"Our Child Is Not Like Us:" Understanding Parent-Child Conflict among U.S. Latino Families

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ABSTRACT. The literature on Latino families in the United States rarely has identified specific topics of parent–child conflict among families headed by parents who are immigrants or the children of immigrants. We used 16 focus groups and thematic analysis to identify seven salient topics of parent–child conflict in these families: activities of daily life, materialism, apparel, dating and sexuality, friendships, education, and use of the Spanish language. Most conflicts had normative characteristics stemming from youth's expanding autonomy; however, parents mostly framed them in terms of cultural discrepancies. Results suggest that in some Latino families, parent–child conflict might be best understood in terms of parallel dual frames of reference, that is, the contrasting cultural frames of reference parents and children use to evaluate one another. Results suggest that family life education programs that foster knowledge of youth development among Latino parents of immigrant background, as well as interventions that help parents and children identify and bridge their dual frames of reference could benefit Latino families experiencing significant parent–child conflict.

Keywords: Latino families, parent–child conflict, acculturation

"Our Child is Not Like Us:" Understanding Parent-Child Conflict Among U.S. Latino Families

Low-to-moderate levels of parent–child conflict are common among North American families (Laursen, Coy, & Collins, 1998), including ethnic minorities (Chung, Flook, & Fuligni, 2009; Fuligni, 2012). Parent–child conflict may result from maturational processes as well as from youth's violations of parental and societal expectations (see review by Laursen & Collins, 2009). Acculturation perspectives on parent–child conflict also suggest that among families headed by parents who are immigrants or the adult children of immigrants (i.e., parents of immigrant background, PIB) the dynamics of cultural adaptation often lead to discrepant dual frames of reference (i.e., parallel dual frames of reference; Qin, 2006) and acculturation gaps (Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993). Some research suggests that such cultural discrepancies might become sources of parent–child conflict (Bámaca–Colbert & Gayles, 2010; Cervantes, Fisher, Córdova, & Napper, 2012; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993). Parent–child conflict is relevant to family science because it shapes parent–child relationships, parenting practices, family dynamics, and developmental outcomes (Prado et al., 2010; Santisteban, Coatsworth, Briones, Kurtines, & Szapocznik, 2012).

In the present study, we sought to delineate salient topics of parent–child conflict among Latino families, as identified by PIB. We focused on Latino PIB because 82% of all adults of immigrant background in the United States are of Latino origin: 47% are foreign-born and 35% are the children of immigrants (Pew Hispanic Center, 2013). Moreover, half of all Latino children in the United States live with at least one foreign-born parent (Fry & Passel, 2009). A better understanding of parent–child conflict among Latino families headed by PIB could inform

the development of life education programs and therapeutic interventions for Latino families, as well as the training of students in the family science and human development disciplines. Many of these future professionals will be providing social and behavioral services for Latinos, the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population (Pew Hispanic Center, 2013).

Theoretical and Empirical Background

Developmental perspectives on parent–child conflict posit that in Western societies, the maturational processes that facilitate the acquisition of abstract and complex reasoning skills and gains in socioemotional development prompt changes in the parent–child relationship (Steinberg & Morris, 2001). These shifts often result in emotional strain, manifested as interpersonal conflict (Laursen & Collins, 2009). Therefore, some degree of parent–child conflict is normative among Western families (Laursen et al., 1998; Montemayor, 1983). Particularly during adolescence, youth may question social conventions and parental rules, and they may strive toward egalitarian relationships with parents (Wilkinson, R. B., 2012; Youniss, 1987). In addition, cognitive and socioemotional development provide a more nuanced understanding of social and moral norms (Smetana, 1983). This understanding expands the number of issues youth might consider as falling within their personal domain and outside the realm of parental authority, which creates opportunities for parent–child conflict (Smetana, 1989).

Aside from maturational processes, parents' expectations about their children's attitudes behaviors may contribute to parent–child conflict (Reis, Collins, & Berscheid, 2000), because parental expectations shape practices such as behavioral monitoring and autonomy-granting (Collins & Russell, 1991; Holmbeck, 1996; Morris, Cui, & Steinberg, 2013). Youth's violations of parental expectations may lead to conflict and eventual realignment of the parent–child relationship. In this realignment process, unrealistic parental expectations may become salient sources of parent–child conflict (Collins & Russell, 1991).

According to the acculturation framework, the expectations of PIB about their children's attitudes and behaviors may result from a *dual frame of reference* or the tendency of immigrants to compare their life in the United States with the life they led in their countries of origin (Suárez-Orozco, 1989). The dual frame of reference of PIB may contrast with the dual frame of reference of their U.S.-reared children, as youth may compare their parents' expectations and behaviors to those exhibited by their peers' parents, or media's depictions of parenthood and family relations. To the degree that both parents and children utilize dual frames of reference to make sense of one another's attitudes and behaviors, parent–child conflict may be rooted in *parallel* dual frames of reference (Qin, 2006).

Likewise, acculturation scholars have explained parent–child conflict among Latino families as the product of cultural (i.e., acculturation) gaps (Bámaca–Colbert & Gayles, 2010; Cervantes, Fisher, Córdova, & Napper, 2012; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993). Various types of parent–child acculturation gaps have been identified (for a review, see Telzer, 2011). The most common gaps occur when U.S.-reared children embrace the country's culture to a higher degree than the parents' heritage culture, while their parents adhere to their heritage culture to a higher degree than the U.S. culture (Bámaca–Colbert & Gayles, 2010; Cox, Zapata Roblyer, Merten, Shreffler, & Schwerdtfeger, 2013; Smokowski, Rose, & Bacallao, 2008).

Although it is well established that Latino children tend to acculturate to the U.S. culture at a faster pace than their parents, a purported association between parent–child acculturation gaps and parent–child conflict among Latino families is still being debated (see Telzer, 2011). For example, using quantitative methods, Bámaca–Colbert, Umaña–Taylor, and Gayles (2012) found that mother-daughter acculturation gaps were associated with mother-daughter conflict among Mexican American middle adolescents, but not early adolescents. Moreover, Schofield, Parke, Kim, and Coltrane (2008) established that acculturation gaps between seventh graders and their fathers, but not their mothers, were associated with parent–child conflict among Mexican American families.

In contrast, Smokowski et al. (2008) reported that parent-adolescent acculturation gaps were unrelated to parent–child conflict. Likewise, in a 2-year study with Mexican American adolescents, Lau, McCabe, Yeh, Garland, Wood, & Hough (2005) found that although parent-adolescent acculturation gaps were common, they were unassociated with increased parent–child conflict. In an investigation involving both parents and adolescents of Mexican origin, Pasch, Deardorff, Tschann, Flores, Penilla, and Pantoja (2006) also established that families who reported acculturation gaps were not more likely to report parent–child conflict. More recently, Nieri et al. (2014) found no association between types of parent-adolescent cultural discrepancies and parent-adolescent relationship quality.

A recent study of Mexican American families living in the Southwest, one of the few qualitative investigations specifically exploring parent–child acculturation gaps and conflict, reported that most parents perceived parent–child conflict as stemming mainly from youth development instead of cultural differences. That is, normative type parent–child conflict was common whereas cultural type parent–child conflict was not (Nieri & Bermudez–Parsai, 2014). However, it remains unknown whether Latino PIB living outside the Southwest also perceive parent–child acculturation discrepancies as playing an irrelevant role in parent–child conflict.

The main objective of this study was to delineate salient topics of parent–child conflict among Latino families headed by PIB, as identified by parents. Moreover, we sought to determine whether parents construed these conflicts as normative, cultural, or both. In addition, we were interested in determining whether PIB perceived cultural discrepancies with their children to be relevant sources of parent–child conflict.

Method

The present study used secondary data from a focus groups project designed to identify sources of acculturation-related stress, including parent–child conflict, among Latino adults. Focus groups allow researchers to explore topics about which there is limited knowledge and understand the meaning groups ascribe to phenomena of interest (Hennink, 2007; Liamputtong, 2011). They are particularly well suited to examine the points of view and experiences of minority populations (Wilkinson, S., 1998) and to bring culturally diverse perspectives to bear on research topics (Smithson, 2008).

Participants

Data for this analysis came from 16 focus groups conducted in California and Massachusetts. Eight focus groups were conducted in each state. The original study included 93 adults (52% male and 48% female; age range, 18–67; *M* age for all participants = 41.7 years), 66 of whom were parents. Because the present study was a secondary data analysis of focus groups intended to identify stressors relevant to Latinos living in the United States, we are unable to present demographic information solely for parents. Thus, demographic data are presented for all participants (i.e., parents and non-parents). Moreover, the original study did not ask participants to report the number and age of their children. This information could have been useful to contextualize the findings from the present analysis.

Over half of participants were born abroad (58%); the mean length of residency in the United States among foreign-born participants was 24.3 years. The Latino subgroups represented in the sample were Mexican (43%), Dominican (24%), Puerto Rican (14%), Central American (7%), and South American (2%). Most participants spoke predominantly Spanish (59%). Most also indicated that Spanish was the language primarily spoken in their homes 63%). The sample almost equally represented adults who had not completed high school (35%), had completed high school (30%) and had some college education or a college degree (35%). Most participants were married (44%) or single (38%). A minority was separated (8%), lived with a partner, boyfriend or girlfriend (8%) or was windowed (3%). Almost a third of participants earned under $10,000 per year (30%) or between $10,000 and $25,000 per year (31%), a fifth earned between $25,001 and $45,000 per year (21%), and less than a fifth earned above $45,000 per year (18%).

Recruitment

The research team collaborated closely with site coordinators at community-based organizations that have strong ties to Latino communities in California and Massachusetts. Site coordinators for the study were selected based on their familiarity with the local Latino communities in each state and having worked with the principal investigator (R. C. Cervantes) on previous data collection studies carried out in the same communities. Convenience sampling took place in adult education centers, behavioral health clinics, and other outreach facilities.

Site coordinators provided verbal information and a one-page flyer in English and Spanish about the study to agency staff (i.e., liaisons), who in turn disseminated the informational flyer and advised agency clients, consumers and family members about the study. The flyer, prepared by the research team, provided the title and purpose of the study, inclusion criteria, and focus group schedules. It stated that participation in the study was voluntary and that a small incentive would be provided to participants. When providing information to potential participants, agency staff was instructed to emphasize the voluntary nature of participation in the study and the right to decline or end participation in the study at any time.

Through the agencies' liaisons, potential participants selected one of the focus groups scheduled at the agency in which they were being recruited and signed up for that group session. No formal data were collected on the participation rate, although agency staff indicated that approximately one-half of those informed about the study chose to participate. Inclusion criteria

for participation in the focus groups included (1) self-described Latino/Hispanic ethnic identity; (2) age 18 and older; and (3) willingness to provide consent to participate in the study and being audiotaped. Exclusion criteria included (1) self-described non-Latino/Hispanic ethnic identity and (2) self-identified as having an acute mental health disorder such as acute psychosis, dementia, or active suicidal ideation. The last criterion was based on self-repot, as no formal psychiatric screening assessment tool was used.

Procedure

All focus groups in California were carried out at one site, whereas groups in Massachusetts were carried out at a variety of agencies. Two focus groups, one in English and another one in Spanish, were scheduled for the early evening hours at each of the participating community agencies. Only one focus group was conducted at a scheduled time, and each group gathered only once. Potential participants met in a reserved room at each data collection site where the focus groups were conducted.

The sessions were moderated by a senior investigator, who was the study's principal investigator, and two doctoral candidates trained by the senior investigator. All three were fluent in English and Spanish. The focus group moderator explained to attendees the purpose of the study and the inclusion/exclusion criteria, answered questions, and distributed consent forms. Participants who provided written consent to participate and being audiotaped were asked to complete a sociodemographic questionnaire prior to the focus group discussions.

The moderator audio recorded the focus group sessions for later transcription. Another research staff member took extensive notes while observing the groups, to enhance the quality of the data collected. Sample grand tour questions posed to participants were, "What are the three main reasons why you and your child/ren argue or disagree?"; "What are the three main problems or difficulties that you have to face as a Latino/ Hispanic parent?" and "What are the three main problems or challenges that Hispanic/Latino families face today?" Probe questions were used at the discretion of the focus group moderators. Each focus group had approximately 6–7 adult participants and lasted between 1 ½ and 2 hours. Each participant received a $10 gift card for his or her participation. An institutional review board approved the study's recruitment and data collection procedures.

Data Analysis

We used an essentialist approach to analyzing the transcripts from the focus groups. This approach, which centers on individual voices rather than on interactions among focus group participants (Wilkinson, S., 1998), was chosen because it allowed us to focus solely on the voices of participants who were parents. Using this method, first a coder went through the 16 transcripts and selected the text segments in which parents were discussing conflicts with children living at home. Next, two coders analyzed the selected segments using theoretical thematic analysis to identify types of parent–child conflict (i.e., "themes"). A theoretical thematic analysis is a deductive, top-down analysis guided by the researchers' theoretical or analytic interest (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Our thematic analysis was guided by the developmental and the acculturation perspectives on parent–child conflict outlined in the

introduction. The identified themes were used to create a preliminary codebook, that is, a set of descriptive codes (e.g., dating, friendships, education, and language use).

Comprehensive word queries using NVivo (2012) software were conducted to extract all units of text relevant to parent–child interactions across the 16 transcripts using keywords in English and Spanish (e.g., child, children, *hijo, hija*). A quarter of the segments extracted through NVivo were coded by two independent coders to test the appropriateness of the descriptive codes. Coding disagreements were discussed and resolved by consensus. In this step, the codebook was refined as some codes were redefined or consolidated. Using the final codebook, two coders independently coded all units of text extracted through NVivo, then compared their coding and resolved discrepancies by consensus. The coders (i.e., the authors)—all of whom self-identify as Latino and are fluent in English and Spanish—compared interpretations of coded data to reach a consensus regarding the data's meanings. Selected segments of speech spoken in Spanish by participants were translated into English. For brevity's sake, we present only English translations of the speech segments.

Results

The main objective of this study was to delineate salient topics of parent–child conflict among Latino families headed by PIB, as identified by parents. Moreover, we sought to determine whether parents construed these conflicts as normative, cultural, or both. In addition, we were interested in determining whether PIB perceived cultural discrepancies with their children to be relevant sources of parent–child conflict. The thematic analysis identified seven salient topics of parent–child conflict: activities of daily life, materialism, apparel, dating and sexuality, friendships, education, and use of the Spanish language. Most conflicts had both normative and cultural characteristics; however, parents interpreted them in terms of parent–child cultural discrepancies; thus, acculturation gaps were perceived by parents to be a major source of parent–child conflict among Latino families.

Daily activities

Conflict over activities of daily life was widely discussed among parents. These normative disciplinary issues included disagreements over the use of media, getting to school on time, homework, chores, and keeping their room or the house organized. A father said, "A big problem with the kids is to get them to school on time. One wakes them up, but they turn around and go back to sleep. Of course, they have gone to bed late, either watching TV or messing with the computer" (translated). A mother explained her struggles getting her children to do their homework and the role her low English proficiency played in these conflicts.

My child tells me, 'Mom, I did my homework, sign off here.' I sign off and later the teacher calls to tell me that my child didn't do her homework. She asks, 'Why did you sign off on the form?' Well, because I don't understand English (translated).

Discussing chores, a father said, "I would cut the grass when I was young, but my children, they don't even cut the grass; to do it, they want five, ten dollars." A mother shared the struggles she had with her teenage son about keeping the house organized, "My son leaves his clothes in the bathroom. I tell him 'Miguel, pick up your clothes!' He says, 'in a little bit; they are not in your way; leave them there; mind your own business.' Then he takes his plate, his glass, and even the juice jug to the computer and leaves them there too" (translated).

Apparel

Conflict over apparel sometimes occurred with sons (e.g., over saggy pants), it most often ensued with daughters, as parents considered some of the clothes daughters chose to wear as "too tight," "too revealing," or "inappropriate for their age." Some parents also believed that in their country of origin, girls wore clothing that was more modest and wanted their daughters to wear modest clothes as well. However, according to parents, girls often construed parents' expectations regarding dress code as due to parents' "old ways." A mother said, "I ask my daughter, 'In this cold weather, why are you going around showing off your bust [wearing a spaghetti-strap blouse]?' She responds, 'Why? You wonder, because when you were young, women didn't wear these types of tops'" (translated).

Materialism

Youth's push for brand name and fashionable clothing was a topic of parent–child conflict, particularly among families that could not afford to fulfill their children's wishes. A mother stated, "My daughter and I argue because she wants things. Shopping, shopping. She wishes Mommy would buy things for her, and Mommy doesn't have the money to go shopping" (translated). Parents generally thought that parent–child conflict over youth's coveting of consumer goods emerged from a U.S.-cultural emphasis on "having things" coupled with what parents saw as an underestimation of the efforts that took to provide financially for their families. A father commented, "In this country, there is a lot of competition over who has more or better stuff. My children prefer the brand-name shoes, the expensive ones, and I am not in an economic condition to buy them. I believe this sense of competing with others harms parents' relationship with their children" (translated).

Dating and Sexuality

Participants held the collective opinion that in regards to adolescent sexual activity, the Latino culture is more conservative than the U.S. culture. Compared to non-Latino parents in the United States, their Latino counterparts are less permissive of sexual activity during adolescence, expect their children to become sexually active at a later age, and deter them, particularly girls, from engaging in sexual activity.

> In the U.S. culture, you see that parents accept sexuality as natural. They instruct their daughters about how to use birth control pills. They have the mentality 'since they are going to do it anyway, let's try to protect them from an unwanted

pregnancy.' Hispanics, on the contrary, try hard to keep their daughters from having sex (translated).

To make their point about the unacceptability of early sexual activity, a mother noted, "You can't buy alcohol until you're 21, yet [in the United States] you can have sex when you're 14. Obviously, the culture is completely different; the expectations when you're here in the U.S., especially among the Anglo and the Latino community, are completely different." Expectations regarding sexual mores, which parents viewed as subject to their authority, constituted a source of parent–child conflicts among Latino families. Parents' reluctance to condone adolescent sexual activity was often framed as a matter of prudence.

My son has his girlfriend, and here in the United States supposedly they go directly to their [bed]room [in the family home]. However, I tell him, "No. Stop right there. Go to the living room." I don't let them go to his room, although he is a boy. When his girlfriend visits, she wants to go directly to his room, but I say, "No." Because she could turn out pregnant (translated).

Thus, traditional Latino cultural values regarding sexuality, as well as their children's health, safety, and future underlay parents' concerns about early sexual activity. Some parents acknowledged that conflict arose from their expectations that children abide by the same rules with which they were brought up.

We tell our children, "Well, when I was your age [in country of origin], I wasn't out at three in the morning with my boyfriend or girlfriend parked in the middle of nowhere. I was home.' But the courtship process was different. That brings a lot of conflicts into the mix."

Friendships

The powerful socialization influence that peers have on other children was widely discussed in the focus groups. Many parents were wary of their children's association with peers in general and with deviant peers in particular. They worried that their children spent more time with friends than with them; thus, they often saw themselves competing with peers to influence their children. A mother said, "Children are surrounded by their little friends daily. Thus, it's difficult to break the influence they wield every day [over my children]." Spanish-speaking parents, in particular, expressed worries that peers could lead their children astray by offering opportunities for early sexual activity, substance use, or gang affiliation. Parents were also concerned that children would "learn from friends to be disrespectful toward their parents" and associate with friends who would "pull them apart from the family." Many parents limited the activities their children were allowed to participate in with peers or the amount of time they could spend with them, to curtail peer influence. However, these parenting practices became sources of parent–child conflict.

We have a rule. We don't allow our daughter to sleep over at another house. . . Our culture, the way I was raised is how I want to raise her. I don't see anything wrong with it. For me, it's something very positive, and I thank my mother for the principles she taught me. And that's a big conflict. She [daughter]

doesn't understand (translated). "Why can't I . . .? [She asks]" "Nope. [I] can't
go against the rules. Those are my rules."

Education

A topic commonly discussed in the focus groups was discrepant educational aspirations between parents and children, and conflict over children's educational trajectories. Most parents expected their children to, at least, finish high school, and many said they wanted their children to attend a vocational school or a four-year college. Thus, conflict emerged when children wanted to drop out of school or refused to further their education. Parents worried about their children's diminished opportunities for well-paid jobs and overall social mobility.

> I push my kids, but one of them [would] rather go out and make the money now. He don't see the long picture. I told him, "Go to school, invest 4 years in college, get a degree that you can make the money later on, instead of making it now and later on you ain't going to have none."

Moreover, immigrant parents framed parent–child conflict over children's educational aspirations and trajectories in terms of motivation to immigrate and parenting goals. That is, immigrant parents explained that their desire to provide educational opportunities for their children was one of the main reasons they had moved to the United States. Immigration as a mean to offering offspring a "better future," as well as education as an enabler of social and economic mobility, was a constant theme in the focus groups. Parents' aspirations were higher for U.S-born children than born-abroad children, because "having papers" conferred the former significant advantages. Recalling what she often told her child, who did not want to go to college, a parent said, "Thank God you were born in this country. You have opportunities others wished they had. I know some girls who would like to get an education, but they cannot; they don't have a social security number." Parents often perceived children's low educational attainment as undermining their goals of children's professional and economic advancement.

Spanish Language Use

Parents considered English fluency a crucial skill to succeed in the U.S. society; thus, parents agreed that both children and adults in immigrant families needed to learn English. However, many parents also thought their children should learn to speak Spanish. Parents' wishes sometimes clashed with children's desire to learn and use only English. The ability to communicate in Spanish was seen by many parents as vital to cultivate relationships with Spanish monolingual family members, such as grandparents, and with members of the broader Latino community, particularly when families lived in Latino enclaves. Children's lack of Spanish skills was perceived as undermining *personalismo* (being personable), *simpatía* (being friendly) *respeto* (being respectful of others), and *familismo* (family unity)—values that parents saw as central to their way of life.

> For my children to learn Spanish, it's difficult for them. But I tell them they have to learn it, at least a little bit. Just in order to be polite and courteous to people on the street, or even their teachers, or parents at school.

For immigrant parents who were not fluent in English, and for whom learning English was mostly a challenging and long-term endeavor, it was particularly important that their children learn to communicate in Spanish. Parents explained that the lack of a common language made it difficult to maintain good communication with their children, monitor their behavior, and provide emotional and instrumental support to them. In fact, parental concerns about poor communication with children, inability to properly monitor their whereabouts, and difficulty in supporting them in the midst of challenging situations at school and with peers, due to low English proficiency, were commonplace in the focus groups.

Acculturation Gaps as Sources of Parent–Child Conflict

Overall, parents perceived cultural discrepancies between them and their "Americanized" children to be the main source of parent–child conflict. A participant said, "Both cultures start bumping heads; you got the Chicano, and you got the *mejicano*." Immigrant parents commented on how they were raised with an "idiosyncrasy" different from the one prevalent in the United States and, therefore, had to change their expectations to adapt to the "system" here. Immigrant parents understood that living in the United States necessitated a change in mindset; however, for many of them, it was a challenging endeavor. A mother explained it this way,

> Our son, who was born here, he has different customs; he is not like us . . . although we [my husband and I] have raised him. Americans [non-Latinos] do things differently. . . . It's difficult for us [the foreign-born] understand and adapt to a new culture. This is part of the stress we face when our children become adolescents (translated).

Discussion

The main objective of this study was to delineate salient topics of parent–child conflict among Latino families headed by PIB. Moreover, we sought to determine whether parents construed these conflicts as normative, cultural, or both. We were also interested in determining whether PIB perceived cultural discrepancies with their children to be relevant sources of parent–child conflict. The thematic analysis identified seven salient topics of parent–child conflict: activities of daily life, materialism, apparel, dating and sexuality, friendships, education, and Spanish language use. Most conflicts had both normative and cultural characteristics, but parents construed them in terms of parent–child cultural discrepancies. Thus, parents perceived acculturation gaps to be major sources of parent–child conflict among Latino families.

Conflict over activities of daily life was the type of conflict most frequently discussed in the focus groups, followed by conflicts over apparel and materialism. Findings are consistent with studies showing that conflict over everyday issues (e.g., household chores, getting to school on time, use of media) is normative among North American families from diverse ethnic backgrounds (Fuligni, 1998; Fuligni, 2012). Results extend the literature on the normative aspects of parent–child conflict among Latino families by showing that PIB often construe conflict about normative issues (e.g., apparel and money) as rooted in acculturation gaps.

Participants perceived Latino culture as more traditional and thus more conservative in its values than U.S. culture. PIB's adherence to traditional Latino gender roles often generated expectations about daughters' personal appearance (i.e., feminine demureness and modesty) that daughters sometimes violated, which resulted in conflict (Collins & Russell, 1991). Previous studies have suggested that Latino PIB hold more conservative attitudes toward dating and adolescent sexual expression than the ones prevalent in U.S. society, and thus disapprove of U.S.-dating practices and early sexual activity (Raffaelli & Ontai, 2001, 2004). U.S.-reared children, however, may exhibit attitudes and behaviors more consistent with U.S. culture than with their parents' heritage culture. In these families, parents may have their social conventions, sense of morality, and parental authority challenged by their children (Smetana, 2002).

Findings suggest that gender socialization practices based on traditional Latino values might generate more conflict in parent–daughter relationships than in parent–son relationships. Some studies have documented Latino girls' perceptions of gendered parenting practices (Raffaelli & Ontai, 2001, 2004). Nonetheless, more research is warranted to examine the differential contribution of these practices to conflicts among Latino PIB and both sons and daughters, as gendered practices and ensuing conflict might be associated with poor mental health among young Latinas (Bámaca–Colbert et al., 2012; Zayas, Bright, Álvarez-Sánchez, & Cabassa, 2009).

Similar to conflict over daily activities, conflict over sexuality was often framed by parents in terms of contrasting moral values prevalent in U.S. culture and their heritage culture. Latino PIB's perceptions of declining morality in the United States were also observed by Reese (2001). She reported that Mexican-origin parents perceived the U.S. society to have more relaxed moral values regarding sexuality than their home countries. Parental concerns about moral values and peers' ability to socialize children into objectionable values are implicit in qualitative studies of Latino immigrant families (e.g., Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007; Ceballo, Kennedy, Bregman, & Epstein–Ngo, 2012; Parsai, Nieri, & Villar, 2010). However, in those studies, parental concerns about moral values and peer socialization have not been identified as aspects of cultural orientation directly influencing parent–child conflict.

Results indicate that a major reason PIB worry about their children's friendships and early sexual activity is that both have the potential to thwart their children's educational trajectory and social mobility. Most parents came to the United States to provide children with better educational and economic opportunities. Even among second-generation immigrant parents, children's educational attainment and its impact on future earnings and social mobility might be interpreted as an issue that affects the prospects of the entire family, because *familismo*, a value prevalent among Latino families, calls for lifetime instrumental support among family members (Calzada, Tamis-LeMonda, & Yoshikawa, 2012).

Likewise, other studies have documented Latino immigrant parents' goal to provide more opportunities for their children as a prominent reason to migrate to the United States (e.g., Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007; Parsai et al., 2010). However, parents' perceptions of the extent to which their children take advantage of such opportunities seldom have been examined as a potential source of parent–child conflict among Latino families. This study is one of the first

ones to bring attention to discrepancies between parenting goals and youth's educational aspirations as sources of parent–child conflict among families headed by Latino PIB.

Among families in the study, parent–child conflict often arose from children's reluctance to learn or communicate in Spanish, a skill that parents deemed important for children's ability to connect with monolingual Spanish-speaking individuals in their families and communities and, in turn, a developmental task rooted in Latino cultural values. Parents considered English proficiency necessary for children to attain goals of education and social mobility; as such, they did not perceive learning Spanish as a source of significant parent–child conflict. This finding is consistent with some studies indicating that immigrant parents generally consider their children's English proficiency to be an asset to the children and the family (e.g., De Ment, Buriel, & Villanueva, 2005; Orellana, 2001). Therefore, Spanish-language discrepancies might be more consequential for the parent–child relationship than English-language discrepancies. Yet, Spanish-language proficiency and preference have not been widely examined in studies of parent–child cultural discrepancies; they mostly have used differences in English-language use as indicators of cultural discrepancies (e.g., Cox et al., 2013; Pasch et al., 2006).

Contrary to the findings reported in a recent qualitative investigation of Mexican American families in the U.S. Southwest (Nieri & Bermudez–Parsai, 2014), parents in the study perceived parent–child cultural discrepancies to be significant sources of conflict. These contrasting results could derive from the characteristics and location of our sample, which encompassed an array of Latino subgroups, mainly Mexican, Puerto Rican and Dominican, living in the East and West coasts of the United States. Our results suggest that the socioeconomic, cultural, and political context in which families live may influence experiences of parent–child conflict, and should be included in future studies of Latino families.

Findings indicate that parent–child conflict among families headed by Latino PIB might be best understood in terms of parallel dual frames of reference (Qin, 2006). Parallel dual frames of reference shape parents' and children's attitudes, expectations, and behaviors toward one another other. As such, parallel dual frames of reference may generate cultural conflict and exacerbate normative conflicts when family members interpret each other's attitudes and behavior mostly or solely in terms of cultural discrepancies. Thus, immigrant parents may contrast their children's attitudes and behaviors to those they see as characteristic of youth in their countries of origin. In the meantime, children may compare their parents' expectations and behaviors with those exhibited by parents more oriented toward the U.S. culture, or to media representations of U.S. parents (Pantin, Schwartz, Sullivan, Coatsworth, & Szapocznik, 2003; Santisteban et al., 2012).

Dual frames of reference help parents and children to organize representations of their world, yet these may also contribute to further attributional biases and misunderstandings within families. For example, many parents in our study considered girls' proclivity for revealing clothing, youths' desire for consumer goods, and the push for increased autonomy the result of a U.S. cultural orientation. However, at the root of these adolescent behaviors lay normative maturational processes (Laursen & Collins, 2009). Moreover, it can be argued that such behaviors are not exclusive of U.S. adolescents. On the contrary, adolescents in Latin American countries exhibit similar behaviors (Welti, 2002), perhaps due to the pervasive influence of

media produced in the United States (Thussu, 2006). Reese (2001) has argued that immigrant parents often idealize the country and the culture they have left behind. This romanticized view might be part of the immigrant experience, an idealization of their former way of life that buffers the harsh realities experienced by many immigrants, such as discrimination and racism. Moreover, a dual frame of reference is an adaptive strategy that parents and children use to make sense of living in the midst of two, often contrasting, cultural systems. Nonetheless, this adaptive strategy might also contribute to the parallel dual frames of reference that can fuel parent–child conflict among families of immigrant background.

Limitations and Strengths

This study addresses an important research question, but it is not without limitations. The study was a secondary data analysis of focus groups data collected for a different research purpose, and thus groups were comprised of parents and non-parents. It is possible that due to the nature of focus groups, non-parents could have influenced the perception of participant parents about parent–child conflict. The original design posed several limitations for the present study. First, we could not obtain demographic information solely for the parents participating in the focus groups. Second, we did not know the number and age of participants' children, who likely were from different cohorts. Third, we could not determine the stage of family development for each parent, Fourth, data analyzes could not be conducted separately for single and married/cohabiting parents. These pieces of information could have aided in the contextualization of the findings. Future studies should compare topics of parent–child conflict according to children's ages and stages in the family life course.

The sample included a diverse sample of Latinos, but data were collected in two states only (i.e., California, and Massachusetts). Future research is thus warranted on the interpersonal dynamics of Latino families living in various regions of the United States, in Latino enclaves and outside of such enclaves. Information about participants' legal status was not available. In future studies, it would be worthwhile to examine whether the legal status of parents and children might affect parent–child conflict in immigrant families. Strengths of the study were the relatively large number of focus groups, the diversity in participants' origins, and the roughly equal amounts of persons of both sexes.

Despite its limitations, our study extends the literature on parent–child conflict by exploring conflict among Latino families headed by PIB and their U.S.-raised children, both of which comprise a significant segment of the U.S. population (Pew Hispanic Center, 2013). The study provides insight into parents' perceptions of parent–child conflict and the attributions they make as to the source of such conflicts. Moreover, the study contributes to the literature on parent–child conflict by bringing together developmental and acculturation perspectives to gain a better understanding of parent–child conflict among Latino families.

Implications for Practice with Latino Families

Results suggest that some Latino families would benefit from the services provided by family life educators and mental health providers who are culturally aware and skilled at working with immigrant families. These professionals could assist families by increasing parents'

knowledge about maturational processes, discussing culturally bound expectations for children and youth development, and teaching parents strategies to negotiate conflict in ways that strengthen family ties. There is evidence that Latino parents who feel that helping professionals respect and value their culture are eager to learn about youth development and enhanced parenting practices. Moreover, these parents are willing to implement practices that promote positive family dynamics and help their children succeed in the U.S. society (Parra–Cardona et al., 2009, 2012). Given the importance of cultural competence skills for effective outreach and delivery of family life education programs to ethnic minority groups, efforts to promote these skills among professionals working with families would be a worthwhile effort. Equally important is to develop a pipeline of young people from ethnic minority communities entering the field of family science to take the lead in educating and serving their communities.

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