No
M: I am not in agreement about drinking, and you don't let me see who you are with. Who are your Friends?
D: I don't want you to see them because you say that you don't like them.
M: If they behave badly, then I am not going to like them. If they behave well, then I am in agreement.

(*Selena, age 15*)

M: There is a friend of yours that I do not like. I have told you that I do not like you hanging around with her. Because when you talk to her, you change your way of being. You treat me badly.
D: That is not true.
M: I have told you that when you are not with her, you are a good girl. I have always told you that I don't like you to hang around her.
D: But she is my friend.
M: It doesn't matter because if she were your friend she would say 'you know, your mom is calling, obey her."
D: It is true that she tells me, 'your mom is calling you' and I'm like 'alright, I am going in a bit." But I am the one choosing not to go. She does not choose for me. I am making my own decisions for myself.
M: You are not an adult to make your own decisions. You are a minor.

D: But it is my life.
M: Yes.
D: I know that but she is also my friend.
M: Yes, but who comes first?
D: You but she is second.
M: It doesn't have to be that way.

Out of protectiveness, it hard for immigrant parents to wrap their head around the idea of

having their daughter sleep away from home (Juri, 2008; Romo et al., 2013). These

concerns stem from not knowing whether the families of their daughters' friends share the

same rules and values as their own. For example, one mother-daughter dyad stated:

(*Alicia, age 16*):
D: That you don't let me go sleep over my friends' houses. That is something that
    we do not agree upon. Why do you let them stay over here but you don't let me
    stay over there?
M: Because here I can watch out over you.
D: And you believe that the mother over there cannot watch out for us?
M: There are many mothers that don't. In other words, they let them do what they
    want and that's it. To feel reassured, I want to be with you.

Out-of-home activities. Over one-third of the mother-dyads engaged in conflict over

the daughters' desires to have more freedom to go out. For example, one mother-daughter

dyad felt that this issue should be up to the parents to decide.

(*Marina, age 15*):
M: You as an adolescent want to have your freedom to do what you want to and you
    are not old enough. We have to see what are your rights and what are going to be
    restrictions. It is not always going to be "yes." You have seen your father and
    sometimes he says, "'there's no argument.'. And sometimes he says, 'I don't
    want you to go out. I want you to be here.' It is not because he wants to keep you
    here. It's because sometimes you should not be out at that hour of the night. You
    have to do things right. When your father says 'no', then okay 'whatever.' Go to
    your room, go listen to your music, look at your computer, read. He is not going
    to always say, "okay, go ahead and go". And all of you have to respect that.

Curfew was a major issue driven by concerns of the mothers over their daughters' safety. For

example:

> (*Erica, 14 yr old*):
> M: I want to tell you that I am not in agreement that you go out into the street at late
> hours in the night. In other words, that you arrive home later. I worry that you
> arrive late, that something can happen. It is something that scares me, something
> I don't like about you.
> D: You worry that I am doing something bad.
> M. I worry that you are doing something bad. What worries me the most is that
> something could happen to you.

Latina mothers report that they would engage in joint decision-making with their daughters

about their out-of-home activities if they trust them (Romo et al., 2013). Daniela's mother

asks her daughter to be open with her and not hide who she is interacting with now that she

has given her more liberty:

> (Daniela, age 16):
> M: I haven't deprived you of going out, at least now I don't. Now I give you more
> freedom. I let you go, I take you, and if you want, I pick up you. Just don't hide.
> If someone wants to be your [male] friend, he will be your friend.
> D: What if someone is just going to give me a ride?
> M: It is not bad as long as I see your friends.
> D: What do you mean?
> M: Let's say that one day they take you and I don't know who it is. I don't find you.
> Who is going to look for you if you don't let me know who went out with? I want
> to take care of you for your well-being.
> D: What if you go leave me somewhere, it's like the same thing.
> M: But I can begin to investigate there.
> D: What if I left in another car?
> M: It can be investigated more easily that way if you tell me. I am not in agreement
> with you having me blindfolded.

Privacy/separation. As part of the process of individuation, adolescents naturally

desire some separation from parents. Many of the girls in this study expressed the need for

privacy, space, and alone time. In the following example, the Leticia's (13) mother denied her

request for more personal space due to family space needs.

(*Leticia, age 13*):
D: Something that I am not in agreement with you is that you take up half of my closet.
M: What? [laughs]
D: No, I'm serious. That room is mine and you have the large bed and I the small bed. And then when grandma comes—Oh my god! It is hard to sleep. I like having it by myself because it didn't have your clothes and towels all over the place. And I had a small bed there set up nicely and I liked how it was arranged and I had space.
M: When my mother comes, we are going both going to sleep there.

Appearance. Twenty-seven percent of the sample discussed the topic of personal

appearance. A theme that emerged under this category was the mothers' desires for their

daughters to dress modestly and to be aware that certain types of clothing styles send strong

messages to others about their values. For example:

(*Paulina, age 13*)
M: Some of the tops you wear, I don't like because they're just way too low cut and now that you have breasts—
D: [interrupts]. Okay, mom! [rolls her eyes]
M: What do you think about that, ..as far as low cut?
D: You wear low cut stuff. Like, look what you are wearing today.
M: Yeah, but I'm covering myself up. But I'm older and it's not that I do it all the time—
D: [Interrupts]: I don't do it all the time either.
M: I know, but you are young and there is a difference. The difference is that I am 48 years old… Anyways, men look, tend to look at-- not all, I don't want to clump all men in a category-- but they tend to be visual and will look at you [signaling at her chest] and say, "oh". They will look at that and they might think that you are older than what you are or you're sexually promiscuous, not that you are.
D: That is not true. Just because you have a V-neck that that is what they are going think. I think you are putting too much emphasis on it and that is ridiculous.
M: Maybe I am and maybe you think it is ridiculous, but I think you should be a little more modest and people will concentrate on you as a person and not on your physical attributes. It concerns me when you do [wear low-cut shirts]

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because sometimes with it comes other stuff that you have to deal with. What are you going to do if a guy says, "hey, baby." What if a guy sees your breasts and is like, "hey, baby, what is your name? How are you?

D: I am old enough to, you know, to know what to do. If it does happen, I am just going to walk away.

(*Sara, age 15*):
M: Those short skirts.
D: What?!
M: Those you put on. Those itty bitty skirts like your grandmother says [both laugh]. Those that you put on and they don't cover anything, look, look.
D: I am wearing shorts underneath like you told me, to put on shorts.
M: No, yes, that is fine. If you sit wrong, you know that you are wearing shorts underneath and nothing is going to show.
D: Then why are you complaining? I have shorts underneath.

In addition, the mothers and daughters discussed how they disagreed with their daughters'

hair style choices or piercings. Some of the mothers were concerned that their daughters'

appearance could attract unwanted attention.

(*Alexis, age 14*).
M: You already know what I don't agree with.
D: Yes, tattoos.
M: Yes, tattoos. And I don't agree with you having piercings here [points to her eyebrows]. Piercings over here [points to her lips]. No, not that. You definitely know that I don't agree with that. I gave you permission to have one here [pointed to her nose]. When you tell me, "mommy, mommy, can I get another one? I already told you no. Right now you are still very young.

Lastly, the mothers and daughters discussed how much or how little makeup the daughters

were allowed to wear, an issue that younger adolescents especially cared about. For example:

(*Patricia, age 13*):
M: He [Your dad] doesn't want you to ruin your nails. He doesn't want you to ruin your face.You know how makeup is.
D: No, I'm not getting pimples because of that.
M: That's why. You know that when you get older you'll be able to do everything you want. Right now you have to listen to us if we say, "no" it means no.

Health-related habits. Another topic of importance was the daughters' personal

habits that potentially interfered with the daughters' health.. Within this topic the mothers

expressed their disapproval over their daughters' personal hygiene and their health

behaviors. For example, the mothers expressed their concerns that their daughters' unhealthy

eating habits could contribute to the onset of diabetes. The mothers also raised their

concerns that their poor sleeping patterns affected their school performance and that in turn

would affect their future. Two mother-daughter dyads discussed:

For example:

(*Beatriz, age 15*)
M: Well that is something that I don't like is that you go to sleep too late. That is
    something your dad too keeps telling you and telling you.
D: That I go to sleep too late?
M: You do not want to go to sleep early and in the morning you do not want to wake
    up and we keep calling you and calling. That is what I don't like. I tell you this
    thing and that and you are not awake.

(*Fatima, age 15*)
M: You have to bathe every day without me having to tell you.
D: Yes, I am bathing every morning.
M: Oh, I know that you do.
D: [Even though] I don't bathe at night, never say that I don't bathe. I take a bath in
    the morning at the time I wake up even though I am still asleep when I wake up.
M: At night you can wash only your body so you can go to sleep fresh.
D: No, that's okay. For me in the morning.

School Issues. Many of the mothers expressed their frustration about their daughters

not completing homework assignments, receiving low grades, skipping class or school

altogether. The mothers made sure to remind their daughters that it was critical for them to be

successful in school because that was the only way to ensure that poverty would be left

behind. Thus, not doing their homework, receiving bad grades, and skipping class/school

ensured that they would not be successful and made the possibility of their daughters having

to work hard laborious jobs more of a possibility. For example, two mother-daughter dyads

discussed:

(Adriana, 14)
M: I disagree that you don't put more effort into school. I know that you are very
    smart. You are very smart and could have much better grades, but it bothers me
    that you do not have that drive and attitude to do the stuff right.
D: [looking down and does not respond]

(Lucy,15)
M: You already know what I disagree about. The same thing as always, that you have
    to study and not go to school to play and skip class.
D: I don't skip class anymore.
M: That is what I want from you.
D: That time at school, did not go to class, but I was at school.
M: What happened?
D: Well, they changed my schedule and put me in this class where the teacher did not
    like me and would always send me outside so I decided not to go. I would go to
    the school's track instead.

Additionally, the daughters' lack of commitment to valued extracurricular activities was also

a source of contention among the dyads.

(Sara, 13)
D: Why do I have to go to violin lessons after school? I don't like it.
M: You don't like it, but you like to play (the violin) and it is something good for you.
D: But I don't like to go.
M: Why?
D: I don't know. It's because it is very boring.
M: It is not boring because you like it.
D: I like it, but [mother interrupts]
M: Everything has a sacrifice. There are responsibilities, could you imagine how the
    world would be if you only did what you wanted to do?
D: Mm-huh, it would be much better.
M: No, it would not. You wouldn't learn anything.

Age differences in topics of importance

Table 2 presents the percentages of mother-daughter dyads discussing particular topics by age group. Topics that were discussed by more than 30% of the dyads were classified as topics of high importance. Topics that were discussed by less than 30% of the dyads were classified as topics of low importance.

For both early adolescents and mid-adolescents, household responsibilities, sibling relationships and media use were topics of high importance as measured by similar percentages of mother-daughter dyads focusing on those areas. Topics of low importance for both age groups were health-related habits and privacy/separation. A topic of high importance for the mid-adolescents, but not for the early adolescents, was out-of-home activities. This was a topic of low importance for the younger adolescents. Topics of high importance for the early adolescents, but not for the older adolescents, were friend/peer relationships, appearance, and school issues. These areas were topics of low importance for the older adolescents.

Table 2: The percentages of mother-daughter dyads discussing various topics by age group.

Early adolescents	%	Mid-adolescents	%
Topics of high importance (>30%)			
Chores	65.8	Chores	64.9
Sibling relationships	43.8	Sibling relationships	38.6
Disobedience/disrespect	34.2	Media use	36.8
Friend/peer relationships	32.9	Out-of-home activities	35.1
Media use	31.5	Media use	
Appearance	30.1		
School issues	30.1		
Topics of low importance (< 30%)			
Health-related habits	23.3	Privacy/separation	28.1
Out-of-home activities	23.3	Health-related habits	26.3
Privacy/separation	21.9	Disobedience/ disrespect	24.6
		School issues	19.3
		Friend/peer relationships	17.5
		Appearance	8.8

Age differences in levels of assertiveness by topic

The extent to which the girls asserted their opinions in the conflict episodes varied by topic and age group. Table 3 presents the means and standard deviations of the assertiveness ratings associated with each topic. Ratings above 2.0 on average (assertive to very assertive) were categorized as high assertiveness. Ratings that averaged between 1.0 to 1.9 (somewhat assertive to assertive) were categorized as moderate assertiveness and ratings below 1.0 on average (not at all assertive to somewhat assertiveness) were categorized as low assertiveness.

A casual observation of the pattern of ratings revealed that both the early adolescents and the mid-adolescents were highly assertive while discussing issues related to sibling relationships. In addition, both groups were moderately assertive while discussing appearance, out-of-home activities, household responsibilities, and school issues. The older girls, but not the younger girls, were highly assertive while discussing media use and friend/ peer relationships. The younger girls instead were moderately assertive. In addition, the younger girls were highly assertive while discussing privacy/separation compared to the older group who was only moderately assertive. The younger adolescents exhibited low levels of assertiveness while discussing health-related habits and disobedience/disrespect with their mothers compared to the older girls who were moderately assertive instead.

Table 3: Mean (SD) ratings of assertiveness associated with discussing various topics by age group.

Early adolescents			Mid-adolescents		
High levels of assertiveness					
Privacy/separation	2.2	(2.18)	Sibling relationships	2.6	(0.86)
Sibling relationships	2.1	(1.25)	Media use	2.1	(0.86)
			Friend/peer relationships	2.0	(1.03)
Moderate levels of assertiveness					
Friend/peer relationships	1.8	(1.32)	Appearance	1.9	(1.25)
Media use	1.8	(1.16)	Health-related habits	1.8	(1.14)
Appearance	1.7	(1.20)	Out-of-home activities	1.8	(0.94)
Out-of-home activities	1.5	(1.29)	School issues	1.6	(1.07)
Household responsibilities	1.5	(1.18)	School issues	1.6	(1.07)
School issues	1.4	(1.23)	Privacy/separation	1.6	(1.10)
			Disobedience/disrespect	1.6	(0.86)
			Household responsibilities	1.5	(1.10)
Low levels of assertiveness					
Disobedience/Disrespect	0.8	(0.89)			
Health-related habits	0.7	(0.89)			

V. DISCUSSION

The present study provides supportive evidence that mothers and adolescent daughters from Mexican backgrounds engage in conflict over issues that touch upon many domains that are similar to mothers from other ethnic groups. Consistent with the literature on European American and African Adolescents, household responsibilities emerged as a highly important topic. This topic by far was the most discussed topic. However, the topic of household responsibilities went beyond discussions about chores such as cleaning one's room. The mothers and daughters also talked about the importance of their daughters being involved in food preparation, perhaps due to gender socialization norms dictating that young women are expected to learn how to manage a household. Also within the topic of household responsibilities, the mothers engaged in disputes about their daughters not fully accepting the responsibility of taking care of their siblings. Interdependence among family members is thought to distinguish Mexican American families (e.g., Cauce & Domenech-Rodríguez, 2002; Marín & Marín, 1991). Often, as part of these values, adolescent girls are expected be "surrogate parents" undertaking nanny or parent-like activities (Valenzuela, 1999). Some mothers in this study expressed their disapproval of their daughters not doing more to fulfill these roles.

Although household responsibilities were the most commonly discussed topics among the dyads, the conflict episodes were not highly contentious as evidenced by the fact that the girls were only moderately assertive. It is possible that Latina girls do not fully protest their mothers' decision-making authority over household responsibilities because they

expect that household chores increase throughout adolescence (Ayala, 2006; McHale et al., 2005; Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004). In a study conducted by Gallegos-Castillos (2006), young Latina women recounted their displeasure with their parents about having to perform household chores. Findings from this study show that Mexican American girls do vent their frustrations, but these discussions are not highly contentious, perhaps because of values placed on meeting family obligations.

An interesting finding that emerged from this study was that the area of unharmonious sibling relationships is a major source of contention among Mexican-origin families. Sibling relationships play a pivotal role among Mexican American families given that Mexican American families tend to have more siblings than do European American families (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). Therefore, conflict associated with sibling relationships might be expected to be more common among Mexican families. Not only was this topic highly prevalent in the conversations, but the conflict episodes were highly contentious, as evidenced by the girls displaying high levels of assertiveness. For many of the mothers, the negative ways in which their daughters interacted with their siblings were clearly moral issues that needed to be addressed, stemming perhaps from values placed on cooperation and sharing with family members. Thus, given the fundamental role these relationships have, the nature of conflict within sibling relationships in Mexican American families and how parents resolve conflict is an uncharted area of research.

Given the emergence and accessibility of electronic devices and social media in recent decades, it is not surprising that the topic of media use was highly prevalent. Most of the studies in the literature conducted on the nature of parent-adolescent conflict have

predated the use of this technology. Therefore, we know little about how parents and adolescents negotiate this issue. The older girls were highly assertive when discussing this issue suggesting that they perceived that the mothers were being intrusive. Perhaps conflict over media use is less intense among mothers and their early adolescent daughters because the girls perceive this matter is within purview of parental authority. The high intensity of conflict between mothers and their older daughters may have stemmed from the girls deeming it a personal matter and from mothers viewing this more as a prudential issue (pertaining to safety, comfort, and health) that could have harmful consequences.

Discussions about out-of-home activities was more prevalent in the conversations of older girls suggesting this topic was highly relevant to their current lives. Latina adolescent girls' desires to participate in normative activities for adolescents in American society may clash with strict behavioral rules set by their parents. Understandably, the girls were assertive in discussions over restrictive policies on their social activities, but only moderately so. In contrast, a highly contentious topic for the mothers and the older girls was choice of friends (although this topic was more predominant among mothers and younger daughters). Many of the mothers discussed their concerns about the character of their daughters' friends. Romo et al. (2013) found that for many Latino mothers, knowing first hand who their daughters friends were was critical in granting their teen daughter more freedom in their social activities, which is consistent with findings from previous studies (Cruz-Santiago & Garcia, 2011; Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2007; Perreira, Chapman, & Stein, 2006). In addition, the mothers also stated strict monitoring of friendships would continue well into adolescence.

This may be due to the high rates of adolescent risk behavior among the neighborhoods that some families are living in (Cruz-Santiago, & Ramirez Garcia, 2011; McKee & Karasz, 2006). It is possible that the mothers who had these discussions with their older daughters were doing so because they had warranted concerns about their daughters' vulnerability to risk behavior.

The topic of appearance seemed to be more relevant to the discussions of mothers and younger daughters compared to older daughters. The mothers were largely concerned about their younger daughters' looking acceptable and respectful. The topic of appearance may be a prudential issue for the mothers because of their concerns that their young adolescent daughters are naïve about the attention that some types of clothing might draw from the opposite sex. Therefore, the mothers may feel that it is their duty as a parent to monitor their choices in clothing, makeup, and hair styles. Mothers grant their daughters more autonomy in decisions related to personal appearance as they grow older (Romo et al., 2013).

Another topic of high importance for the mothers was the need for their early adolescent daughters to put effort into completing their homework and doing well in school. Some studies suggest that in Latino families it is valued for girls to behave in traditional gender roles which also includes discouraging girls from placing higher importance on their education (Driscoll, Biggs, Brindis, & Yankah, 2001; East, 1998). Yet, there is considerable evidence that Latina mothers perceive that education is a pathway to opportunities, and they pass these views on to their children (Ceballo, 2004; Ceja, 2004). Research has shown that Latino children and adolescents are often excused from doing chores or home responsibilities

to complete homework and focus on their studies (Ceballo, 2004; Ong, Phinney, & Dennis, 2006; Romo et al., 2013).

Another topic that was of high importance to the mothers and daughters of younger girls, but less for older girls, was disobedience/disrespect. Many Latino parents set limits on their daughters' independence because of values of *educación* (education) which consists of raising children with good character. Simply put, a girl who is well-behaved or *bien educada* (well educated) is one who goes to school, returns home, and does not hang around in the streets. The mothers were concerned about their daughters engaging in deceptive behavior to get more freedom. Adolescents from immigrant households may be more likely than European American adolescents to conceal information from their parents to have more freedom while out of the home in order to avoid upsetting them. For example, in a study conducted with Hmong American mid-adolescent girls, it was found that adolescent girls reported they had kept secret information about what activities they would partake with their peers due to their beliefs about their parents being unable to comprehend the behaviors of teenagers in America since they did not grow up here (Bakken & Brown, 2010). For these adolescents, withholding information about their activities with their peers was necessary in order to deal with with their parents' overprotectiveness and strictness, which seems to be the case with the adolescent girls in this study. An interesting finding is that the younger girls were quite subdued in these conflict episodes perhaps in acknowledgement that their behavior was inappropriate.

Conflict episodes in which younger daughters were highly assertive included the need for privacy/separation. Research on early adolescents in European American households

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suggest that as early adolescents undergo puberty, they feel a higher need for separation from

parents (Renk et al., 2005). Given limited space issues due to larger families, this may be

area that is difficult for mothers and adolescents to resolve. Conflict intensity may decrease

over time as evidenced by lower levels of assertiveness exhibited by the older daughters.

Limitations

First, this study was part of a larger study that investigated the Latina mother-

daughter relationship and the ways in which they communicated with each other about

sensitive topics. Thus, a limitation to this study was how the data was collected because there

were other videotaped conversation topics the mother-daughter dyads were asked to discuss

(e.g., dating and sexuality and HIV/AIDS) in addition to the videotaped conversation of the

things they disagreed about. The videotaped conversations were counterbalanced in order to

prevent order effects, but we do not know with certainty how much the order of the

conversations affected the nature of the topics discussed in these conflict conversations.

Thus, we may not completely know if the dyads had more disagreements than those

mentioned in the videotaped conversations. For example, the subject of boyfriends and dating

was not found to be a topic of disagreement, which may have been affected by the topics

preceding the conversations or possibly not, but we cannot know with certainty. Therefore,

these results should be generalized carefully.

The assertiveness coding system captured how opinionated the daughters were in

these conversations, but girls could be assertive in both positive and negative ways. I

attempted to code the conversation episodes for negativity, but reliability was difficult to

achieve, and for the most part, the girls demonstrated low levels of negativity. This may be

partly due to the procedure. The girls may have restrained their negative reactions because they were being videotaped. It would be useful in a future study to play the video back to the girls after the procedure and ask them if they experienced negative affect in the episode.

Another limitation of the study is that I did not measure acculturation. Little is known about whether acculturation-based conflict is normative in Latino families. According to Gil and Vega (1996), "high levels of acculturation stress experienced by parents and adolescents led to negative effects on parent/child relations by increasing the level of cultural conflicts in the family" (p. 453). It is not clear to what extent to the acculturation-gap plays a role in the developmental patterns of normative conflict throughout adolescence. For example, in the Roblyer et al., (2015) study, some parents described having disagreements with their adolescents about Spanish language use (disagreement of whether or not to learn to speak Spanish) and the adoption of values of mainstream culture in the U.S. These issues may create conflict because parents are concerned about their children losing their cultural values or become too "Americanized."

Conclusion

Mexican immigrant parents understand that a healthy relationship with their children includes being able to create *confianza* (trust) (Cruz-Santiago & Garcia, 2011). Although this understanding has been demonstrated, a different picture of Latino parents has been portrayed, such as, Latino parents being only authoritarian who make the sole decisions in their adolescent's lives than do their European American counterparts (e.g., Hill, Bush, & Roosa, 2003). The present study shows verbal give-and-take may be more common in

Mexican household than what has been reported in the literature. Mothers also do not shut down their daughters when they express their opinions.

It is important to mention that Latino adolescents report they understand their parents reasoning behind their strict rules on their activities outside-of-the-home because they perceive it as their parents displaying their concern for their safety (Crockett et al., 2007; Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2007; Villarruel, 1998). For example, Bush, Supple, & Lash (2004) found that the Mexican American girls that participated reported higher levels of self-esteem if they perceived their parents to monitor their behavior more and if they believed in the rightful authority of their parents to do this monitoring. However, findings from this study suggest that Latina girls do in fact have conflict parental authority over their social activities, but this is a very normal occurrence with adolescents and their parents from different ethnic backgrounds as well because they may not be in accord regarding when they should have their autonomy granted in different areas of their lives (e.g., Helwig, 2006; Smetana et al., 2003). A better understanding of what conflict topics are normative in Latino parent-adolescent relationships and the intensity of these conflict episodes can shed light on what aspects of the developmental course is similar to, or different from, that of other ethnic groups.

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