

Coming Into Their Own—Adolescent Latinas in the United States

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A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina
at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Sociology

Chapel Hill
2009

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Abstract

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(Under the direction of Kathleen Mullan Harris and Lisa D. Pearce)

First- and second-generation Latina adolescents represent a growing proportion of youth in the United States. Latina adolescents bring a culture with a unique set of norms that govern their sexual behavior. This coupled with the stressors felt in most Latino families markedly influences the sexual behavior of Latina teens. This research explores the role of family experiences in the United States and cultural norms on Latina sexual and reproductive behavior in the context of the recent Latino population boom.

This work focuses on two primary areas: Latino traditional values and the situational and environmental aspects of minority life in the United States. *Respeto*, *simpatia*, *machismo*, *marianismo*, and the concept of ideal family life are the key strongholds of traditional Latino values. This combination of bindingly specific gender roles, a hierarchy of familial roles and an unhealthy desire to maintain peace in the family at the cost of remaining silent, has resulted in stress and dysfunction within Latino homes. The U.S. situation for Latinos can be highlighted by the examination of acculturation, poverty, stress, bullying, and conflict in school. The level and rate of each family member's acculturation ultimately determines the degree of peace and communication that exists

between Latino parents and teenagers. Poverty causes stress within the household, which leads to tension when there is conversation, but more often that not, leads to silence. Bullying and conflict in school is often the result of low socioeconomic levels and poor acculturation. Latina teenagers desperately struggle amidst these obstacles to fit into the dominant U.S. culture. These variables ultimately impact parental communication, religion, familism, and the parent–adolescent relationship, which in turn shape Latina sexual behavior.

To father: Francisco J. Veliz. Your infinite wisdom has always been a beacon of guidance in my life. Without your love and constant support this accomplishment would not have been possible. I appreciate all the sacrifices you have made in order for me to fulfill my dreams. I am forever indebted to you and I love you.

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Introduction

The recent explosive growth in the Latino population in the United States represents an unparalleled migration during the past century. Fueled primarily by immigration from Mexico, Latinos now comprise almost 15% of the U.S. population, making them the largest minority group in America. With this rapid population growth comes opportunities and challenges for our nation's policymakers. Because of the newness of the Latino immigration phenomenon, research on the experiences of the offspring of new immigrants is in its infancy. The intricacies of the decision-making among Latina teens are processes that currently elude sociological research, especially decisions regarding sexual behavior. Behind every adolescent's decision to become sexually active is a complex network of environmental, physiological and ethnic influences. These are often comprised of family experiences, socialization, school life, peer pressure and feelings of self-worth. This dissertation examines the selected experiences of Latina adolescents and their families in the United States, and how these experiences might affect their decisions surrounding sexual behavior.

Although recent immigration has been characterized by migrations from regions such as India and Southeast Asia, this work conveys the experiences of Latina teens and their family life in the United States. Due to the large number of migrants from Mexico and Central America—as well as settlement into enclaves—Latinos have traditionally assimilated more slowly than other groups. They also face a great deal of discrimination

due to language barriers and economic competition with other groups. The tension Latino parents experience trying to preserve family life, while working to achieve the American dream of financial success, weighs heavily on the experiences and decisions of Latina adolescents. My hope is that this dissertation will help policymakers understand the issues that adolescents of other immigrant groups experience as they attempt to negotiate home identities within the dominant culture of the United States.

First and second generation migrants experience many challenges when assimilating to a new society. They must adjust to different societal norms, values, and mores. How these migrants acclimate to these rapid changes will significantly impact their families. It is significant that first and second generation¹ Latinos constitute 53% of the overall growth of the Latino population (Pew Hispanic Center, 2006). Given that first and second generation Latinos comprise an increasing share of the total U.S. population, it is critical to understand the unique experiences of these immigrant families. Children of immigrants, who are born in the United States, must struggle with balancing in between two worlds.

Recognition of increasing immigration is crucial within the new Southern “feeder” states where immigration is new and families are experiencing staggered arrivals of family members. These state infrastructures are only just beginning to feel the impact of the unprecedented surge of Latino immigrants and their children. Currently, about 60% of the Latino population in the new “feeder” states is foreign-born, contrasted with the national figure of approximately 41%. This, coupled with a higher Latino fertility rate, will likely

¹This research uses the Pew Hispanic Center’s (2003) definitions of “generations.” First generation is defined as those born outside the US. Second generation are those born in the United States with at least one foreign born parent.

result in a population boom of second generation Latinos being born in the South. On average, second generation Latinos are 17 years old (with average age being as low as 4 or 5 in some regions of the South), which speaks to the newness of any research done on this group. With the growth of the U.S. Latino population, comes interest in the social patterns of ethnic teenagers and how they will fit into the U.S. culture.

Changing Times—Latinos Make Their Entrance

The Latino population increased by almost 60% between 1990 and 2000. This explosive growth curve continues into the new millennium. The Latino adolescent population is growing faster than the teen population of any other racial or ethnic group. By 2025, almost 25% of U.S. teens will be Latino. While this growth is certainly momentous, it is nowhere more significant than in the “historic” South (excluding FL and TX). Due to a strong economy, the South has become a veritable magnet for new Latino immigrants. The newness of immigration to this region of the country brings opportunities and challenges to everyone involved. The Latino populations in some counties in the South have increased by 200 to 500% since 1990. This has fueled discrimination and conflict with Whites and Blacks. Kochhar, Suro, and Tafoya (2005) reports that the Latino school age population in the South grew 322% from 1990 to 2000, compared to the 10% growth of the White population and the 18% growth of the Black population. Many of these school-aged Latino(a)s in the South are bullied by other groups, with 17.5% of Latino(a) teens in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, NC high schools reporting having attempted suicide (CMS, 2008). Latina teens’ experiences in school will be analyzed using interview data in subsequent analysis.

Perhaps more alarming is the dramatic increase in teen birth rates in the South and Midwest. Alabama and Tennessee, both states that have witnessed a new wave of Latino immigration, have experienced an increase of over 300% in Latina teen births since 1990. For several years, North Carolina has consistently had the highest Latina teen pregnancy rate in the country (Driscoll, Biggs, Brindis, & Yankah, 2001). Given the growing number of Latino teenagers, it is imperative to examine the sexual behavior of adolescents. This will help to create more well-informed policies for the nation as a whole, and particularly for states that are new to the Latino influx. Teen sexual behavior will be examined using both interviews and nationally representative survey data by race and ethnicity in the United States.

There is a cultural and generational clash that may heavily impact children born into bi-national Latino families. These families are defined as consisting of immigrant parents (including unauthorized migrants) and their U.S.-born children, or second-generation families. In order to understand the specific challenges they face and how they cope with these challenges, it is imperative we examine the family life of Latina youth. The realm of sexual behavior is of particular interest because of future ramifications of negative decision making in this arena.

Semi-structured interviews from the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR) and survey data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health), provide a unique and critical opportunity to study second generation Latina youth as they reach adolescence. Waves I and III of the Add Health survey data will be used to examine parental and youth attitudes toward sexual behavior and sexual behavior

outcomes. NSYR interviews will be used to give heretofore unparalleled insight into the day-to-day experiences of Latina youth in the United States as they describe them.

Bridging the Gap—Contributions of this Dissertation

This dissertation seeks to bridge a long-standing divide within the scholarship surrounding Latina adolescent sexual behavior. There is a lack of nationally representative studies that delve into the seemingly contradictory phenomena within the Latino community. That is, Latinos have traditionally conservative norms and mores about sexual behavior, but high rates of teen births and sexually transmitted infections. The NSYR has gathered rich interview data in the three hour in-depth semi-structured interviews on the topics of morality, religion attitudes, and sexual behavior. In addition, it allows for specific analysis of Latinas of different nationalities, which is not possible in most nationally representative datasets, due to small sample size. Although the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study gives important insight into the experience of second generation youth, it is limited to traditional areas of immigrant settlement, California and Florida (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). The Add Health dataset employed a large sample size characterized by detailed health information, which allows for a broad analysis of a wide variety of topics. The merging of this data enables me to present research regarding family processes, school experiences and adolescent life in a comprehensive study that is both expansive and revealing.

This research seeks to systematically fill in several notable gaps in the literature on adolescent Latina sexual behavior. The first gap is a lack of understanding of the concept and measurement of ethnic values and behavior within Latino families. I address this in

my methodology by using two types of data from two different national studies. There is little knowledge of the ways in which culture impacts Latino attitudes, family processes, and sexual behavior, particularly during the formative years of adolescence and early adulthood. These processes are clearly strained by their place in the U.S. racial/ethnic stratification system (Driscoll et al., 2001). Interview data from NSYR will help elucidate family processes in Latino households and uncover macro-level societal factors that might affect Latino families.

My second aim in this research is to examine the relationships between family life and parent–adolescent communication and attitudes. Family processes play a critical role in how parents socialize their children, and the values and attitudes they internalize toward sexual behavior. Using the interviews of the NSYR, this section investigates Latino family processes in the United States. They will be examined specifically within the context of how they affect parental relationships with teenage daughters. The Add Health data will be used to conduct quantitative analysis on how family life affects the parent–adolescent relationship.

My third focal point of research is to model the impact of family and acculturation on sexual behavior, and the ways in which parent–child relations mediate the effects of culture on several sexual behavior outcomes. With regards to bi-national families, there is limited knowledge on how the immigrant generation affects the parent–child relationship and generates potential for conflict (Driscoll et al., 2001). Acculturation is a key measure in my analyses, contributing significantly to this research gap.

Chapter I

A Power Cocktail—Socialization and Acculturation in the United States

This chapter delves into the theoretical framework for both the qualitative and quantitative analysis of Latino families and their effects on Latina adolescent sexual behavior. The rate, level and intensity of socialization and acculturation that envelopes Latino families serves to shape their most basic processes. Socialization is the primary mechanism through which parents teach and pass on norms and values to their children. This process can be mediated by the level of acculturation. Children internalize the most fundamental acts and routines that they see modeled by their parents. However, the immigrant Latino community has been faced with a youthful rebellion, as adolescent daughters turn away from their traditional roles and seek sexual attention and freedom. This chapter will explore the Latino home and examine the intriguing cocktail that ethnic mores, conservative gender roles and the dominant American society has served.

Molding the Next Generation—The Role of Socialization

Socialization can be broadly defined as the process by which people learn and act out the roles within society. Through this process, they often acquire beliefs of this social world (Arnett, 1995; Cherlin, 2005). Parental socialization is one of the most powerful influences in a child's life. Because parents interact with their children on a continuing basis, they have a crucial impact on their children's physical, social, and emotional development (Baca Zinn & Eitzen, 2005). Some have argued that children are more

affected by parental influence than genetics and heredity (González, Umaña-Taylor, & Bámaca, 2006). Cherlin (2005) asserts that parents socialize their children in two general ways: 1) providing material and emotional support and 2) exercising control over children. The method by which parents achieve these two objectives can differ by race/ethnicity. For example, parents vary in the degree to which they are physically and emotionally affectionate, supportive and critical. Employing the use of interview and survey data on the topic of parent–adolescent relations, these areas will be explored in subsequent analyses.

Cultural Parenting

Similarly, ethnic and national backgrounds play a role in shaping various parenting philosophies. Baumrind (1971) suggested three different styles of parenting: 1) authoritative, which consists of high levels of emotional support and consistent, moderate control, 2) permissive style with support but little supervision and control and 3) authoritarian parents who provide little support and harsh attempts at control (Cherlin, 2005). It is important to ascertain if these parental socialization methods vary by race/ethnicity or nationality. These variations may affect an adolescent's behavior and thus lead to differential outcomes by race/ethnicity. The NSYR and Add Health studies further explore certain parenting practices such as corporal punishment and parental monitoring.

The extant research on socialization has primarily focused on White families. However, new research shows that the socialization process may differ in families of color (Arnett, 1995; McLoyd, Cauce, Takechi, & Wilson, 2000). While the socialization that occurs in

families of color shares some similarities with the dominant culture, it is also distinct (Bámaca, Umaña-Taylor, Shin, & Alfaro, 2005). One of the principal functions of socialization is the process of acclimating children to the culture in which they are being raised (Cherlin, 2005). Norms and values often vary by cultural background. The method by which parents and family members transmit these norms and values may differ as well. The sample of interviews from the NSYR include White, Black and Latino families, allowing for a comparative analysis. With Add Health, I am able to analyze how prevalent and significant the race and ethnic differences are.

When displayed alongside their White counterparts, it has been shown that Latino parents tend to use stronger discipline and control tactics when dealing with their children (Cherlin, 2005; Halgunseth, Ispa, & Rudy, 2006). This intensity may be inspired by a fear of “losing” their child to the dominant culture, which is confirmed in the experiences relayed by Latinas in the NSYR interviews. If this is true, then it may indeed be necessary to exercise more monitoring and control to retain ethnic Latino values and norms. Parents of color generally feel the need to “protect” their children from discrimination. They tend to make it a priority to instill in their children a sense of pride in being who they are, in spite of the dominant culture (González et al., 2006; Halgunseth et al., 2006). Subsequent analysis will delve into the time-constraints that often limit the second part of this equation. Because of long work hours, parents often employ harsh monitoring techniques and then fail to follow-up with the work needed to instill a sense of self-worth in their impressionable teens. Parents may use strategies designed to keep the children at home with the family, such as purchasing children a Super Nintendo and

buying more toys (Halgunseth et al., 2006). Therefore, children of color are not only creating a self-identity; they are simultaneously trying to cultivate an ethnic identity.

Ideally, Latino parents pass on their ethnic heritage to their children in a variety of ways, called familial *ethnic* socialization. The inculcation of ethnicity can occur in a variety of ways. Practicing cultural traditions at home, celebrating ethnic holidays, and simple everyday conversations between family members can help to transmit these values.

Familial ethnic socialization can occur either overtly or covertly (González et al., 2006).

Overt methods of socialization include instituting Spanish as the primary language at home, attending classes with other second generation Latinos from the same country, and home-based learning. Covert techniques include decorating with “ethnic” items, listening to Latino music, and watching Latino television channels (González et al., 2006).

Language usage in the home is a variable that will be explored using the Add Health data.

González and colleagues (2006) take notice of the many values and beliefs that work together to create a unique socialization experience for Latino adolescents. The Add Health data indicates that Latinos are more likely to live in larger households with extended kin, thus allowing more family members to contribute to the socialization process.

The Role of Grandparenting

Grandparents also play a vital part in passing on cultural heritage. It is interesting to note that grandmothers are more involved with granddaughters, and grandfathers with grandsons (Padilla, 2006). Latino gender roles tend to be specific and divided. Mexican grandmothers often teach their granddaughters how to cook Mexican dishes, practice

Mexican songs and dances, and speak to them in Spanish (Padilla, 2006). This socialization often continues regardless of generation, although the amount of specifically ethnic socialization can diminish slightly with acculturation (González et al., 2006). Additionally, the amount of interaction dwindles as the use of Spanish declines (Padilla, 2006).

The Way of Life—Educating By Story

As with grandparents, within the immediate family, Mexican parents are generally in charge of socializing children of their own gender. Research shows that the primary method through which Mexican mothers socialize their children and adolescents is through “*consejos*,” or words of wisdom. *Consejos* are generally defined as “spontaneous homilies used to influence children’s moral behaviors and attitudes” (Halgunseth et al., 2006). They use these *consejos* to “*educar a los hijos*,” which in literal translation means to educate the children. However, it is of note that Latinos use the word “educate” more broadly than it is used in English. “*Educar a los hijos*” means to educate children in the ways of life and the rules of behavior, not just in their intellectual and academic development (Halgunseth et al., 2006). This type of socialization encompasses moral, social, and ethnic norms and values. Halgunseth et al. (2006) describe *consejos* as a form of psychological control employed by Latino parents with the explicit intention of shaping children’s attitudes and behaviors. The role of *consejos* within teenage sexuality will be explored in subsequent chapters.

Children Assimilating Parents

When it comes to socializing in a new country, children often exercise as much influence as their parents. As parents inculcate their children with their culture, values and ideas, children are also teaching their parents. This is especially true for the offspring of immigrants, who frequently serve as “cultural brokers” for their parents (Padilla, 2006). Particularly with foreign-born parents, their children are forced to act as translators between their family members and teachers, doctors, and store clerks. In these instances, youth are expected to be bicultural in order to assist their parents. This presents an interesting control dynamic between parent and child. In effect, the children and adolescents are bringing the dominant culture to their parents. This can have a positive effect, as parents learn more about American culture and begin to assimilate.

Unfortunately, the burden of bicultural fluency can be difficult for the second generation. Also, parents may feel threatened by their dependence on their children (Padilla, 2006).

The process of familial socialization continues into adolescence, even as peers begin to assert more of an influence. Family closeness is an important predictor of adolescent conduct, particularly with regards to sexual behavior. Upchurch, Aneshensel, Mudgal, and McNeely (2001) find that Latino teens who live in neighborhoods with a lower percentage of Latinos tend to have a significantly higher risk of indulging in sexual behavior than teens living in a “medium-high-density” Latino neighborhood. This shows that an isolated, insulated ethnic community may serve to reinforce and monitor cultural values more effectively than an integrated community. Using the findings from the NSYR, I will examine the experiences and family life of young Latinas in predominately Latino neighborhoods and how they differ from those in predominantly White or Black

areas. Information gleaned from Add Health will also provide insight into the effects of ethnic enclaves.

Acculturation and Effects on Family Life

The second theoretical basis for this work is the nature and effect of acculturation on Latina adolescents. The literature identifies three patterns of how acculturation affects the parent–child relationship (Halgunseth et al., 2006; Portes & Rumbaut, 1996). The first pattern is referred to as “consonant acculturation,” when parents and children acquire the dominant language and culture at the same rate. In this pattern the relationship between immigrant parents and their adolescent children (Halgunseth et al., 2006) is the most harmonious because they are simultaneously absorbing and adapting to their new surroundings. They are able to share common experiences and relate them back to one another in a way that is non-threatening.

In the second pattern, “dissonant acculturation,” children acquire the dominant culture faster than their parents. The children then begin to express a preference for the dominant culture, as opposed to their parents’ native culture. This pattern is characterized by amplified family conflict and a decrease in parental authority. Children increasingly express embarrassment over parents’ culture and beliefs (Halgunseth et al., 2006).

The third pattern is “selective acculturation,” in which the children become bicultural in a manner that is characterized by pluralism and mutual respect for both cultures (Halgunseth et al., 2006). Park (1928) would describe such a child as a “marginal man” (Padilla, 2006). According to his theory, this person is caught between two cultures, accepted by neither, and is thus at risk to suffer grave psychological consequences.

However, new research has shown that being bicultural can have positive effects (Padilla, 2006). This person has the ability to socially blend in both settings comfortably. Many parents encourage this flexibility, as it can lead to many advantages (Padilla, 2006). This points to the importance of including measures of acculturation in this research, for it influences the parent–child relationship in immigrant families and the relative outcomes for children.

When undergoing an analysis of Latino families, the process of how family values and communication patterns change as the families acculturate must be considered (Zambrana, 1995). Vega explains that the process of acculturation could be confusing for children as they try to reconcile their home culture with the dominant culture amidst a sea of different generations in the home (Vega, as cited in Zambrana, 1995). Nativity is explored within the data gathered from Add Health. Markers of dissonant acculturation between Latina teens and their parents are measured by the closeness of their relationship and if they have experienced a serious argument.

Make Yourself at Home—A Modern Assimilation Theory

Old models of assimilation were modeled after White European immigrants and painted assimilation to be a unilinear process that happens smoothly and quickly. However, the primarily non-European immigrants who entered the United States after the Immigrant and Nationality Act of 1965 have opted to embrace pluralism, rather than the “melting pot” ideology. There is an attempt to retain home traditions while acculturating to the dominant culture. Compared to European-Americans, the achievement of selective acculturation or biculturalism is possible for Latinos for many different reasons. The

sizeable flow of Latino immigrants continues in such a way that Latinos in the United States have a constant connection to their ancestral home and customs. In 1924, the National Origins Act basically ended immigration to the United States, which resulted in European immigrants losing contact with their homeland. This forcibly facilitated assimilation.

Another key difference is geographic proximity. Latin American countries are much closer to the United States than Europe, which allows for more opportunities to visit and touch base with their ethnic home-base. Technology allows communication to the homeland to be almost instantaneous. Telephones, internet, instant messaging and email are only a few of the myriad of ways that ethnic groups can stay connected. U.S. cities with large Latino populations, such as Los Angeles and Miami, often boast Spanish television, ethnic music stations and stores catering to Latino clientele. This serves to encourage the development of subcultures that foster biculturalism. In more drastic circumstances, it can even lead to separation, which is defined within this context as the “maintenance of the culture of origin through rejection or avoidance of the new culture” (Driscoll et al., 2001; Lara, Gamboa, Kahramanian, Morales, & Hayes Bautista, 2005).

Following the classical assimilation model, immigrants interact with White, Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASPs), “absorb” the core culture and adapt accordingly. However, because of their predominately low socioeconomic status, many new Latino immigrants do not have day-to-day contact with middle class WASPs. Therefore the question remains as to what cultural norms they are assimilating (Driscoll et al., 2001). As the literature shows, acculturation is associated with an increase in negative health outcomes such as teen pregnancy and substance abuse (Harris, 1999; Lara et al., 2005). It seems that young

Latinas are acculturating to low socioeconomic and urban norms, rather than middle-class suburban White norms.

Most immigrants come from rural areas in Mexico and Central America to reside in predominately large metropolitan areas, even in the midst of extensive Latino immigration in the South and Midwest (Driscoll et al., 2001). Thus, recent immigrants must acculturate to the dominant norms within the United States as a whole, as well as to the subculture of urban, working class neighborhoods (Blair, 1999; Driscoll et al., 2001). This can result in parents feeling a marked disconnect with their children. Ethnic habits are left by the wayside, leaving a communication gap between the generations and increased tension in the home. Taking these factors into account, the comfort level and frequency with which Latina teens discuss sex with their parents will be measured with Add Health survey data.

A Whiter Shade of Pale—Latino Diversity Leads to Divergent Assimilation

The segmented assimilation theory explains this alternative pattern of incorporation of non-European immigrants to American culture. Portes and Zhou (1993) describe three distinct possibilities for the adaptation of post-1965 immigrants into the dominant culture. The first possibility supports the traditional assimilation theory and suggests that immigrants would slowly adapt and be absorbed into the new culture. The second option involves assimilating into a culture of poverty and the underclass. The third possibility entails the achievement of economic success by immigrants while still retaining their native culture—in effect, pluralism.

The theory of segmented assimilation is not only concerned with the different patterns of adaptation of non-European immigrants, but also how these distinct patterns lead to both the deviation from and embracing of the dominant group (Zhou, 1997). Segmented assimilation research examines possible determinants of success and failure within immigrant integration. The diversity that exists within the Latino population and the circumstances surrounding immigration suggests that there will be divergent patterns of assimilation. This is particularly relevant among the different nationalities and phenotypes, with darker Latinos (such as those from the Caribbean) experiencing less success (Mason 2007). Within the United States, there is a clear bias toward light-skinned people. Even within specific races and ethnicities, fair-skinned Latinos and Blacks tend to assimilate more quickly and successfully into the upper echelons of American life. However, the purpose of this work was to surmise broad patterns among Latinos generally. In the future, it is critical to conduct subgroup analyses on the different Latino nationalities and race to properly document this phenomenon. The NSYR interviews did include Latinas of various nationalities, and fascinating differences emerged within these interviews, so some of this is possible within this work.

The clash between ethnic norms and American assimilation is most acute in second generation families, where foreign-born parents give birth to children in the United States. The tensions between less acculturated parents and their U.S.-oriented children tend to peak during adolescence. During this time, second generation children begin to distance themselves from their foreign-born parents as peers become increasingly important. As they distance themselves physically from their family, they also distance themselves from the protective elements of Latino culture. Second generation

youths—particularly more acculturated teenage girls—ignore the traditionally conservative Latino value of premarital abstinence (Advocates for Youth [AFY], 2006). This can be devastating for Latina adolescents, as lack of parental communication often results in inadequate knowledge about their own bodies, the use of contraception, refusal skills, and access to health care (AFY, 2006).

Walking the Line Between Two Worlds

While a lesser degree of acculturation can put young Latinas at risk for some elements of sexual behavior, such as contraceptive use, the literature confirms that a greater degree of acculturation is associated with a number of negative outcomes. There are, in general, two theories that hypothesize the potential reasons for these negative outcomes. The first is “stress theory” which states that Latina teens may experience a greater level of stress because of the competing cultural values to which they are exposed, in addition to racial discrimination at school. As a result, they are vulnerable to negative coping mechanisms such as early transition to sex (Afable-Munsuz & Brindis, 2006).

The second theory, “cultural norms theory,” confirms earlier statements that characterize a change in norms and values with regard to gender, sexual behavior, and family formation. As Afable-Munsuz and Brindis (2006) explain, acculturation leads to a weakening of the values of familism, *marianismo* (virginity, family responsibility and deference to men), *respeto* (respect for the family), and *simpatia* (maintaining harmonious relationships). Therefore, a more acculturated teen would be less hesitant to violate these norms and values and more likely to engage in sexual behavior.

A study of teens in the Arizona Abstinence-Only education program finds that Latina teens show a greater likelihood of indulging in intercourse than White teens. Indeed, when controlling for other predictors, the risk was much higher for acculturated Latinas (Adam, McGuire, Walsh, Basta, & LeCroy, 2005). Adam and her colleagues (2005) defined acculturation using a single proxy of primary language spoken in the home. They also found that acculturated teens were more likely to be in abusive relationships and less likely to have a strong, supportive father. Both of these variables will be explored in this dissertation in an anecdotal fashion using the NSYR interview data. As a result, acculturated Latinas engage in higher risk sexual behavior than Latina adolescents who are less acculturated. This includes early transition to sex and sex with multiple partners. Over half (58%) of acculturated Latinas had sex before the age of 15 and 46% reported sex with multiple partners over a six month period of time. This is compared to only 17% of less acculturated foreign-born Latinas.

Finally, a critical positive aspect of acculturation that must be considered is that acculturation provides more opportunities for women. Attaining higher levels of education, delaying marriage and childbearing, and working towards a career are all more viable options within the dominant culture. These objectives are not necessarily “better” than the traditional female Latino’s role, but do provide women with more choices. Many adolescents experience this phenomenon in the home, as their mothers enter the workforce and the dominant role of men begins to wane.

The Aftermath—Latina Adolescent Sexual Behavior

Sexual behavior choices made during adolescence often have long-term implications for Latina teenagers. Driscoll et al. (2001) explain that the sexual choices of Latina teens can affect their long-term health, education and career goals. For example, unprotected sex could result in a pregnancy, abortion or sexually transmitted disease, which could compromise future fertility. Teenage mothers are at heightened risk for dropping out of school and living in conditions of poverty (Driscoll et al., 2001; Hoffman, Foster, & Furstenberg, 1993).

Current research suggests that the negative consequences of teenage childbearing may be overstated. However, this research is focused primarily on non-Hispanic Whites and African Americans. Teen birth rates have started to rise once again due to changes in the economy, media, and public policy (Moore, 2008). Because of the growing rate of Latino immigration, it is imperative that studies begin to include the unique experiences and obstacles that Latina teenagers encounter in the United States. The tumult associated with acculturating to a new country with different ethnic norms may play a key role in the rise of adolescent Latina pregnancies. It is vitally important to keep the Latina immigrant community in mind as we raise questions about the negative aftermath that often follows teenage pregnancies.

Initiation of Sexual Activity

Adolescent Latinas living in the United States are molded by the variety of messages they receive from their parents, as well as the ethnic experiences to which they are exposed. These are critical components in the shaping of the adolescent values that will guide them to make pertinent decisions regarding sexuality. For the purposes of this dissertation,

sexual behavior is defined by key markers: the age at first intercourse (including any subsequent pregnancies or births), the use of contraception, number of sexual partners, and frequency of sexual intercourse (Driscoll et al., 2001). These will be explored either anecdotally in NSYR or with survey data from the NSYR. Age at first intercourse is a critical variable. While teen pregnancy has decreased significantly on a national level, the average age at first intercourse has slid to younger adolescents since the mid-1990s (Meier, 2007). Early initiation of sexual activity puts adolescents at risk for sexually transmitted diseases and negative mental health outcomes (Driscoll et al., 2001; Meier, 2007). The average age of first sex for non-low income adolescents is highest for Latinas at 16.44, followed by 16.11 for Whites and 15.46 for Black adolescent females (Meier, 2007). Low income status lowers the age of first sex slightly, but Latinas are still, on average, last to lose their virginity amongst Black and White teenagers in the United States (Meier, 2007). If Latinas initiate sex early it can put them at risk for sexually transmitted diseases and lengthens the timeframe when they can possibly become pregnant. This critical variable will be analyzed using Add Health data.

In the Gilliam, Warden, and Tapia (2004) research, Latina teens report peer pressure as a reason for the initiation of sexual activity. Reasons for becoming sexually active also included being attracted to older men and being influenced by older friends who bragged about sex. The young Latinas felt that “they were in love and thought that sex would maintain the relationship” (Gilliam et al., 2004). Pregnancy was also seen as a mechanism for “keeping their guys with them.” Sexual activity and pregnancy were considered an “out” to a bad home situation. Becoming pregnant and getting married was seen as a way to leave their parent’s home and escape such domestic problems as spousal

abuse and arguing (Gilliam et al., 2004). These themes are recurrent within the interviews with Latinas in the NSYR and are explored fully in Chapter 3.

Roadblock—Consequences of Adolescent Sexual Activity

While the idea of starting a family may appeal to some adolescent Latinas who are looking to escape their undesirable family environment, teenage pregnancy often results in personal and institutional consequences. Personally, it may affect their happiness and chance to achieve high levels of education and career paths. On an institutional level, many young mothers turn to the state for social services and health care. The high rate of unintended pregnancies within the adolescent Latina community has sabotaged too many opportunities for Latinos to get ahead in the economic race. Young women have babies, drop out of school and often give up on education. The young men who have impregnated these Latina women often leave school to pursue jobs that will support their newfound family. The pressure of traditional norms among Latinos also increases the probability that a Latino couple will get marry in the wake of an unplanned pregnancy. There is no doubt that the soaring rates of Latina adolescent pregnancies have detrimental effects on the pursuit of higher education.

First generation Latina adolescents face similar challenges to teenagers in other immigrant groups. One of the primary shared issues is the struggle to find ground between the cultural differences of their country of origin and the United States. As discussed previously, for those who are native-born with foreign-born parents, there is often a significant disconnect between their values and norms. In addition, many new immigrant Latino families experience absolute and relative poverty (Table 1.1). Financial

instability and low socioeconomic status are both common results for Latinas who practice unsafe sexual behavior, such as lack of contraception, multiple or older partners, or early transition to sex, as they are more so for Blacks.

More broadly, even though Latinas seem to wait the longest to initiate sex, a high percentage (44%) of Latinas high school students reported engaging in sex. This statistic surpasses the percentage of sexually active White high school girls (41%). In other words, Latinas are merely delaying sex to later in high school rather than abstaining through adolescence. The age at which they first have sex is a key variable, as research shows that girls who have sex at a younger age are more likely to report that it was nonvoluntary (Centers for Disease Control [CDC], 2004). Becoming sexually active at a younger age is also associated with an overall higher number of sexual partners.

Sex amongst young teens is more likely to occur in the context of a casual liaison, as opposed to a committed relationship (CDC, 2004). This is significant, because teenagers in serious relationships are more likely to have discussions about decisions regarding sexual matters (Holcombe, Ryan, & Manlove, 2008). Although Latina teens are the last to make the transition to sexual intercourse, their probability of getting pregnant is much higher once sexual activity is initiated. When compared to White teenagers, sexually active Mexican-American girls between the ages of 13 and 19 are twice as likely to experience pregnancy and have a live birth (Aneshensel, Fielder, & Becerra, 1989). A startling 51% of Latinas—more than half of the entire group—will become pregnant before the age of 20 (National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy [NCPTP], 2006). Conclusively, we see that later initiation of sex does not appear to be a protective factor against pregnancy for Latinas.

Latinas and Teen Pregnancy

Latinas have the highest teen birth rate in the United States (Schuster, 2003). In California, Latina youth have a teen pregnancy rate four times higher than Whites (Driscoll et al., 2003). The drop in teenage pregnancy among Latinas has also been markedly lower than other racial/ethnic groups in the United States. The rate dropped only 12% in the 90s, compared to the 31% drop among Blacks (NCPTP, 2003; Schuster, 2003). The risk for Latinas having births out of wedlock is 60% higher than non-Latinas (South, 1999). At 81.3%, the clear majority of adolescent Latinas who give birth are unmarried. The percentage of nonmarital childbirths for Latinas varies from 69.4% for Mexican-American adolescents to 87% for Puerto Rican adolescents (NCPTP, 2006). The overall birth rate for teenage Latinas has once again started increasing (Moore, 2008). In a stunning wave, the large and increasing number of Latina teens in the United States is actually bringing up the entire national average of teen pregnancy (Moore, 2008).

One of the most interesting statistics for the purposes of this research is the difference in average age of pregnancy that exists between U.S.- and foreign-born Latinas. U.S.-born Latinas between the ages of 15 and 18 years old were more likely to be pregnant than foreign-born teens, and foreign-born Latinas 19 to 24 years old were more likely to have been pregnant than native-born teens. This is indicative of the theory that teenage pregnancy may indeed be a U.S. cultural phenomenon. In fact, a survey conducted by The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy (2007a) suggests that Latinas in the United States do not feel that getting pregnant is a big deal. Child Trends reports that Latinas are more likely to state that they are “very pleased” with their pregnancy than

other ethnic groups (Manlove, Papillio & Ikramullah, 2004). Acculturated Mexican-American adolescent girls engage in sexual activity earlier and are more likely to consider single parenthood a possibility than those who are less-acculturated. This finding suggests that as acculturation occurs, adolescents transition to sexual behavior earlier and thus experience higher rates of teen pregnancy (East, 1998). This phenomenon is explored in both the NSYR and Add Health. Although teen pregnancy is frowned upon in U.S. culture, Latinas feel so alienated from their families and school, they sometimes seek solace in relationships and sexual behavior.

Repeat births are also an area of concern for Latina teenagers. Franzetta, Schelar, and Manlove (2007) reports that one out of five teen births, or 22%, are repeat births. A second birth as a teen would exacerbate any issues brought on by a first teen birth, such as risk for living in poverty. Latinas are particularly at risk for a subsequent birth, as they are more likely to marry or cohabitate with their partners. Other characteristics of these Latinas include limited English and failure to complete high school (Gilliam et al., 2004). The decrease in repeat births has not been as dramatic for Latinas as it has for other groups. Latina teens are most likely to be pleased with their pregnancy, which increases their likelihood of subsequent pregnancies during adolescence (Franzetta et al., 2007). Forty-six of Latina teens have at least one repeat pregnancy (Gilliam et al., 2004). Gilliam et al. (2004) suggest that using prevention methods before the first birth occurs will be most effective in deterring repeat births.

Sexually Transmitted Infections and Contraception

Contracting a sexually transmitted infection is a potentially serious consequence of adolescent sexual activity. Latinas have higher chlamydia and gonorrhea rates than White teenage girls. In addition, U.S.-born Latinas are more likely to have higher rates of chlamydial infection than foreign-born Latinas (Minnis & Padian, 2001). Latinas account for 20% of the new HIV cases among teenage women, even though they currently account for only 12% of the overall teenage population (AFY, 2006).

Condom use is a critical factor in the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. Latinos use condoms most infrequently in comparison to other groups. One-third of Latinas between ages 15 and 19 reported not using a condom the last time they had sex, compared to one-quarter of all teenage girls. Latinas also convey lower use of contraceptives in general. Over 33% of Latina teens girls reported that they did not use any contraception at the initial of sexual activity in 2002, compared to 25.5% of teens girls overall. This is confirmed by the Add Health data on condom use, which will be presented in later chapters. Condom use is critical, as teen females are less likely to have a birth before the age of 20 if they use contraception a first sex (CDC, 2004). Latino high school students have the lowest rate of contraceptive use during first and last intercourse compared to White, Black, Asian, and Native American high school students (Schuster, 2003). The rate of contraceptive use at first sex did increase for Latina teens between 1995 to 2002 from 53.4% to 66.2%, compared to a rate of 74.5% use at first sex for all teens in 2002 (NCPTP, 2006). Condom use at last sex is 57.7% for Latinas and 62.8% for all high school students (NCPTP, 2006).

Interestingly, Latina teens have a higher use of injectable contraception. This suggests that perhaps long-term contraception methods are better suited to Latina teens. The cultural taboo of discussing sex would prohibit open conversation about contraceptives with parents. Thus, an injected contraception would be easier to hide from family members. Teenagers can be irresponsible when taking a daily contraceptive pill, so a contraceptive shot that lasts up to five years is a much more practical solution (CDC, 2004). It has been reported that teen Latino males are the least likely to use contraception of any racial/ethnic group (CDC, 2004). This compounds with the fact that Latina teens are the least likely to talk about contraception or STDs with their partners prior to sex. Seventy-nine percent of teens report dating someone of the same race ethnicity. This results in a mostly closed racial market, which heightens the risk of pregnancy for those of Latino heritage (Holcombe et al., 2008). The NSYR will explore the comfort Latina teens feel with the various methods of contraception.

One element working in favor of Latina teens is that they seem to have fewer sexual partners. Buzi, Weinman, and Smith (1998) report a significant difference in the number of sexual partners between White, Black and Latina adolescents. Whites had the highest average (5.2 partners), followed by Blacks (3.73) and then Latinas (3.05). Latina adolescents also have fewer partners than their male counterparts, but are almost as likely to be sexually active. Driscoll et al. (2001) ascertain that patterns in Latina sexual behavior suggest that they are entering into long-term monogamous partnerships, whereas Latino adolescents tend to have multiple partners. This may indicate that Latinas who are engaging in sex are involved in what they perceive to be a serious relationship. However, Child Trends reports that teens in more serious relationships use birth control

less consistently (Holcombe et al., 2008). This, coupled with Latino family values, may lessen concerns surrounding pregnancy among Latinas and ultimately contribute to the high birth rate.

The Role of Tradition—A Stifled Source of Communication

Familism

As seen in the work by Portes and Rumbaut (2001) family struggles with assimilation have occurred with immigrants of all nationalities as they try to fit into the dominant culture of the United States. Immigrants attempt to retain aspects of their ethnic culture and inculcate their children with that culture. However, recent scholarship has noted the distinctness of the Latino orientation toward family and the conflicts that Latinos face in their attempts to assimilate with the majority White culture. As Hurtado explains in “Understanding Latino Families”, “even among the most acculturated individuals, Latinos’ attitudes and behaviors are still more familistic than Anglos” (Zambrana 1995). The diversity in color and class among Latinos could serve to increase discrimination against them and place different stressors on Latino families compared to other groups (Rumbaut 1994). Lower socio-economic status and discrimination could increase the pressure to settle in enclaves and increase reliance on extended kin. In *Legacies*, Portes and Rumbaut (2001) find that Latino families display a high level of family cohesion compared to other immigrant groups and 31% of Mexicans displayed a high score on their familism scale, compared to, for example, 21% of European and Canadian immigrants, 22% of Chinese immigrants and 24.6 of Jamaican immigrants. Although some Asian immigrant groups (particularly those with a high number of refugees such as Laotian immigrants) had higher familism score, Latinos had a much higher score on

family cohesion. Family cohesion was comprised of three survey questions asking whether family togetherness was important, whether family members feel close to each other and whether family members like to spend free time together. These three describe elements of normative and demographic familism, both of which will be explored thoroughly in the qualitative data and will be shown to be at-risk in the Latino family due to long work hours. Although Latino families are as diverse as the nationalities they represent, there are some common themes among their family lives that do emerge. Familism, an obligation and orientation to the family, has been used a framework in almost all the extant literature surrounding Latinos (Baca Zinn & Eitzen, 2005; Zambrana, 1995). Familism and more specifically, family cohesion, is important for this analysis because as the seams unravel within the Latino community, so does the communication between family members. As Baca Zinn and Eitzen (2005) explain, there are different components to familism. Demographic familism involves family size, and structural familism entails extended-kin households. Other types of familism include normative familism, which places value on “family unity and solidarity,” and behavioral familism, which details the amount of interaction between family members and kin. This is detailed in the family stories told in the NSYR semi-structured interviews. All of these types of familism can be examined using qualitative and quantitative data. The Add Health data includes variables on household size, the importance of gender roles, whether a mother works for pay and the expectation of teens to marry by the age of 25.

Latinos have long been characterized as emphasizing “traditional” values and strict gender roles. These are a facet of familism that can differ by country of origin and level of acculturation. Of the various country from which Latinos hail, those of Mexican

descent have been shown to hold more traditional values on most indicators (Raffaelli & Green, 2003). The majority of the Latinos in the United States are of Mexican descent (63%), which does not include the 6 million undocumented Mexican nationals (Kochhar et al., 2005). Therefore, it is safe to presume that the cultural beliefs of Mexicans in particular are of great importance in an analysis of Latinos in the United States. Mexicans exert a significant influence on the Latino culture in the form of enclaves, a very large Mexican-dominated media presence, and noteworthy consumerism (Penaloza, 1994). Generally speaking, although there is great diversity within the various Latino nationalities, most studies do show Latinos have a tendency toward more traditional views when compared to Blacks and Whites (Baca Zinn & Eitzen, 2005; Zambrana, 1995). Retaining strong traditional views can have positive and challenging aspects when considering communication between parents and adolescents, particularly regarding sexual behavior.

What Is a Family?

Latinos possess different attitudes and expectations than other racial/ethnic groups in their family interactions. These expectations may include the amount of communication expected to pass between family members, as well as the very definition of “family.” As Hurtado states, “Whites do not feel the need to communicate on a frequent basis with family or live close together, whereas Mexican-Americans tend to keep more closely-knit” (Hurtado as cited in Zambrana, 1995). Mexican-Americans tend to include more people in their definition of extended family and kin. These extra extended family members are godparents (*compadres* and *comadres*), and respected elder members of the community (Zambrana, 1995). Blacks have been shown to occupy the middle ground

between Latinos and Whites when it comes to behavioral familism. Research suggests that Blacks may be more likely to call upon extended kin for material help, whereas Latinos are more likely to rely on kin for social and emotional support (Hurtado as cited in Zambrana, 1995). Assimilation has caused a rift in many extended families. There is a growing independence of nuclear family units and reverse migration. As a result, the amount of guidance and monitoring decreases within Latino households, which could have ramifications in the realm of adolescent sexual behavior.

There are elements of familism in the Latino culture that remain even after acculturation has occurred. Hurtado reports that in spite of acculturation, Latinos report a high level of family support and a desire to be geographically close to their families (Zambrana, 1995). However, some aspects of familism do decrease with acculturation. These include exclusively relying on family members as role models, as well as serving as the only source of financial and emotional support for members of the extended family. The NSYR interviews will expound upon the reasons for declining parental and familial communication as it relates to familism.

Latinos who live in locations with a large Latino population maintain more contact with their kin than those in more secluded areas (Zambrana, 1995). The southern region of the United States boasts only a smattering of Latino enclaves. However, because Latinos tend to have larger families, they constitute a small, but rapidly growing school-age population. As the second generation Latino children begin to attend schools with a vastly different culture, the “values mismatch” problem may magnify. The South is historically very different than the traditional immigrant regions in the West. Attending schools devoid of a significant Latino presence may cause serious repercussions. Second

generation children may acculturate more quickly and further distance themselves from their parents. Another possibility is that they will experience isolation and alienation. This may lead them to negative coping mechanisms, such as early or promiscuous sexual behavior. At a minimum, this will present new challenges for both populations as new issues begin to emerge.

Gender Expectations Within Latino Families

Gender roles play a significant function in Latino family dynamics. There are explicit roles for men and women, which translate into different expectations for sons and daughters. Differential treatment between boys and girls has been documented in Latino families (Raffaelli & Green, 2003). Specific expectations surround behavior during adolescence and “acceptable adult pathways” (Driscoll et al., 2001). Adolescent girls are encouraged to practice abstinence and eventually follow the path of motherhood in the context of a committed relationship. Given these gender role differences, Latino children mainly communicate with the parent of the same gender (Gilliam, 2007). Anecdotal evidence from the NSYR semi-structured confirms this assertion in later chapters.

Traditional Latino families have little tolerance for daughters and wives who do not fulfill their prescribed gender roles. Hurtado explains that the brunt of familism lies on the shoulders of women, thus reinforcing their subordinate status. He states that women are relied upon for health matters and men are called upon for home repairs and upkeep. There is less cultural support for women to receive higher education and career status (Driscoll et al., 2001). It is generally more acceptable for women to work inside the house, rather than in an outside office. A study of Cubans in tri-generational households shows that the elderly women provided childcare and contributed their income to the

household (Hurtado as cited in Zambrana, 1995). Within the context of women having specific familial roles, there is a strong bond created between Latino women. “Same-sex family members are relied on for financial issues and personal problems, and feelings of solidarity are greater with same-sex family members as well” (Zambrana, 1995).

Familism is characterized by the view that childbearing is “an integral part of family life and the feminine gender role” (Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004). When compared to their White counterparts, Mexican Americans tend to have a negative view of being single and strongly encourage the idea of marriage within the larger familial context. There are several common Spanish words and phrases that Latinos use to describe the role of women within the family, as well as a more general orientation toward household structure. In addition to *familismo* (Spanish for familism) there is “*marianismo*” which, “based on the Catholic ideal of the Virgin Mary, emphasizes the woman’s role as mother and celebrates the mother’s self-sacrifice and suffering for her children” (McLoyd et al., 2000).

Another concept in Latino culture is “*respeto*,” which refers to the hierarchy of power in the family should always be respected and observed (Afable-Munsuz & Brindis, 2006; Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004). This structure empowers the dominant and independent role of men, and the submissive helping role of women (Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004). “*Simpatia*” is the emphasis on maintaining harmonious relationships (Afable-Munsuz & Brindis, 2006). *Simpatia* plays a crucial part in enabling *respeto* to be observed properly.

There is evidence that these traditional beliefs influence the choices that adolescents make with regard to sexual behavior (Driscoll, Brindis, Biggs, & Valderrama, 2004; East,

1998; Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004). Latino adolescents report stricter rules about dating and chastity while living in the home. This can be a protective factor against first becoming sexually active, but may lower contraceptive use once the transition to sex has occurred because Latinas feel that they cannot go to their parents with questions about contraception. This theory will be explored in the Add Health data (Hovell, Sipan, Blumber, Atkins, Hofstetter, & Krietner, 1994; Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004). In fact, many Latinas expressed ambivalence at the prospect of becoming pregnant. They understood that a nonmarital birth was not the ideal scenario, but recognized it as a way to “escape” a strict household (Meschke, Bartholomae, & Zentall, 2000).

In their study of family influences on Latina and White adolescents’ sexual behavior, Hovell et al. (1994) found that Latina women were expected to be more compliant with sex roles. They also noted that Latinas reported substantially less sexual experience than White women. This may be traced back to the dramatically different social and ethnic mores that exist for women in different countries. In Mexico, many Latinas wear skirts instead of pants in deference to the traditional and conservative gender roles. Many Mexican women in the United States still find wearing pants “socially unacceptable” (Penaloza, 1994). Clearly, traditional family values play an important part of making more profound decisions about sexual behavior and dress. These findings regarding the importance of marriage, children and chastity for single women may lead to a different sequencing of events in terms of pregnancy, childbearing, and marriage for Latinas. All of these critical elements of gender in the Latino community will be fleshed out using the data from NSYR and Add Health.

The Role of Religion in Latino Families

Religion serves as a primary factor related to ethnic values. The majority of Latinos are Catholic, and thus the Roman Catholic Church has had a significant impact on all of Latin America. The current form of Catholicism practiced by most Latinos is comprised of a mix of Roman Catholicism, customs of indigenous populations, and African slave beliefs. However, there are sizable numbers of Latinos who are Protestant (Pentecostal) or Mormon. Overall, Catholicism is an integral piece of the belief systems of many Latinos. Driscoll et al. (2001) describe the Catholicism practiced by Latinos in the United States as more centered on family and the home than European Catholicism. These ideals affect attitudes and values that are integral to this research—namely gender roles, sexual behavior, values, morality, family formation, socialization and expectations (Driscoll et al., 2001).

Day hypothesizes that Catholicism impacts the reproduction rate of minority populations who live in countries with high economic developments (Sabagh & Lopez, 1980). Sabagh and Lopez (1980) confirm this theory. Their findings revealed that Chicanas, women of Mexican descent who are born and raised in the United States, have fertility rates that are impacted by religiosity. This does not hold true for those brought up in Mexico. In her study of Mexican immigrants and their sex lives, Gloria Gonzáles-López (2005) finds that religion inspires women to experience guilt and remorse around the subject of premarital sex, while none of the men express this feeling of guilt.

The cultural imperative to remain a virgin until marriage permeates Latino culture. However, this cannot be attributed solely to religion. In his ethnography of second-generation or higher immigrants, Villarruel (1998) interviewed Puerto Rican and

Mexican adolescents in Detroit and Philadelphia. These teenagers claimed that although virginity was important to them, it was “not necessarily associated with religious doctrine or practice. The necessity of preventing pregnancy was also considered important.” In her book, Gonzalez-Lopez states “The Catholic Church has held powerful control over the sexuality of Mexican women, but the moral standards of Catholicism are only one variable influencing women’s ideas about virginity” (González-López, 2005). It can thus be assumed that while religion may not be a socialization agent in and of itself, it has a vital role in the myriad of values and doctrines that parents pass on to their children.

Religion also plays a role in the acceptability of birth control. Latina teens stated that their families’ religious views made birth control unacceptable. In Gilliam et al. (2004) one teen said, “If it’s God’s will then you’re going to get pregnant; don’t worry about birth control.” Catholic schools promote sexual abstinence, which serves as a discouragement against not only sex, but also birth control methods. However, many researchers are reexamining the impact that religion has on sexual behavior. Regnerus (2007) found that when parents discussed sexuality with their children, race and ethnicity seemed to have more of an impact on their approach. The NSYR interviews provide an unparalleled and enlightening view into the religious lives of Latina teens, and how they synthesize their beliefs with decisions to become sexually active.

Identity Formation and Acculturation

Ethnicity is a key factor in how children develop identities. Identity formation is critical, because it translates into self-esteem and decision-making during adolescence. This is especially relevant for minorities who may feel a separation from the dominant culture. Many Latino children are bicultural, which can alternately serve as either a source of

strength or tension (Driscoll et al., 2001). Therefore, a discussion of youth and adolescent development is central to any examination of the sexual behavior of adolescents. Most developmental models include a facet of race and ethnicity in identity formation (Rodriguez & Morrobel, 2004). In these models, “culture, ethnicity, and race are viewed as critical dimensions of growth and development, underlying the development of identity, belief, cognition, and social interactions.”

Rodriguez and Morrobel (2004) discuss two key tenets in ethnic identity research. The first is a developmental process of ethnic identity. The second tenet is that the establishment of a Latino ethnic identity is highly dependent on relationships with others (Rodriguez & Morrobel, 2004). One of the most important stages of human development is adolescence. Latino youth may face different identity challenges than other U.S. subpopulations. Latino adolescents are challenged with learning how to successfully navigate through two different cultures. This often leads to identity conflicts that are stressful. Latina teens may turn to engage in negative coping mechanisms in an effort to deal with the tension they are experiencing (Rodriguez & Morrobel, 2004).

Generation Gaps

First generation (foreign-born) youth who are experiencing the shock of an entirely new culture may not have the tools to make a smooth transition into the dominant culture (Driscoll et al., 2004; Rodriguez & Morrobel, 2004). Some of these adolescents may have taken part in a dangerous journey to come to the United States. Many of them may not be comfortable with the English language, and others still may have to deal with the stress of being in this country “illegally” (Driscoll et al., 2004; Rodriguez & Morrobel, 2004). The

NSYR interviews provide a thorough and detailed account of the experiences of foreign-born Latinas in the United States and their struggles with family life and school.

Kochhar et al. (2005) reports that more than half of Latino youths are second-generation. Second-generation youth are U.S.-born children with at least one immigrant parent. Because they are born in the United States, adaptation to American culture can be easier for them. These teens face many challenging issues. However, there may be what I have labeled as a “values mismatch” with their foreign-born parent(s). This may be a source of conflict between the adolescent and their parents that occurs because they are living essentially in different cultural worlds. Bicultural youths must deal with the “American world shaped by peers, the media and other potent, pervasive, and often attractive cultural forces” (Driscoll et al., 2004). At home, Latino youths often experience a contradiction between the culture introduced by their parents and the surrounding values, attitudes, and language of the dominant culture (Driscoll et al., 2004). As we will see in the analysis of both datasets, this is a key component in the quality of the parent–adolescent relationship.

Driscoll et al. (2004) report that one-third of Latino youth are third-generation. This means both the youth and their parents are U.S. born. They are mostly fluent in English, but remain a member of a disadvantaged minority group. They may face some of the same challenges as African-American youths (Driscoll et al., 2004). Latino adolescents tend to be more aware of their lower status in the U.S. stratification system, and thus identify more as “minorities” than as “immigrants” (Driscoll et al., 2004).

Talking About Sex—Discussion vs. Education

Most studies that have examined adolescent sexual behavior have focused on parent–adolescent communication as the most important agent in sexual education (Meschke et al., 2000; Miller, Forehand, & Kotchick, 1999). It has been shown that teens who are able to communicate with their parents frequently, openly, and in a positive manner about sex have lower rates of sexual activity, sexual behavior and teen pregnancy (Driscoll et al., 2004; Meschke et al., 2000). Other positive effects of parental communication include later initiation of sexual behavior, more consistent condom use, and a lower rate of sexually transmitted infections (Hutchinson & Wood, 2007). Parent communication can serve to offset the influence of peers. Teens will be more likely to develop sexual norms that closely resemble those of their parents (Hutchinson & Wood, 2007).

However, other studies show that the relationship between parental communication and sexual activity may be more complicated (Meschke et al., 2000; Romo, Lefkowitz, Sigman, & Terry, 2002). While most parents state that they would like to be the primary source of information on sex for their children, many actually avoid the topic because it can be uncomfortable to discuss. This is why I use variables in the Add Health data to inquire about not only the amount of parental communication about sex, but also the comfort level parents feel discussing sexuality with their teens. Parents can feel embarrassed, worry that they do not have enough knowledge, or be concerned that discussing the matter might encourage their children to become sexually active (Sprecher, Harris, & Meyers, 2008).

Sprecher et al. (2008) explain that there is a significant difference between discussing sex and providing information and “education” about sex. The literature shows that Latino parents are less likely to communicate with their children regarding sexual behavior than other groups. Parents of Mexican descent show the least amount of communication (Raffaelli & Green, 2003). Similarly, Latina teens are less likely than adolescents of other ethnicities to have discussions with their parents about sex or to share their parents’ values about sex (NCPTP, 2007a).

Open Communication—Deterrent or Enabler?

In their study of 55 Latina mothers and their adolescent children, Romo et al. (2002) found that discussing sex in Latino families presented both positive and negative effects on adolescent sexual behavior. The tone of the conversation was the most significant variable. Latina mothers generally discussed their personal beliefs and values about dating and sexuality. This was coupled with parental advice and cautionary messages, which was previously described as “*consejos*.” Romo et al. (2002) discovered that the mother’s own viewpoint was most associated with adolescents deciding to abstain from or delay sex one year later. Additionally, when mothers spent more time discussing their own experiences with dating and sex, the adolescents reported more openness in the mother-child relationship one year later. They also developed more conservative attitudes toward premarital sex (Romo et al., 2002). However, this work also shows that when mothers engaged in monitoring the teen’s day-to-day activities, the adolescents engaged in more sexual activity one year later. Researchers suggest that the extant literature explains this phenomenon to be the result of a parent already being suspicious that their teenager is sexually active. These types of conversations were characterized by a focus on

what the child was doing, as opposed to the mother explaining her values (Romo et al., 2002).

Baumeister, Flores, & VanOss Marín (1995), examined Latina adolescents' perceptions of how much their parents discussed sexuality as it relates to sexual behavior. They observed two groups of Latina adolescents; 40 who have never been pregnant, and 43 who have been pregnant or have children. Their results show that Latinas who were not pregnant received more information from their parents concerning sexuality (Baumeister et al., 1995). Both parents, particularly the fathers, conveyed a clear message to their adolescent children that they should not have sex in the next month. This is consistent with the findings in Romo et al. In addition, the least discussed topic in this entire sample was contraceptive use, which is consistent with other studies' findings on the Latino aversion to discussing birth control (Baumeister et al., 1995; Gilliam, 2007).

Similarly, the study of pregnant and nonpregnant teens in the Los Angeles area conducted by Adolph, Ramos, Linton, and Grimes (1995), found that good communication with one's mother and emotional connection with friends were inversely associated with pregnancy. This study established that the following variables were significantly linked with pregnancy: alcohol, drug use, favorable view of premarital sex, older onset of menarche, and being older. Interestingly enough, some variables that the authors had anticipated to be significant, actually revealed little variance between the pregnant and not-pregnant populations. These variables included self-esteem, perception of love by father and mother, and poor communication with father (Adolph et al., 1995). This study is particularly robust because of its large sample size of 300 participants. The 1993 study conducted by Christopher, Johnson, and Roosa (2008) showed that age, views on

premarital sex, and perception of best friend's sexual experience were significant predictors of personal sexual behavior, such as fondling and kissing.

The exact words employed in conversations are fundamental to understanding the nuances of parental communication. In a study using Latina focus groups, Gilliam finds that Latina mothers and fathers primarily transmit "traditional" messages to their teens (Gilliam, 2007). This, as shown previously, has led to mixed results regarding sexuality and, in this case, pregnancy. She finds that mothers have a strong influence on their daughters when it comes to making decisions that are connected with pregnancy. Latina mothers in this sample were shown to use negative messages in the form of examples and scare tactics to dissuade their teens from becoming pregnant outside of marriage. In their study of 32 pregnant Mexican-American and White adolescents, De Anda, Becerra, & Fielder (1998) found that the mothers and older sisters of the Mexican-American adolescents mainly used vague warnings such as "Watch out for boys. They only want one thing." They also made ambiguous references to birth control, making statements like "take care of yourself." Many of the mothers and sisters used examples from their own lives to serve as cautionary tales. These female role models discouraged pregnancy by saying things like, "Look at me, six kids!" and warned the adolescents to not "make the same mistakes." The NSYR gives adolescents' accounts of what messages were conveyed by their parents.

Gilliam et al. (2004) report that parents of young Latinas sent very strong messages regarding sexual activity. Or, perhaps, that these particular teenage Latinas certainly came away with an understanding about the proper terms of sexual behavior. In this study, participants stated that their parents would "kill" them if they knew that they were

having sex, and that “if you have sex before marriage you are a whore. It does not matter if you are using birth control or not” (Gilliam et al., 2004). These young women expressed that while most of their parents wanted them to go to school, it was acceptable to become pregnant so long as they got married.

Father-daughter communication is an under-analyzed but vitally important aspect of Latina sexual behavior. Surveys mostly rely upon mothers’ responses because they are usually the primary caregivers. It is assumed that they know more about the day-to-day lives of their children (Regnerus, 2007). Gilliam (2007) did examine fathers in her study. Teens reported having fathers who were “controlling, strict, and protective.” Though fathers rarely addressed pregnancy directly, they did expect certain behavior, such as church attendance. When there was discussion, it usually surrounded protecting the daughter’s virginity with messages such as “protect your little treasure” (González-López, 2005). Absent fathers, stepfathers and long work hours were cited as the primary reasons for poor father-daughter communication and a corresponding increased susceptibility to pregnancy (Gilliam, 2007). Meschke et al. (2000) state that fathers play a very important role in impacting their daughters’ sexual behavior. Perceived paternal disapproval has been shown to delay first intercourse. Day (1992) found that the presence of a father dramatically reduced the chance of Chicana women deciding to engage in sexual behavior.

Socioeconomic status is another important determinant of whether parents discuss sexual issues with their teenage children. Non-Latino parents of high socioeconomic status are more likely to discuss sex with their children. Compared to Latinos who boast a high

socioeconomic status, low-income Latino parents are more likely to engage in discussions surrounding sexuality (Raffaelli & Green, 2003).

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy (2007b) conducted a survey documenting the views of Latino parents and adolescents on sex and pregnancy. This report showed that Latino parents may be overestimating the impact of the conversations they have with their teens surrounding delaying sex and avoiding pregnancy. Eighty percent of parents reported that they have had a valuable conversation with their teen regarding sexual behavior. However, only 63% of Latina teens thought the conversations were helpful. A significant finding of the NCPTP Survey (2007b) revealed that 75% of Latino parents did not know what to say when it came to discussions surrounding sex, and admitted that they were sending inconsistent messages. Because parents are the primary source of information for adolescents regarding sexual issues, this discovery is both fascinating and extremely troubling. If teenagers cannot receive accurate and straightforward messages about sex from their parents, whom can they entrust? The NCPTP survey (2007b) confirms this, with 51% of Latina girls stating that their parents exert the most influence on their decisions about sex, with friends coming in at a distant 21%.

It is of interest that both Latino parents and teens thought that a strong abstinence message should be sent. However, when given the choice on whether they wanted more information on abstinence, birth control, or both, the overwhelming response was both. This held for Blacks as well, but not Whites. This demonstrates adherence to traditional values, although not necessarily at the expense of information surrounding contraceptive use.

Conversations About Menstruation

Age at menarche is a significant determinant of adolescent pregnancy in many studies (Baumeister et al., 1995). Teitelman (2004) states “as girls experience menarche, many learn to associate their bodies and emerging sexuality with shame and danger, and, subsequently, come to feel less sure of their bodies and selves.” She goes on to note that this could have a negative impact on their perceptions of their bodies and sexuality. Therefore, messages about pubertal development are also important to explore. In their study of urban, low-income girls and mothers, O’Sullivan, Meyer-Bahlburg, & Watkins (2000) find that the Latino community spoke of puberty in “vague terms, relying frequently on euphemisms.” As a result, Latina girls had a lesser understanding of puberty and sexuality than a similarly-aged sample of African American girls. On a parallel note, Latina mothers expressed feelings of “shame, secrecy, and sacredness” regarding these pubescent changes (O’Sullivan et al., 2000). Mothers seemed genuinely upset for their daughters, and the changes that their bodies were embarking upon. In contrast, Black mothers discussed sexuality in a positive manner while helping them deal with issues such as tampons, birth control and abortion (O’Sullivan et al., 2000).

Coming into Their Own—A Structural Layout

Chapter Two will describe the mixed method approach employed for this research and give details on both, the qualitative and quantitative data used. The chapter includes descriptions of the analytical samples and variables used in the analysis of the quantitative data.

The findings from the NSYR in-depth interviews of teens of all races will constitute Chapter Three. This chapter will explore the semi-structured interviews with Latinas and

how they describe their family life and experiences. Their attempt to negotiate a balance between retaining family life, attaining the American Dream and staying connected to their children will be fully investigated.

Chapter Four will detail the results of bivariate quantitative analyses. Results from the Add Health data show how familism and culture affects parent's attitudes, and thus communication with their adolescent children regarding sexual behavior.

Chapter Five will present the results of multivariate analyses using the Add Health survey data to examine familism, acculturation, the parent–adolescent relationship, parental communication, teen attitudes and sociodemographic variables affect teen sexual behavior. The sixth and final chapter will present concluding thoughts.

Chapter II

Conceptualizing the Analysis of Latina Adolescent Family Life and Sexual Behavior

Because of the complexity and diversity of the Latina experience in the United States, two datasets are used to explore Latina adolescent sexual behavior with both a qualitative and a quantitative lens. Chapter 3 will consist of in-depth analysis of the face-to-face interviews of the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR). The semi-structured NSYR interviews provide rich data on how Latina adolescents talk about their lives, their families, and their own romantic and sexual involvements. The interviews of Latina adolescents can be compared to those of White and Black girls to better understand the differences. In Chapters 4 and 5, the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) allows me to gauge how attitudes actually translate into actions and outcomes immediately and in the future. Add Health, with its sampling method, also provides robust statistical power that allows me to more confidently generalize to the larger population.

Figure 2.1 shows the conceptual model which guides this analysis. Race and ethnicity are related to the level of familism and acculturation which are in turn related to the parent–adolescent relationship. However each concept is also associated with sexual behavior. Although I explore these interrelationships in descriptive analyses, my primary goal is to understand the independent effects of these factors with regard to sexual behavior outcomes and thus I do not model the indirect pathways of these variables. Chapter 3 will explore the connection between race/ethnicity and familism and how that

interaction affects the parent–adolescent relationship and communication. Chapter 4 will explore the same interactions using quantitative data and Chapter 5 will explore how all of these components are associated with sexual behavior.

National Study of Youth and Religion Semi-Structured Interviews

The National Study of Youth and Religion is a longitudinal, multi-method study of the religious and spiritual lives of American youth. Although the focus of the study is religion, both the nationally representative telephone surveys and the in-person, semi-structured interviews involve questions on a variety of topics, including race/ethnicity, family dynamics, peer interaction, morality, and dating and sexual behavior. Here I focus my analysis on the semi-structured interviews that come from the first wave of the study.

The NSYR started with a telephone survey of a nationally representative sample of 3,290 English and Spanish speaking adolescents between the ages of 13 and 17 and their parents. This initial survey was conducted from July 2002 to April 2003.

The method used to conduct the survey was random-digit-dial (RDD). This involves employing a sample of randomly generated telephone numbers representative of all household telephones in the United States (Regnerus, 2007). This method is ideal for this dissertation, because it includes adolescents who are normally missed in school-based surveys. As Latinos have the highest drop out rate of any group, using a telephone-based survey ensures the inclusion of dropouts and nonenrollees, as well as adolescents who are home-schooled. However, it does miss those homes that do not have a landline. The parent interview in the NSYR was generally conducted with the mother of the adolescent. This is advantageous for research concerning the adolescent Latina population as the

literature review confirms that Latinas tend to primarily communicate with their mothers about sensitive subjects, such as sexual behavior (Halgunseth et al., 2006; Regnerus, 2007).

Following the first telephone survey, in the spring and summer of 2003, 267 in-depth personal interviews were conducted with a subset of the survey respondents. These interviews consisted of thorough discussions about their family lives, spirituality, religion, and social lives (see www.youthandreligion.org for a copy of the interview guide). Of the 267 teens that participated in these interviews, twenty-two were Latina females and three of these interviews were conducted in Spanish. The great strength of the NSYR is that it includes recent immigrants and captures the diversity of the “new Latinos” who more often hail from Central and South America. In addition, I personally conducted fifteen of the nineteen interviews with Latinas, include all three of the Spanish-language interviews. The population of the Latinas in the NSYR is in stark contrast to Latino immigrants who came before 2000 who were primarily of Mexican and Puerto Rican descent.

The participants in the in-depth interviews represented the great diversity this country has to offer. Participants were selected to try to achieve a balance on the following characteristics: whether they lived in a suburban/urban/rural area, sex, age, race, household income, religion, and school type, and importantly for this research, language spoken (Regnerus, 2007; Smith & Denton, 2005). These interviews were conducted by a group of seventeen trained interviewers in 45 states across the United States providing a thorough lens through which one can view the life of American teens.

The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health

The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) is a nationally representative study of over 20,000 adolescents in grades 7 through 12 in the United States in 1995 (Harris, Florey, Tabor, Bearman, Jones, & Udry, 2003).² The study used a multistage, stratified, school-based, cluster sampling design. A stratified sample of 80 high schools was selected with probability proportional to size. For each high school, a feeder school was also selected with probability proportional to its student contribution to the high school. The school-based sample therefore has a pair of schools in each of 80 communities. This large sample size allows an unprecedented look at the adolescent Latina population and their sexual health. The Add Health data also includes an oversample of Cubans and Puerto Ricans, which adds to the diversity of Latinas in Add Health. The oversample of Puerto Ricans is especially important, in that most Puerto Ricans identify themselves as Black and are quite assimilated into the U.S. culture. This will give a different lens than the NSYR data which consists of more recent immigrants.

An in-school questionnaire was administered to every student who attended each selected school on a particular day during the period of September 1994 to April 1995. The in-school questionnaire was completed by more than 90,000 adolescents, and was intended to measure school-context variables, identify friendship networks, measure a variety of health conditions, and obtain data in order to select special samples. School characteristics were obtained from a self-administered school supervisor interview. This procedure then allowed for the selection of students for a more detailed home interview.

²Further information on Add Health can be obtained at the Carolina Population Center Website (www.cpc.unc.edu/addhealth)

In a second level of sampling, adolescents and parents were selected for in-home interviews. From the school rosters, a random sample of some 200 students (100 of each gender) from each school pair was selected. This sampling was executed irrespective of school size in order to produce the core in-home sample of about 20,000 adolescents. Each teen was accompanied a parent, usually their mother. A number of special over-samples were chosen by using screeners from the in-school questionnaires. This over-sample included physically disabled adolescents, Black adolescents from highly educated families, several ethnic samples (Cuban, Puerto Rican, and Chinese adolescents), a genetic sample (identical and fraternal twins, full sibs, half sibs, and unrelated adolescents in the same household), and saturated samples in 14 schools. These in-home interviews provide the core attitudinal data from the adolescents as well as their parents. The information garnered from this study is unparalleled.

During Wave II in 1996, a follow up interview was conducted with the adolescents who were in grades 7–11 during Wave I. High school seniors who were part of a special genetic sample were also re-interviewed.

In 2000–2001, a third wave of interviews was conducted with the adolescents who had been interviewed during Wave I. The respondents were aged 18 to 26 during Wave III and thus had completed their teenage years. This made for an ideal data set to examine sexual behavior. More than 15,000 original Wave I respondents were re-interviewed.

This dissertation will use data from Waves I and III of Add Health.

Methodology—A Synthesis of Interview and Survey Data

Because of the substantive nature and complexity of this research, a mixed-methods approach is employed. This allows the most appropriate measures to be gauged in order to reach a more complete understanding of Latino family life in the United States and its effects on Latina adolescent sexual behavior. Specifically, many theories on the assimilation and the overall experience of immigrants to the United States have been based on White-European immigrants. Studies of assimilation of the new immigrant groups are typically based on local, unrepresentative samples or focus on one ethnic group. Employing mixed-methods helps to address the weaknesses of generalized quantitative research. The use of categories and theories may not be applicable to smaller groups. Mixed-methods allow me to provide the in-depth detail of Latino family life, while simultaneously granting external validity (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989).

Additionally, the extant literature indicates that useful information concerning Latina adolescent sexuality is limited and more exploratory investigation into the processes underlying their behavior is necessary. Consequently, constraining my analysis to survey methods, which are especially strong for testing well-formulated hypotheses with theoretically driven and representative systematic measurement, would limit the potential of my research. By incorporating the analysis of qualitative data here, I can use the strengths of this type of analysis (i.e., the discovery of new themes, social dynamics, and theory-building) to enrich this work. Latinos are underrepresented in sociological research as is the acknowledgement of the cultural distinctness of the population. Therefore, it is important to give a voice to the participants, in their own words, to elucidate the data.

Qualitative Analysis—The Latina Experience in Their Own Words

To accomplish the first goal of understanding the intricacies of Latino family life in the United States, I use the in-depth one-on-one semi-structured interviews from the NSYR to investigate the experiences of teens of different races and many nationalities. These interviews shed comparative light on teen attitudes and experiences while also serving to inform my quantitative analysis on familism. Moreover, I present a detailed portrait of life experiences in the adolescents' own words. These vignettes serve to detail the struggles and triumphs of day-to-day life of Latino families in the United States compared to the experiences of Whites and Blacks. In order to achieve this goal I read through all fifty interviews multiple times. I sought to find themes such as strict gender socialization, messages about the dominant culture, future goals (as they relate to marriage and childbearing), methods of ethnic socialization and relationships with extended kin. I also explored potential struggles between home life and school culture. The in-depth interviews provided a roadmap for the quantitative research as well as identified challenges in examining familism.

To examine how parents' communication styles and attitudes towards sexual behavior vary by race, I also used the NSYR interviews. I was able to explore how family life affects parental communication styles and attitudes. I examined specific messages given to Latinas from their parents regarding sexuality, and the teen's corresponding attitudes regarding the topic.

This level of detail cannot be obtained by survey data, but is necessary to expand the breadth of knowledge on this topic. I will use percentages and numbers in my analysis,

even though the sample is not representative in order to convey how common the sentiments described were among the interview sample.

Quantitative Analysis—Bivariate and Multivariate Analysis

To accomplish the second goal of this dissertation, to examine the relationships between family life and parent–adolescent communication and attitudes, I use bivariate analysis.

Bivariate analysis is employed to examine the relationships of pairs of variables especially relevant to the key theoretical concepts explore in this dissertation. In Chapter 4, I analyze how differing amounts of familism and rates of acculturation are associated with sexual behavior, the parent–adolescent relationship, and parental communication.

My third aim, to model the impact of culture and acculturation on sexual behavior, is explored using multivariate analysis in Chapter 5. The multivariate analysis will examine how familism, acculturation, the parent–adolescent relationship, parent–adolescent communication and teen attitudes are associated with sexual behavioral outcomes. The general hypothesis guiding this model is that familism, acculturation, the parent–adolescent relationship, and parental communication are associated with sexual behavior outcomes, and that these processes vary by race and ethnicity. I plan to estimate these models by race in order to facilitate a comparative analysis in the experience of White, Black, and Latina teens.

For my analytic techniques, I either use logistic regression and Cox proportional hazard modeling depending on the outcome variable. Logistic regression is employed upon my dichotomous outcome variables (e.g., ever had sex, contraception at first and last sex, and teen pregnancy). I conduct Cox proportional hazard modeling for the age at first sex to

account for the fact that not everyone has had the opportunity to have sex by Wave III (about 10% have not had sex by Wave III, personal communication from Dr. Harris, March, 2009). This technique also prevents truncation bias. Models are also run separately by race. While I would like to have conducted regressions for races other than Whites, Black and Latinas and for different Latino nationalities, once I constrain the sample to only those who were sexually active at Wave I for the analysis of birth control at first sex, the sample sizes for each race and ethnic group do not allow further disaggregation (and the sample size for Asians is very small given their high age for sexual debut). Although not representative, I do try to describe the experiences of different nationalities captured in the NSYR interviews. In future research, I plan to examine the relationships studied here with age and teen pregnancy for specific Latina ethnic groups involving Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban and South American groups, which can include the complete Wave III female sample.

Analytic Sample

The analytical sample for the qualitative analyses were selected by matching the 19 complete interviews of Latinas in the NSYR with teens of other races within the same income range and the same age. For example, one 15 year old Latina came from a family with an annual income of between \$10,000 and \$20,000 per year. Therefore I selected a teen in the sample that also was 15 and came from a family with an income of between \$10,000 and \$20,000 per year. The majority of Latinas in the sample came from families of annual incomes of less than \$50,000, therefore the analytical sample is skewed toward families in this income range. One Latina was not able to be matched on income, as she was the only teen girl in the NSYR interview sample who came from a family that made

less than \$10,000 per year. Also if I could not match on age, then only income was used. One Latina had her family income listed as missing, therefore she was matched with a Black teen of the same age who also had missing family income. Overall, 1 Latina teen came from a family with income less than \$10,000, 1 Latina came from a family with income between \$10,000-\$20,000 per year, 4 Latinas came from families with income between \$20,000 and \$30,000 per year, 4 Latinas came from families with income between \$30,000 and \$50,000 per year, 4 Latinas came from families with income between \$50,000-\$70,000 per year,, and 3 Latinas came from a family with income between \$70,000 and \$90,000 per year. One Latina teen had missing data on family income. So, overall, about 30% of the interview sample of Latinas came from families in or near poverty and 40% came from families with income over \$50,000. This yielded a sample of 50 interviews of White, Black, and Latina teens from all over the United States representing a variety of ethnic backgrounds and religious faiths. Specifically, there were 19 Latinas, 22 Whites, 7 Blacks, and 2 teens of “other” race in the analytic sample. In addition, nine of the Latinas had a biological father in the home, three had stepfathers, and 7 lived with single mothers. Eleven Latinas stated that they had been brought up Catholic, even though some did not consider themselves Catholic anymore. One Latina was Baptist-Pentacostal, one foreign-born Latina was Seventh-Day Adventist, five considered their families to be simply “Christian”, and one Latina’s family was non-religious. Of the 19 Latinas, four were foreign-born and fifteen were U.S. born.

The quantitative analysis is conducted on three different groups of teen girls. My largest sample is the primary analytic sample ($N = 4810$). This sample consists of White females ($N = 3059$), Black females ($N = 1113$), and Latinas ($N = 638$) who were interviewed at

Waves I and III. I use attitudinal data from Wave I and sexual behavior data from Waves I and III to conduct my quantitative analyses. Because many of my independent variables come from the parent interview, my analysis sample is further restricted to adolescents who had a parent questionnaire, have complete information on all selected independent variables, and who have valid Wave III sampling weights. The sampling weights adjust for differential sampling probabilities in the selection of adolescents, and for attrition to Wave III. Standard errors are also adjusted in all analyses for the clustered sampling design using STATA survey procedures.

Because some of my outcomes are based on sexually active females (at Wave I and Wave III), two smaller samples will also be used to conduct multivariate quantitative analyses. For the analysis of birth control at first sex during adolescence, this analytical sample consists of teens who were sexually active at Wave I ($N = 1719$). For the analysis of age at first sex, this sample includes those who have ever had sex by Wave III ($N = 4188$).

The Latinas in Add Health had the following distribution of nationalities: 40% Mexican, 22% Puerto Rican, 18% Cuban, 13% Central/South American 7% other Latina.

Comparatively, four Latinas in the NSYR were Mexican, two were Peruvian, two were mixes of 2 Latino nationalities, one was from Honduras, one was Argentinean, one was half Honduran, half white and six were of unknown Latino nationalities. Thus, the NSYR Latinas had more Latino ethnic diversity than the Add Health sample.

Measures

Dependent Variables

This analysis measures outcomes on four variables from the Add Health dataset and means on these outcomes are shown in Table 2.1. The first dependent variable is whether the teen has ever had sex as reported at Wave I. It is coded as a dichotomous variable 0, for no and 1 for yes. As Table 2.1 shows, Blacks are much more likely to be sexually active in adolescence than Whites and Latinas. The second and third dependent variables are whether birth control was used during the teen's first sexual experience, as reported Wave I and whether the respondent ever experienced a teen pregnancy, as reported at Wave 3. These are also coded as dichotomous variables, 0 for no and 1 for yes. I have defined a teenage pregnancy as 18 and younger because this generally represents school age (through 12th grade) during which childbearing is especially problematic as identified by the literature because the parenting role competes with other adolescent roles and activities such as the completion of school. Also well-known in the literature are the long term adverse effects of high school dropout on one's future socioeconomic status (Haveman & Wolfe, 1994). The final dependent variable is age at first sex as reported at Wave III, indicating that Blacks have the youngest age at first sex and Latinas the oldest.

Independent Variables

Means on independent variables are shown in Table 2.2 for the whole analytical sample (ever had sex), Table 2.3 for the teens sexually active at Wave I (birth control at first sex), and Table 2.4 for the teens sexually active at Wave III (teen pregnancy and age at first sex).

Familism

Because of the difficulty in directly conceptualizing familism with survey data, I used themes that emerged in the NSYR that had corresponding variables in the Add Health data as indicators of familism. This gives the concept of familism more generalizability which is currently lacking in the literature. In the parent survey from Add Health, I use household size as a proxy for demographic and structural familism, which are defined as reliance on extended kin and larger households. Household size is a continuous variable with values from 1–16. As shown in Table 2.2, Latinas have the largest average household size, at just over 5 people per household. Related to strong connections to extended kin, I will include whether the neighborhood in which the family lives in was chosen because of proximity to relatives (0 = no; 1 = yes).

In order to examine traditional gender roles, I explore the question posed to parents as to what is the most important thing for a girl to learn. If a parent responded with: to be popular, to think for herself and to work hard, the response was coded as 0. If a parent responded: to help others and to be well behaved, the response was coded as “1” to signify a higher level of familism and traditional gender roles. Another measure of familism will include whether or not the mother works for pay (0 = no; 1 = yes), which has been shown to be an indicator of less traditional gender roles. Latinas have the lowest percentage of mothers in the workplace (69%). I will also examine family orientation from the perspective of teens in Add Health by using their responses to the question regarding their expectation for marriage by the age 25. This is coded from 1–5, which 1 being “not likely at all” and 5 being “very likely.” Expectation of an early marriage highlights the inculcation of traditional gender roles, particularly marianismo, which

values the woman's role as a mother and wife. Although these are not perfect measures of familism, they do allow me to quantify some of the NSYR findings. Marriage is a difficult concept for teens of all races to discuss because it seems like something in the distant future, however this measure still provides insight into teen thought processes.

Acculturation

In Specific Aim 1, I will also measure markers of cultural acculturation. I will use primary language used in the home as a fundamental measure of acculturation. In addition, as discussed in Chapter 1, the percentage of Latinos in the neighborhood affects family interactions and adolescent outcomes. Therefore I have included a Likert scale indicating the percentage of Latinos in the neighborhood, with 1 being low and 4 being high. This variable is self-reported, not an official census proportion. Any study that investigates Latina teen sexual behavior must also control for immigrant status (South, 1999). I include a measure indicating whether or not the parent was born in the United States (0 for no and 1 for yes). Almost all adolescents in Add Health were born in the United States, so I opted not to include this variable. Table 2.2 indicates that only 66% of Latina teens speak English as their primary language spoken at home and 44% of Latina teens have foreign-born parents, compared to White and Black teens who all speak English at home and are native-born.

Parent-Adolescent Relationship

I use variables that might tap into a "values mismatch" between parents and their adolescent Latina daughters. In the Add Health survey parents were asked whether they felt that they did not understand their teen children. This is coded on a 5-point scale consisting of always, often, sometimes, seldom and never. Because this variable was

fairly skewed, I turned it into a dichotomous variable. If a parent said that they always, often or sometimes did not understand their teens, I coded that response as 0. If a parent responded seldom or never, I coded that response as “1.” So a more understanding relationship would be the higher value. This variable could be skewed because parents are apprehensive to admit poor relationships with their teens. However, it still provides important insight as Table 2.2 shows half of parents of all races felt that they did not understand their teens. The Add Health survey asks whether parents make decisions with their teens. Responses range from never to always on a 5-point scale. I also use the responses to whether the teen had a serious argument with their mother about their behavior in the past four weeks (yes/no). Latina teens had the highest percentage reporting a serious argument with their mother (43%). As monitoring has been shown to have conflicting effects on sexual behavior of Latina adolescents, it is important to examine the role of parental monitoring in my research. The Add Health parent interview asks whether they have met the teen’s best friend (yes/no), whether they have met the best friend’s parents (yes/no), and what the teen’s established bedtime is, if any. The teen survey asks teens if their parents let them make their own decisions about curfew, who they hang out with, what they wear, how much television they watch, what they watch, what time they go to bed, and what they eat. In order to reduce the number of variables in my model, I employed factor analysis on groups of monitoring variables that were theoretically linked in order to ascertain whether an index could be constructed. The factor analysis procedure is based on the assumption that there is a latent underlying factor accounting for the covariation in a set of variables (Kim & Mueller, 1978). The factor analysis procedure generates a new scaled variable capturing the factor or factors

that are present in all the analyzed variables. The factor analyses yielded one variable which will be operationalized as the mean response (ranging from 0–1) across the ten variables for monitoring. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin a measure of the internal reliability of the construct, was 0.68.

Parent Communication

Parental communication is the main mechanism through which familial values translate to the teen’s values and potentially influencing sexual behavior. The literature suggests that Latino teens do not believe the communication taking place with their parents is as effective as their parents believe it to be (NCPTP, 2007b). It is also evident that Latino parents have a higher level of discomfort in discussing sexuality with adolescent children (confirmed in Table 2.2), which could translate to different outcomes. In order to assess the affect of culture on comfort level and actual parental communication surrounding sexual behavior I will use the rich data available in Add Health regarding communication about sexual issues between the teen and her parents. I will explore some of the Add Health questions explored in the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy’s (2007b) survey on Latino Parents and Teen Sexuality such as, “you really don’t know enough about sex and birth control to talk about them with teen,” “it would embarrass teen to talk to you about sex and birth control,” “it would be difficult for you to explain things if you talked with teen about sex and birth control,” “teen will get the information somewhere else, so you don’t really need to talk to teen about sex and birth control,” and “talking about birth control with teen would only encourage her to have sex.” All of these variables have 5 response options: strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, or strongly disagree. In addition, the Add health survey asks parents how much they have

talked with their teens about having sexual intercourse, birth control and the negative or bad things that would happen if she got pregnant. Add Health also asks the parent whether they strongly agreed, agreed, neither agreed nor disagreed, or strongly disagreed with the question as to whether they had recommended a certain method of birth control. Again, I employed factor analysis to reduce the number of variables in the analysis. The factor analysis yielded two groups of variables that were theoretically linked. The first group consists of variables indicating how comfortable parents were discussing sex and had an internal reliability score of 0.94 and the second factor loading which represented variables that indicated the amount of discussion parents had with teens surrounding sexual activity had an internal reliability score of 0.70. Whether parents recommended a specific birth control did not group with the other variables in the factor analysis, so it will remain an independent variable. Interestingly as Table 2.2 shows, the parents who felt that they had recommended birth control the most were Latino parents (3.64). This is consistent with (NCPTP (2007a) who found that Latino parents overestimated the effect of discussions about sexuality on their kids. However, consist with research on Latino parents, they were the least comfortable discussing sex (4.04) and discussed sex the least (3.13). One shortcoming of this measure is that while it provides valuable information about the amount of communication, it does not provide the content of these conversations. Therefore, as will be discussed later, high communication may be indicative of a problem with the teen, as with monitoring, rather than a close parent-adolescent relationship.

Teen Attitudes

Because attitudes toward nonmarital childbearing can be crucial in the construction of norms surrounding sexuality, I analyze teen responses to the question as to whether they would consider a nonmarital birth. This is a dichotomous variable where 0=no and 1=yes.

Sociodemographic Variables

The basic demographic variables I will analyze in Add Health are race of the teen, whether the family receives public assistance, parental education, whether there is a father present, the importance of religion, frequency of church attendance and age of the teen. Presence of a father has been shown to be a strong protective factor against transition to sexual intercourse. Income, race, and age are also factors that have been confirmed in the extant research to affect the probability of sexual behavior.

The importance of religion will also be examined (coded on a 4-point scale in Add Health from very important to not important at all as reported by the parent and the frequency of church attendance (coded on a 4-point scale in Add Health from once a week or more to never). I expect that the qualitative interviews will reveal the complexities of negotiating sexuality with religious beliefs for teens in a more illuminating manner than will the quantitative data. The NSYR has many probes on this issue and these vignettes will be telling of the covert and overt role of religion in the sexual decision making process of Latina teens. Another limitation with a quantitative measure of religion is that religion and religiosity (actual practice of religion) are very different in nuanced ways which would be difficult to capture in a large-scale survey. In addition, as discussed in the introduction, the South has the fastest growing Latino population in addition to the largest number of recent immigrants. Therefore it is imperative to examine the effect of living in

the Southern United States as young Latinas who reside here may be less acculturated, poorer and more likely to be foreign born.

Chapter III

A Different World—Latinas Coming of Age in the United States

It is apparent that the infrastructure of the Latino family is significantly shaped by the relationships developed between parents and their adolescent children. This chapter examines the intricate processes operating within Latino families that affect the potential for open conversations about sexual behavior. Although most teenagers experience change and upheaval during their adolescent years, a thorough analysis of the in-depth interviews of the NSYR revealed that Latina adolescents in the United States face exceptional challenges. The experiences of Latina interview participants differ significantly from their Black and White counterparts, which have had a profound impact on the parent–adolescent relationship. Specifically, Latina adolescents experience differences in five areas: 1) their struggle to maintain familism, 2) the gender and power issues they face in the home, 3) acculturation issues, 4) types of racial/ethnic discrimination they face, specifically in school and, 5) differences in how their parents communicate about sex and alcohol/drugs. These disparate experiences serve to increase familial stress and in turn strain relationships Latinas have with their parents. This stress causes communication to be more sparse and lacking in quality. Tumultuous parent–child relationships within the Latina community often leads to risky sexual behavior (Davidson & Cardemil, 2009).

The Struggle—Maintaining Familism Amidst Adversity

Although many American families struggle to find a balance between work and family, generally speaking Latino families endure a more acute level of strain. This occurs for a variety of reasons. On average, they are of lower socioeconomic status and are primarily employed in labor-intensive and low-skilled jobs. Working in the service sector often involves long hours of underpaid menial work that takes a harsh physical and mental toll. In terms of balancing work and family, Latinos exhibit an intense cultural need to monitor their children closely in order to retain their ethnic norms. This can be difficult to accomplish when parents are forced to work long hours in order to stay above the poverty line. It is not surprising that religious practices within the Latino community have declined, perhaps from a lack of family time. These factors compound to limit positive familial interactions and self-affirming parental guidance—two key elements which would act as a safeguard against risky sexual behavior and mistimed teen pregnancies.

Economic Epidemic in the Latino Family

As shown in Table 1.1, Latinos have the lowest net worth of any racial/ethnic group coupled with a low median income and high poverty rate. The current economic downturn has hit Latinos particularly hard, with the employment rate for immigrant Latinos dropping 2.8 percentage points versus 1.6 for the population as a whole (Kochhar, 2009). In addition, Latinos are overrepresented in low-skill and service jobs which tend to have longer working hours at irregular times (Kochhar et al., 2005). This makes it difficult to retain the family-oriented aspect of Latino life. Inflexible work schedules were cited as the number one reason why Latino parents do not exercise a high level of participation in their children's schooling (Zarate, 2007). This perpetuates the

economic anxiety that Latinos will raise a new generation of low-skilled workers. It is of further concern that parents who do not have time to take an interest in their children's academic education will often fail to provide adequate information or guidance about safe sex and abstinence. Low economic status often breeds indifference to negative sexual behavior and can create an apathetic lens to such serious matters as teen pregnancy and promiscuity.

Latinos in the United States spend a great deal of time away from home, often pursuing jobs within the fields of domestic work and construction. Many of the Latinas interviewed were primarily concerned with the stress of long hours of work inflicted on their parents and the time it took away from spending time with them. When asked how she got along with her father, one 18-year-old Latina of Mexican descent stated:

Me and my dad, we don't really have a relationship, but we do, like talk every once in a while, like on the weekends, or something, if he's home, because during the week, he's not really home, he's mostly working so sometimes he gets home really late, and on Sundays, like that's his day off, and it's usually like our family day, you know, we go driving and stuff like that, so I try to fit myself in the conversation once in a while, but we don't really have like good conversations.

In many cases, both parents are compelled to work outside the house in order to earn money to keep the family economically afloat. About 60% of the Latinas interviewed had families who had combined incomes of less than \$60,000, therefore this sentiment was echoed by approximately 80% of the Latinas. Table 2.2 showing the descriptive data from Add Health confirms that 69% of Latina mothers work for pay. This is a particularly common experience to foreign-born Latinas (Zarate, 2007).

Two recent South American immigrants were both severely affected by the absence of their mothers. In discussing her relationship with her mother, a 15-year old foreign-born respondent stated that the relationship was “good,” but she went on to say, “I mean, she always works, and I almost don’t see her. I see her at night.” Then later when asked if she had been involved in any things that she thought were wrong, she replied,

I didn’t go to school ... I smoked cigarettes ... alcohol ... marijuana ... because I wasn’t with my parents like I am now. I mean, last year my mom worked at night ... an hour away from here and she always traveled. And she was sleeping all afternoon. Like, I felt bad, I felt alone. And ... I tried that. I don’t know, I thought it would make me feel better but I didn’t feel better.”

When asked if her parents knew her friends, the 17-year old South American immigrant stated:

“Well they don’t know them ... because they live far away [and] ... because they work. They come home at midnight ... then they can’t meet each other.”

This young woman lives with her father and rarely sees her mother, who works as a live-in maid for a family. She had emigrated seven months earlier and left behind older siblings in her home country. During the interview she discussed having a very tumultuous relationship with her father and being enormously affected by her mother’s absence. These difficulties were experienced by all foreign-born Latina respondents. When asked if there had been any turning points recently in her relationship with her parents, she stated:

I was very affected when I came here [to the United States] because I was separated from my siblings and when I arrived here I was also separated from my mother because I didn’t see her all week and I only see her on the weekends. That affected me a lot.

This Mexican-American teen remarked on the emotional distance separating her and her father:

Cause my dad's never home, so it's like, we can, you know, dad, I want to discuss this with you, you know, and he's more like, oh wait 'til I take a shower and stuff like that, and by that time, he's like, watching TV, his news, and he goes to bed right after it, it's like, okay, you know, forget that ... I wouldn't ask my dad to change his schedule, cause he doesn't really have one, but I would rather, like I would want to talk to him more ... I don't get to talk to him about anything, when I do talk to him, it feels weird, like I'm barely me with him.

These sentiments were mimicked by another young Latina:

Um ... well ... when I was younger he used to like, actually, like talk to me more and stuff. Like lately, mostly since I've been in high school, last years, it's been hi, bye, type of thing ... he's had trouble with his job ad stuff and he comes home really tired and there really isn't much for us to talk about. It's like sit there and like ... so ... that commercial's funny. Yeah what a funny commercial that is.

Another 15-year old Latina teen stated that her parents “usually fight about my brother or the rent.” When asked what she thought about her purpose in life, she described her desire for financial stability and close familial ties. While many teenagers in the United States might dream of sports cars, shopping sprees and world peace, this Latina's hopes were focused on her immediate family life. She declared:

I really, really want a good job, and like to I want to be able to make decisions to get that job. A house, cause so much, my parents paying rent, too many years of that story, ... um I want to stay in touch with the people I care about and that I don't change. Like if I change it would be for the better, and like that my family would have a good life.

The NSYR interviews clearly demonstrated that the sense of financial strain wore on the minds of many Latina youth. As Garcia-Reid (2007) explains, many Latinas may be expected to work to help ease family financial strain, which would further limit the

amount of time spent together. Working long hours is extremely common in Latino families. With this comes an awareness that there is acute financial stress within the household. As a result, many teens take on a parental role when their mother and father are at home, so that they can have space and relax from a long day at work. An environment is created that closes off potential communication and interactions that provide sorely missed learning opportunities. Parents are exhausted from their jobs, adolescent children are left unsupervised and bereft of loving hands to guide them toward positive and industrious pursuits. It is no surprise that Latina teens often seek out attention and love, which results in undesirable sexual exploits.

How Much is Too Much? The Impact of Behavioral and Demographic Familism

The Latino culture exhibits a form of behavioral familism that thrives on frequent physical contact and interaction with family members. However, long work days preclude many Latino parents from being able to spend significant amounts of time with their children (Taylor & Behnke, 2005). Data from Add Health shows that Latinos have the largest average household size (5.10), which denotes demographic familism. The combination of exhausting days at work and a larger than average-sized family results in a reduced amount of quality time spent communicating with any specific child.

Latino parents suffer from a lack of time to interact with their teenage daughters. This has created an interesting phenomenon that is not nearly so wide-spread within the community of White and Black families. Latinas (particularly U.S. born Latinas in the NSYR) report a worsening relationship with their parents, while White and Black teens describe relationships with their parents as improving as they progress through adolescence. As they reach maturity, White and Black teens have declared an

understanding and respect for their parents. This gradually led to gaining their parents' trust, and thus more freedom. Latinas did not experience this change in rapport, and most commonly stated that their parents just "did not understand" them.

Demographic familism is the driving force behind the relatively large size of Latino families. Because their time at home is limited, Latino parents tend to focus their attention on managing their children who are having problems, rather than concentrating on preventing issues of concern. Younger children generally receive little consideration because their older siblings with children that are still living in the home require more attention. This increases the chance that younger Latinas will not receive the communication about sexuality that they need from their families. An 18-year old Latina expressed being distraught that her parents were not paying attention to her because of her sisters. About 20% of the U.S. born sample also mentioned older siblings garnering more attention. When asked if there had been any turning points in her relationship with her parents, she said:

I think, um, with my parents, I think they're a little less focused on their other children, honestly, like they're way really involved with my sister now for some reason ... like they basically support her children ... my dad gave her a job, you know he took it away from my sister to give to her ... they now support her children, her three children, and her ... they're not going to throw her out ... they like refuse to do so, like, cause they're like no, that's my daughter, I don't want to see her on the streets, doing all kinds of stuff ... I do wish they were more focused on me, cause you know, I mean, there's certain things I want to do.

Clearly, the amount of time spent between parents and adolescents plays a significant role in creating a positive familial relationship and an atmosphere in which teens can openly communicate about social, academic and sexual concerns.

In contrast to the expanding void experienced by Latina teens and their parents, the White teenaged interviewees tended to describe the mother-daughter relationship growing closer as they matured into adolescence. A 16-year old White teen described her connection with her mother as evolving from an “ok” relationship to having a good relationship. She attributes this to “probably, well probably mostly me probably maturing, cause I think I’ve matured a lot over the last year or so and um, just understanding more where she is coming from, I think that has helped a lot.” Another White teen explained that she felt her relationship with her single mother was “much better” because she could give her mother advice on *her* relationships with men and the “tables are turned a little bit.”

One 14-year old White teen asserted that her relationship with her mother had become closer in recent years, but then went on to clarify “maybe not closer, but I think it’s become a different relationship, I mean, cause I’ve gotten older and so we can, we do all the same, we read all the same books and we talk about them.” Similarly, a 16-year old Black teen proclaimed:

I think when I got [to be] a teenager, we got closer ... because we had, went through a lot of stuff, so we got closer ... it was moving all the time. And she was going through a lot so I tried to be there for [her].

This same teen went on to describe her friendship with her mother as sometimes being problematic because of blurred boundaries, particularly within the arena of discipline. As evidenced by the aforementioned quotes, the White and Black teens tended to bond with their mothers as a result of going through similar experiences. Many Black teens stated that they had more of a “friendship” with their mothers than a standard “mother-daughter” relationship. Overall, Black teens viewed this friendship with their mothers as

a positive thing that brought them closer together. One teen related a certain degree of self-awareness as she commented on her relationship with her mother: “I know when not to mess with her. I know when she’s about to be my mother and when she [is] my friend.”

Tight Reigns—Monitoring as a Response to Acculturation

A general sense of constraint governs the lives of many Latina teens. Some Latino parents practice extreme methods of monitoring their teenager’s social interactions. It is likely that this is an attempt to buffer their children from the influences of the dominant culture. However, some of this monitoring and inconsistent discipline could be driving Latina teens away (Davidson & Cardemil, 2009).

When Latina adolescents are compared to their Black and White counterparts, there is a large variation in response to monitoring. White and Black teens from very religious families report a high amount of monitoring, but these teens do not seem to mind. Overall, White and Black teens did not express the feeling of being monitored “too much.” However, Latinas specifically expressed a desire to “escape” from their parents and their home life. This Peruvian Latina stated:

Well about a month ago I wanted to leave the house ... I did not share a lot with my father. I wanted to rebel. I wanted to take ... to leave the house, rent a room for myself and make it on my own. In that change I sort of rebelled against my parents. I no longer wanted to be with them.

About seventy percent of Latinas interviewed felt that they were excessively monitored. Monitoring a child’s behavior is often seen as a type of discipline. It stands to reason that because of their long work hours and low-level jobs, Latino parents experience a high

level of stress that may be taken out on their children in the form of monitoring/discipline. Halgunseth et al. (2006) explain that the “processing of social cues may be preempted ... stressed parents may assess children’s behavior more negatively than they would if they were living under more secure, relaxed circumstances.”

When interviewed and asked what excited her most in life, this 14 year old Latina replied, “leaving my mom ... leaving her. Or [getting] away from the discipline.” In contrast, when a 14-year old White teen was asked the same question, she responded, “What’s gonna happen tomorrow, you’re like, you wake up and it’s a new day and anything could happen ... I want to go to a designing school and become a designer. My own brand of clothes, that would be nice.” Similarly, a Black teen in the Midwest sounded more like a “typical” 14 year old who gets excited about school and boys.

While monitoring can be a useful parenting tool, particularly in the prevention of undesirable activities or ideas, it can also backfire. Based on the interviews and research conducted, Latina adolescents strongly resent parental monitoring. Instead of seeing it as a loving method employed to keep them safe, they view monitoring as a way for their parents to exercise restrictive control. Why then, do Black and White teenagers seem to have closer and more understanding relationships with their parents, even when monitoring is employed? One possible answer is balance. If Latina children spend very few hours with their parents, and largely under stressful conditions, they are not given the opportunity to form understanding relationships. Although teenagers ultimately want independence, they rebel against being deprived of attention. The ultimate rebellion is often risky sexual behavior.

Retreat From Religion

It is widely suggested that religion plays a strong role in increasing family solidarity and togetherness, as well as facilitating the socialization of children (Regnerus, 2007). Many Latina teens reported attending church regularly as small children. However, participation in religious activity ceased as they grew older. The reasons cited for this inactivity were parental time constraints and parents no longer “believing.” There has been much speculation about the connection between religion and sexual behavior of teens.

Regnerus’s work (2007) showed that participation and affiliation with religion increased discussion of sexual morality but decreased discussion about sex and birth control.

Although religiosity seems to be stereotypically connected to Latinos, Latina teens did not articulate that religion guided their lives and decision-making processes concerning sexuality any more than White or Black teens. In general, religiosity did not seem to affect parent–adolescent relationships within the Latina community. One notable exception was that of foreign-born parents, whom teens reported to be extremely religious. The teenage daughters of foreign-born parents seemed alienated by this high level of religiosity. In contrast, many White teens expressed being more religious than their parents, while Black teens did not seem to differ significantly from the religious beliefs of their parents. One Latina teen in particular had a particularly tumultuous experience with her very religious Ecuadorian step-father. He required her to stand in front of him and pray every evening. He used corporal punishment if she stated a verse incorrectly, as her father’s family did to him as a child in Ecuador. She relayed the following comments to the interviewer:

My step dad is really religious, even though he doesn’t go to church, like every morning before he goes to work he goes and he donates money, he’s really

religious when he wakes up he's like, he says a prayer, when he goes to sleep, he says a prayer. I say you know, I say prayers sometimes but he wants me to say a prayer ever, every morning, every night and I have to learn this little book of prayers and I have to say it every night, if I don't, he pulls my ear, he starts yelling ... if I mess up a little word he starts yelling ... He's too religious, he wants me to be exactly like him and he's always talking about how they used to treat him when he was little, like that's why he treats me that way, too.

Clearly, this Latina teen felt stifled by the level of religious observance instituted by her step father. She is punished for failing to meet his standards of religiosity. This creates an atmosphere of distrust and judgment—she knows that she will be physically hurt if she fails to live up to her step father's expectations. When the religiously taboo subject of sexuality is added into this equation, it is likely that communication is suppressed. While the level of religious observance plays a role in how deeply it affects the communication of sexuality within the Latina community, it is clear that it does have an impact.

Summary

For generations, Latinos have toiled at low-level jobs that require long work days and painfully little monetary remuneration. They have little time to spend at home, and even less energy to devote to their families. Demographic familism has strongly influenced Latino parents by encouraging larger sized families. Long work hours, insufficient pay, and mounting responsibilities from their children at home result in an enormous amount of stress within the Latino community. Consequently, many Latino parents employ the use of monitoring in order to have control over their children in a more direct and harsh manner. This seems to have backfired, resulting in Latina teenagers feeling stifled and wanting to escape. Religion was once a stronghold of faith, discipline and family time for many Latinas. However, growing time constrictions and crises of faith have diminished the presence of religion in these families.

These seriously disruptive factors have caused a rift between Latina parents and their teenage daughters, ultimately resulting in a dramatic reduction in the quantity and quality of parent–adolescent conversations. Latina teens have clearly articulated worsening relationships with their parents, while their Black and White counterparts are reporting an increased understanding and appreciation of their parents. This forecasts serious concerns for creating a comfortable atmosphere for Latina teens to discuss sexuality with their parents.

The Clash of Ideas About Gender Appropriate Work and Family Roles

As discussed in Chapter 1, gender dynamics and gender socialization in Latino families has always been a focal point of research. Although gender dynamics between Latino men and women are rapidly changing and undoubtedly multifaceted, the concepts of *machismo*, *marianismo*, *simpatia*, and *respeto* have been inextricably linked to the Latino experience, particularly for those of Mexican descent (Edwards, Fehring, Jarrett, & Haglund, 2008).

Machismo and Marianismo—Unrealistic Gender Ideologies

Male authoritarianism has played a key role in Latino politics and society for generations. Machismo has been widely defined as an exaggerated sense of masculinity, particularly pertaining to power, virility and strength. A key element of machismo within the Latino community is being the primary provider for the family (Taylor & Behnke, 2005). This can create conflicts for Latino families living within the United States. Traditional Latina cultural norms glorify the woman's role in childrearing. However, there is pressure from acculturation to focus on material possessions and therefore a woman must forego her duties of childcare in order to go into the workplace.

However, in many Latino families, women still remain at home to attend to domestic duties, but money is always a volatile issue. These tensions between husband and wife add to familial stress. This further exacerbates the harsh monitoring that Latina teens want to escape, and also suppresses the likelihood of parents and adolescents conducting open conversations. Latina teens receive conflicting messages from both their family and the outside society, regarding the role of women in the household. This may affect their life decisions. A Latina who chooses to stay at home and raise her children may create less conflict within her ethnic community because she will be fulfilling the role expected of her due to *marianismo*. However, the financial strain that will likely result from this decision will create a different kind of stress. For mothers who work outside the house, finances become easier to manage, but creates strain within her marriage and community. This type of family tension has been shown to increase depression in Latina mothers. This, in turn, may decrease their ability to communicate with daughters. Latinas are at higher risk for depression than other ethnicities in the United States (Vasquez as cited in Aguirre-Molina & Molina, 2003).

Even when Latino parents divorce, the sense of *machismo* and *marianismo* often still remain. One Latina teen spoke of the oppressive situation that arose after her parents' divorce. Despite their dire economic situation, her biological father insisted that her mother refrain from working outside the house in order to focus on the children, a key tenet of *marianismo*. "She stays at home. And she takes care of kids when she can. But mostly, he doesn't want her to work because of my baby brother." It seems that the virtues of *machismo* and *marianismo* are so ingrained within the Latino culture that even the basic need for survival can become secondary. Of the 12 Latinas with fathers in the

home, 25% specifically stated that their mothers stayed home for “traditional” reasons.

This figure is high considering the low socio-economic status of Latino households in the NSYR.

No Rod to Spare—Cultural Violence in the Home

As Latina women have begun to join the work force, their husbands face a direct threat to their ethnically machismo lifestyle. Foreign-born men, who tend to be more culturally traditional, are particularly likely to feel that their values are being endangered. A foreign-born Latina teen reports that her parents “fight a lot,” which has led her to avoid spending time and talking to them. When asked what fueled this tension in the home, she responded that it was her parent’s jealousy. She further elaborated:

They both are ... I don’t know. It’s that in Argentina they were always home because they didn’t ... there wasn’t any work, and all that. But now since they have both jobs here ... they aren’t there ... I don’t know what’s going on, but they’re always fighting. My dad [came to the United States] 4 years ago, and we came 3 years ago ... they blame each other for everything and I don’t like to listen so I leave. I go to sleep or something. Let them fight by themselves.

The tension in the home caused by financial difficulties and dissonant acculturation between family members can escalate simple arguments into physical violence.

Unfortunately, Latina teens often get caught in the middle. About 50% of the Latina respondents reported violence of extreme tension in their homes. Violence in the home dramatically affects whether a teen feels comfortable in her own home and the ability to have a loving, open relationship with her parents. Many teens of all races discussed how violence causes family members to ignore each other. While up to 30% of couples in the United States have experienced domestic violence, Ellison, Trinitapoli, Anderson, & Johnson (2007) explains that “Latinos living in socially disorganized communities

encounter more social stressors on average, than non-Hispanic Whites, including work-related problems and financial strain, as well as interpersonal and institutional racism.”

Another Latina teen who had fallen victim to extensive drug use and sexual promiscuity, noted how her father’s violence affected their communication:

As of right now, me and him do not talk ... and we have not talked for about three, four weeks now ... I usually start arguing with him cause of the way he starts treating my mom. [He treats her] horrible.

She went on to detail that her father has hit her mother in the past. She recounted what happened when she tried to protect her mother:

He just tries to start argue with me, yelling with me, but I do the same thing right back to him ... I argue with him more than my mom does ... she starts to like screaming and crying trying to stop it.

When asked what her parents fought about and how they generally resolved their disagreements she stated “everything and anything ... they don’t [resolve it] ... they just stop talking to each other, ignore each other, they hit each other ... they just keep arguing. It is common within Latino families for poor communication, lack of argument resolution and violence to lead to family members “giving up” and finding solace in silence.

As research shows, the cycle of violence generally repeats itself. Consequently, physical abuse in the home might lead teens to engage in violence themselves or to seek out abusive relationships. This same teen reported that she used to hit her little sister on a regular basis. Another troubled Latina who had been “smacked” by her mother had been suspended from school multiple times for fighting. This teenager also recounted the day

that her mother told her that she “hated” her. Clearly, when abusive words and actions exist within the family structure, adolescents suffer from poor communication and relationships with their parents.

An Ecuadorian-American teen who witnessed her mother being hit by her stepfather, confided that she personally was also in an abusive relationship with her boyfriend. This is particularly significant, as teens who experience violence in dating are more likely to engage in substance abuse, have unhealthy weight control, poorer health, sexual risk behavior, pregnancy and suicidal behavior (Jaycox et al., 2006).

Machismo—The Breakdown of Blended Families

Interestingly, issues of machismo become most salient when a mother has children from another union. These children serve as a constant reminder that the mother/wife has had sexual relations with other men. This often ignites feelings of hostility and jealousy between stepfathers and their stepchildren. Amongst the Latina girls interviewed, four had stepfathers. The ones with Latino stepfathers described their relationships as horribly abusive. However, the teens who had White stepfathers reported that their relationships were excellent, even better than the relationships they had with their biological fathers.

A Peruvian girl with a White stepfather stated “I get along with him really well. I mean I can talk to them both about anything and some stuff like I’ll talk to my mom.”

In contrast, a very depressed Latina teen who had a horrible relationship with her foreign-born stepfather, admitted feeling constant guilt due to his pressure and verbal abuse. He blamed her for the fights that went on between him and her mother. Her Latina stepfather made clear his preference for his own children by giving them an allowance, while she

was denied. As is evident in the following excerpt from her interview, small daily interactions quickly intensified into blowouts. She said:

I barely talk to him, I only see him at night and I just say goodnight or whatever and I go to sleep ... a typical night is I take out the trash, my Dad gets home, um, he eats dinner, then after he's done, I eat dinner, cause we don't like sitting together, cause every time he feeds me together, if I don't use the knife the right way, he starts yelling ... I have to go do my homework, brush my teeth, go to sleep ... she tells him something, like to defend me and then he said that he's always, she's always defending me.

Another teen stated that one of her close friends (another Latina) was more reserved because she lived with a stepfather. "Sophia is more serious than me and Marina ... she doesn't share many of the jokes among the three ... and her personality is a little more reserved ... she lives with her ... with her stepfather and then her personality is characterized by that."

It is possible that the phenomena of Latino stepfathers versus White stepfathers could be explained by socioeconomic status or country of origin. All of the Latino stepfathers in this study were foreign-born and low income, while all of the White stepfathers were American and earned high income salaries. It is feasible that a comfortable income would allow the family to worry less about finances and establish better relationships. However, it is more likely that it is a complex combination of circumstances that have led to the breakdown of communicative harmony within Latino families. Suffice it to say that Latino blended families simply have one more hurdle to jump.

Many teens struggle with step or blended families, but interestingly enough, none of the White respondents of similar age and SES to the Latina respondents lived with a stepfather. Few White respondents lived with single mothers, and most had family

incomes under \$50,000 per year. A mother of one Eastern European respondent remarried but chose not to live with her new husband because of tensions with her daughter. The two respondents who reported that their mothers had live-in boyfriends portrayed it as a very negative experience that contributed to their tumultuous relationships and poor communication.

Although none of the Black respondents in the analytic sample reported their mother having a live-in boyfriend, many had half siblings. This may imply that a boyfriend has been in the home at some point.

Two White respondents lived with single fathers, neither of whom had a live-in girlfriend. However, neither of these respondents reported having a close relationship with either parent. Both mothers, coincidentally, were extremely religious and had moved away.

When divorce, death, remarriage or dating occur among parent figures within a household, it usually carries a certain level of stress and need for readjustment to a new norm. It should come as no surprise that Latinos have a particularly difficult time making this adjustment. Tedious low-level labor, financial problems and a propensity toward turning to violence in the home all add up to equal enormous hurdles. The Latino ideal of machismo is centered around male power—and when the family is falling apart, the man has lost his control. Latinas are particularly susceptible to negative male influences during adolescence, and seek out violence in their social realm to mirror their environment at home. Open parental communication is extremely important to Latina

teens who come from blended families, lest they find themselves in the role of victim or aggressor.

Teenage Mothers and Marianismo

The term “marianismo” refers to the stereotype that women are morally superior, self-sacrificing and possess great personal strength and glorifies the woman’s role as the bearer of children. Most teens in the United States have been affected by teen pregnancy, either personally or someone they know. Latina adolescents in the matched sample of NSYR interview participants analyzed here, were the most likely of all racial and ethnic groups to have a sibling who had experienced a teenage pregnancy. Many Latina teens had siblings who were still living in their parents’ home with their own young children. In addition, many respondents had siblings who gave birth to children in their early 20s as well. The frequent instances of young pregnancy within Latina families have normalized the idea and practice of early childbearing, which is consistent with marianismo.

Many teenage Latinas choose to remain silent rather than frustrate or worry their parents. One particularly troubled Latina stated that she does not talk with her mother about dating, because she does not want to add to her mother’s fears about teenage pregnancy. Her mother gave birth to the respondent when she was 15 years old, and has been a victim of spousal abuse. Another teen in this study watched as three of her four sisters became pregnant or chose to marry by the age of 20 years old. Latina teens in the Northwest and Southwest reported that many girls in their high schools had teen pregnancies and that it was seen as the norm.

In the absence of direct communication about sexual behavior, the examples set by their mothers, sisters, and cousins speak volumes to these young Latinas. However, women are not the only ones setting an example for these adolescent girls. Two respondents reported that they had older brothers with babies who were living in the home with their girlfriends. Such examples have contributed to the normalization of nonmarital births. The majority of Latinas who were interviewed for this study were themselves products of a teenage pregnancy.

The tension experienced in many Latino households due to gender role confusion sends conflicting messages to young Latinas. These tensions are heightened when families are broken and recreated and roles must be renegotiated. Teens are often stuck in the middle and are only given their family examples to serve as guiding beacons for their lives. As a result, Latinas are apt to repeat the cycle of early childbearing and seeking out men who also believe in machismo. These two situations could combine to limit the future of Latina teens.

Simpatia—Appearances Above Honesty

Simpatia refers to the importance of maintaining harmonious relationships within the Latino community. Interestingly enough, the appearance of “getting along” is of such crucial significance that Latina adolescents will frequently lie or withhold information in order to keep up the facade and avoid familial disputes. Violations in simpatia are severely sanctioned, which feeds into the cycle of poor communication amongst parents and teenagers. In the Western United States, one respondent stated that her mother disowned her older sister because she had a secret boyfriend. The sister, who was 25 at the time, left home after a heated fight with her mother regarding her boyfriend. Because

this was a single-mother household, the sister had played the mother role for the respondent, while the mother acted more as father figure. When asked what happened to her sister after she left home, the respondent said:

She lived at her boyfriend's house ... I had her phone number so once in a while I called her until my Mom took me to Houston for vacation. We came back and my aunt told my Mom that they got evicted from the house, so I never heard of her since ... Um, lately my aunt is like saying ... things about my sister like ... why aren't you forgiving her and all that stuff. My Mom always says, how should I forgive her, she's betrayed me, and they just yell on the phone.

Some Latina women will go so far as forgiving infidelity within their relationships in order to preserve or stave off the appearance of troubled relationships. This sets a poor model of behavior for adolescent Latinas, who often lose a certain amount of respect for their mothers, or potentially repeat their mistakes. The acceptance of infidelity inculcates young Latinas with detrimental ideas about not only how to have a healthy relationship, but also the value of their own self worth. Because machismo plays such a large role within the Latino community, extramarital affairs are often tolerated because the sexual desires of men are seen as "natural and uncontrollable" (Muñoz-Laboy, 2008). A young Latina discussed how her father had numerous affairs, and yet her mother took him back. Their arguing about the situation led her to fantasize about running away from home:

Alright, let's say my dad wasn't out of the house, and everything is going good and they argue. Emotionally that affects me, cause I'm like, like just stop and I want to scream, but I can't cause then they'll be like, butt out it's none of your business, ... she [mom] was like I hate y'all, like I hate the way you people act and she closed the door ... I can't wait until I'm 18 and then I'll move out. Then my sister's gonna have to deal with that. But whenever my sister wants to run away or she doesn't want to go somewhere, she can always come to my house, always, always, she's always welcome at my house, no matter what.

Summary

Gender expectations and family dynamics have a marked impact on the amount and quality of communication parents have with their teenage daughters. Men and women have very clear and seemingly nonnegotiable roles within the Latino family, as defined by the concepts of machismo and marianismo. Latino families trying to negotiate new roles within the context of difficult financial circumstances, often create tension and violence in the home. The unrealistic goal of achieving perfect harmony, *simpatia*, has caused irrevocable damage to young Latinas by encouraging silence. In the absence of communication and positive role models, Latina teens are left to their own devices to decipher and navigate relationships. The home environment often serves not only to confuse Latinas but also alienate them from their parents and siblings.

Acculturation

Issues surrounding dissonant acculturation were most vividly described by Latinas who were dealing with it within their own homes. Many Latinas find themselves caught in the middle, as they enjoy the modernism of the dominant culture while still struggling to hold on to their traditional customs at home. The tension caused by acculturation manifests itself in two different forms. Firstly, bi-ethnic children (White/Latina) and native-born children find themselves pitted against their foreign-born parents. A palpable feeling of cultural distance from their parents serves to decrease the amount of communication. Secondly, foreign-born children tend to assimilate into American culture at a rapid rate, due to public schooling and social interactions. This causes tension with their parents, who tend to have little interaction with the outside world, and cling to their traditional culture. It is common for foreign-born parents to treat their children as they would treat

them in their own country, without realizing the cultural and sometimes legal differences in parental authority in the United States.

Parents Just Don't Understand

When children are raised by parents from radically different cultural backgrounds, there is often confusion regarding the “right” path. Two Latinas in the sample had White fathers and Latina mothers. Both teens boasted excellent communication with their respective fathers, despite the fact that one teen’s White father was biological, while the other teen had a White stepfather. The bi-ethnic Latina (White biological father, Latina mother) had a very troubled relationship with her Honduran mother. Holding her mother up to the dominant culture, this teen complained that she was neither educated nor “American” enough to meet her social standards. Embarrassed by her mother’s seemingly out-dated way of thinking, the bi-ethnic Latina claimed to identify more with the accomplishments and culture of her father. This passage highlights the tension and communication problems within this teen’s relationship with her mother:

I have a really bad relationship with my Mom. Um, she’s unreasonable and she’s very irrational and she screams a lot and I really can’t stand her ... She was born and raised in Honduras ... and I was born and raised here. And American children and Latin American children act very differently, so like I grew up and I have all this freedom and my father spoils me a lot ... and so she gets very upset that I’m spoiled like I am ... she demands a whole lot more respect than I think she should get. But me and my father are extremely close, like I tell him everything ... he never asks me where I’m going but I’ll volunteer the information and, and like we go everywhere together ... like there’s no life decision that I do without him ... I just always need like daddy advice.

It is evident that although this teen has a very close relationship with her father, socialization regarding sexuality in both Latina and American culture tends to be gender-specific. Thus, because of the chasm between mother and daughter, it is unlikely that this

Latina teenager will feel comfortable communicating about sexuality with either of her parents.

Silence is Deafening

Financial status seems to play a significant role in social behavior and expectations. The majority of Latinos in this sample were low-income, and seemed to raise their kids with a sense of restraint and using more directives (Lareau, 2003). Children from higher class society tend to have closer interactions and conversations with adults. This is not true of many Latinos. This goes hand in hand with the cultural values of respeto and filial piety, in which children are discouraged from questioning their parents. When one Latina teen asked how adults perceived her, she stated:

If you went up to like family members, the adults in my family, they'd probably say like I'm really shy. Because around them, I can't really be myself ... I can't really act out, you know, and it's like, cause my parents taught me to be like more respectful ... be quiet around when adults are speaking ... so I'm pretty sure they think that I'm behaved, you know. Hopefully [laughs].

Every culture has its own set of customs and expectations from its youth. This study revealed that Black teens, in particular, were taught the value of being assertive—a character traits that might send Latino parents reeling. Confirming Lareau's (2003) research, White teens in the NSYR conveyed a sense of confidence when speaking to adult family members about their lives. Many White teens also discussed having in-depth discussions with their fathers about subjects such as politics and sports. For Black and White teenagers, there was a general sense of comfort speaking to both mother and father as an equal, that was stunningly absent amongst Latina adolescents.

Everything is Relative

Foreign-born Latinas among the NSYR in-depth interview sample related a sense of hesitancy about discussing school concerns with their parents, for fear they would overreact. Already lacking the relative social freedom of their American peers, Latina teens seem more likely to withhold information from their parents that could potentially result in further restrictions. There is a recurring theme regarding the difference in values and freedom that children are enjoy, based on what country they are raised in and where their parents were born. Foreign-born Latinas and Latinas who live in ethnic enclaves tend to have very different cultural norms, especially when compared with Latinas reared in the United States. Many Latinas expressed fearing American teens, but were unable to communicate these concerns to their parents. One foreign-born teen stated “in Argentina they [teenagers] are healthier. Here there are a lot of drugs ... A lot of everything.” The teens worried that because their parents did not go through the U.S. school system, they would be unable to understand or empathize.

Foreign-born Latino families often have difficulty adjusting to the cultural climate in the United States, where their traditions are not highly valued. The dominant culture, which is primarily influence by the numerically dominant racial group, Whites, is generally accepted as the ideal in the United States, while all other ethnic groups fall lower on the ladder. It is common for Latina adolescents to acculturate to this way of thinking, and even begin to lose respect for their own parents, simply because they are Latino. A Peruvian Latina teen bluntly told the interviewer, “White people are better.” When asked if she believed that “right and wrong” were relative concepts, she replied:

Yes, everything is relative ... It depends on the people, right? How they consider it, if it is wrong or right. But for high-level people, everything is normal for them. They only devote themselves to excel. If they consider it wrong, they overcome it. If they fall, they overcome it. They never ... sink their way of thinking. Especially White people in this country ... I see it here, when I go to New York City ... people read and read and read and read, right? And I rarely see color people, right? I see that White people overcome a lot.

It is not surprising that the undercurrent of White superiority in the United States has permeated to the core of Latina youths. The aforementioned quote demonstrates an acute level of self-awareness, that this Peruvian Latina will never be able to stack up to the cultural ideal of success.

Tough Love on Foreign Shores

Child-rearing styles markedly change for foreign-born parents when they come to the United States. As discussed previously, many Latino parents impose harsher forms of monitoring in an attempt to retain their culture. This practice is only accentuated with foreign-born Latino families. Parents who might have imposed severe methods of discipline on their children while living in their home countries are cognizant of the fact that U.S. cultural norms frown upon corporal punishment of children and physical spousal abuse. However, many choose to turn a blind eye because they are so overcome with stress.

It is common for families to be separated for long periods of time, due to staggered immigration. The men of the family are usually first to come live in the United States, followed later on by their wives and children. This is extremely unsettling for Latino families, especially when coupled with dissonant acculturation as each member of the house takes a different amount of time adjusting to the new cultural atmosphere. These

stresses generally prevent normal attempts at monitoring. Foreign-born parents must work hard to improve their socioeconomic situation, while recovering from separation during the immigration process and trying to acculturate. These huge life changes often serve to effectively shut down communication between foreign-born teens and their parents. When probed about her relationship with her father, one Latina adolescent detailed the strain that staggered immigration had placed on her family. She stated that because her parents had not lived together for so long that their communication was “terrible” and that they “did not get along very well.” Difference in social norms was a constant struggle for this Latina teen who had recently arrived in the United States. When asked what she would change in her relationship with her father, she stated:

I would try to be better. I would try to improve. Although he won't because ... that was ... the way he was brought up, very rough, right? They hit him too much. He lived in the country and then he wanted to bring us up in the same way, right? But my mom never allowed him to hit us, she preferred to be hit herself but not allow him to hit us. I don't think my dad will change. I am the one who has to change and try to understand him because he is already an older person, right? He's 60 years old. I would be the one to change, not him.

Summary

In the absence of strong familial ethnic socialization, Latina teens begin to question the value of their home culture and also question their parents' authority. This is seen most poignantly in a bi-ethnic Latina who loathes her mother because of her “backwards, uneducated” culture, while she idealizes her White father. Foreign-born teens see the dangers that American culture brings, with regards to drugs and violence. However, foreign-born Latinas living in the United States tend to see the limitations of their culture—particularly that of familial violence and poverty. These difficult circumstances

heighten confusion for Latina teens, and impedes the likelihood of establishing open communication with their parents.

School and Race Wars

The alienation felt in school is a key factor in examining family relations and sexual behavior. Because many Latina teens have contentious relationships with their parents, their social experiences at school magnify in importance. Many Latinas are targeted for bullying at school because of their poor clothing, difficulty with English, and generally substandard relationships with their teachers. The Latinas in the NSYR felt that their parents would not understand their troubles at school, because their parents had received their educations in a different country. This assumption has resulted in decreased communication about schooling between parents and adolescents.

Many Latinas reported skipping school on a regular basis because of a feeling of disengagement. This disengagement has led to seeking comfort in dysfunctional behavior, such as taking drugs or indulging in unhealthy sexual relationships. These Latinas were also involved with many altercations at school, and were particularly sensitive to tension with Black students. Many had friendship groups exclusively with ethnically homogenous groups because they felt more comfortable and understood by peers within the same nationality. It also served to provide them with a sense of safety within schools that boasted a dangerous reputation. Overall, Latinas had negative attitudes toward school and school spirit, describing it as “gay” and “stupid.” Thus, school life seems to be where the most salient culture clash between family and dominant

values occur, ultimately succeeding at further alienating Latina adolescents from their parents.

Class Clashes

Alienation is often bolstered by class differences between the races. One young Latina talked about a group of students that teased her at school:

Some girls, um, the ones who like they laugh at us, because you go to like Wal-Mart to buy our clothes instead of the mall ... They like making fun of other people ... they talk back to the teacher or they start making jokes ... to hurt someone I don't really know what they talk about us, cause we don't really pay attention, we don't really care ... we know that they're talking about us, saying oh, look at them they're so poor they're so, ah-ha-ha.

Most Latinas equate being popular with being “White and preppy.” “The ones that wear like tight, pretty clothes and they talk to the guys, they’re supposedly known as the popular girls.” Latinas described feeling “ignored” and “ugly” in comparison to their classmates. The discrimination and teasing that Latinas experience in school serves to confirm their feelings of inferiority to the dominant American culture. About 80% of the Latinas who were enrolled at school (one Latina was home schooled) reported problems with other students, teachers, or school generally. Consequently, this is an issue that Latinas feel that they cannot discuss with their foreign-born parents. In addition, very few reported positive relationships with teachers and school administrators. In contrast, although most White girls in the NSYR did not report being part of the “popular” group, the majority attended athletic events and were involved in sports and, school activities. White teens described having generally positive experiences at school. Lareau (2003) found that White adolescents had frequent conversations with their parents about what was occurring at school, and their parents actively encouraged them to participate in

school activities. Only one out of nineteen Latinas interviewed in the NSYR in-depth interviews reported having any school spirit. A Latina teen who had been held back a grade and disciplined repeatedly, described school as being “boring” and claimed that she did not care about how well she did in school. Students who do not excel academically, socially or in some other significant way, tend to dislike the confines of school. Ironically enough, these adolescents who lack structure and focus are exactly the people who would most benefit from academic instruction and social interaction.

Secret Bullying

Racial bullying is a very real problem at many schools in the United States. It is yet another concern that Latinas feel uncomfortable sharing with their parents. There seems to be a hostile environment at many of the schools in larger cities, which the majority of the Latina respondents in the NSYR attended. The few Latinas who were engaged in academics at school were often ridiculed for being “geeks and nerds” by White “suck-ups” as one teen called them. White teens routinely received preferential treatment in class. One particularly shy Latina teen was tormented by her peers at school. Many girls said that they wanted to “fight” her because she was short and received good grades. The Latina had this to say about the popular kids:

[They] swear too much, just because they’re popular and everybody like looks up to them ... and they call you a nerd but in front of the teacher they swear that they’re really nice to you and that they’re your friends ... and now whenever we’re doing like a presentation or something in class like they start laughing or whatever I say, like to make me nervous or stuff like that ... people tell me that I’m so ugly and I’m so different from everybody else ... and that I’ll never have a boyfriend ... they always say things like that.

In another situation, this teen was pressured to allow one of the popular girls to cheat off her paper. The student stated that if this Latina teen did not help her cheat that the entire school would bully her. Instead of confiding in her parents, the Latina kept her mouth shut for fear that involving them would cause the problem to become worse. She ultimately decided to report the incident to a school counselor, which resulted in the popular girl being suspended from school. However, this only made the problem worse for the Latina as she lived in fear of retaliation from the popular kids.

Cultural Isolation

Many Latinas conveyed a sense of isolation and loneliness at school. Academically, they felt that their opinions were ignored by the White students. Socially, Latinas expressed being intimidated by White students, and fearing physical harm by Black students. This was especially true of foreign-born Latinas. One Latina teen stated that she often asks the teacher to put her in a different work group because students will not listen to her or take her seriously. Only two Latinas felt that they were in the “popular” group in school, and both lived in predominately Latino geographic locations. When one Latina was asked how she fit in at school, she stated that her group of friends was known as “the weirdos, the geeks and like the nerds.”

Refusing to confide in her parents, another Latina began to cut herself to deal with the social pain and anxiety she experienced at school. When asked why people at school hated her, she responded:

I don't know, cause everybody looks at me differently because I ... try to do the right things and like they don't care about it ... they're just like, well look at that freak, you know and ... I'll be nice to them and polite and everything but we

don't really get along as friends. Cause they talk behind people's back and I don't like hypocrites.

Teasing, threats, and not being taken seriously are all parts of the average school day for many of these demoralized adolescents. This day-to-day cultural isolation felt by Latinas often causes them embarrassment and to retreat into depression. Few of the Latinas interviewed felt comfortable discussing school or social issues with their parents, regardless of the severity. The question becomes, are teenagers sabotaging themselves by refusing to seek adult counsel, or are their parents so absent and disinterested that they are simply not available to their children on any significant level? There is no easy answer.

Desperately Seeking Acceptance—Deviancy at School

Many native-born Latina teens choose to indulge in deviant behavior rather than spend time in an unwelcoming school environment. Attending “ditch-parties,” smoking marijuana and drinking alcohol during the school day were the most popular diversions noted. Those students who did remain at school during the day usually ended up engaging in fights or simply dozing through classes. One teen classified the girls in her school under the categories of “valley girls, gangster girls or kick-back girls.” The “valley girls” were described as the young women who engaged their energies in school, went home and did their homework. The term “Gangster girls” referred to girls who regularly took part in fights at school and other deviant acts. This teen considered herself a “kick-back” girl. In her own words, “a kick back girl is just like whatever girl, she’s gonna do whatever’s like, doesn’t mind kicking it over here, doesn’t mind chilling over here, does all kinds of things all the time.”

She went on to say that kick-back girls sometimes do things they are not supposed to do in school, similarly to the gangster girls. This teen had served time in Juvenile Hall for getting caught stealing with her boyfriend. She had also experimented with crystal meth and admitted to smoking marijuana six days a week (a habit she started in the sixth grade). She lost her virginity at 13 years old, and had numerous pregnancy scares. This Latina's father worked very long hours and was mostly absent in her life from the time she was a baby. She did not even understand that this man was her father until she was older, because he played no significant role in her life. It is no surprise that this Latina resorted to deviant behavior to try and get attention to fill the emotional void that her father created. Unfortunately, this story is all too familiar for Latina teens across the United States.

Interestingly enough, this study shows that foreign-born teens are less likely to succumb to the peer pressure to ditch school. Although many of them struggled socially in school, foreign-born Latinas tended to have better relationships with teachers. This may be, in part, due to taking ESL classes that have a Latina or Spanish-speaking teacher. One teen recalled that she was invited to "hooky parties" but chose not to miss school because she felt it would be counter-productive to her goal of becoming successful. When asked about her teachers, she commented that:

They ... are a good influence because ... they counseled me, right? When I got here. Because when I arrived here, like all depressed, and saw the things that happen here, and became surprised, they told me: "It is normal. Don't worry. You just go forward. I know that ... they will stay behind, but you will climb a higher ladder."

As shown by this example, when a parent or other trusted adult figure expresses interest, encouragement and faith in Latina adolescent girls, the positive effect is immeasurable. Although it is the job of parents to support and empower their daughters, they are often too busy working, over-stressed, or unaware of the difficulties that school presents. Too many Latina teens skate through school without ever encountering a caring mentor, which leaves them open to exploring less productive measures to achieve a semblance of self-worth.

The Role of Race

One issue that native-born Latinas seemed to navigate more smoothly than foreign-born Latinas was that of race and gangs in the schools. Almost all foreign-born Latinas in the NSYR reported physical altercations with Black students at their school. One teen was almost physically assaulted in a boys' bathroom, but was able to escape. Instead of communicating with her parents about what had happened in the bathroom, she simply stopped going to school. However, unlike her native-born counterparts, she did not skip school with the intention of engaging in deviant behavior. Rather, she stopped going to school in order to remain safe. Given that her parents did not speak English, she did not think that they would be able to help with her school situation. Another foreign-born teen claimed that the Latinos could not eat in the cafeteria at her school. She said, "We couldn't go down to eat lunch because ... the Black students would take it away. They were very aggressive with us, the Hispanic. But now ... it has calmed down a bit." This teen had attended a private school in her native country, but had switched to a public school upon moving to the United States. When her mother saw that "there were mainly

Black students, heavy, cut here, with their caps” that she wanted to send her to a private school, despite the added expense.

Although there has been recent media attention regarding the prevalence of gangs in the Latino community, native-born Latina respondents had little to say on the subject. They did seem alarmed by the amount of violence in U.S. schools compared to their home country. One Peruvian Latina astutely noted that the main difference in the United States is that all teens go to school, whereas in Latin America only a privileged few go to school beyond their early teen years. Latin American schools also tend to be more private and selective. This teen open expressed her belief that students who want to be in school should be separated from students who do not want to be in school.

Well, there [in Latin America] you don’t see the difference so much because everyone wants to study. No, well, I was attending a private school, right? And there was a lot of competition. Everyone wanted to get the best grade and there was not a difference. They were all at a similar level. But here I see a great difference because there are some who want to study and some who do not want to.

She also noted that she tried to separate herself from those who were pursuing the wrong path in life. She noted that she was “in none of those groups. No, in none of those groups because ... they lead to wrong paths ... I don’t like the groups ... the gangs as they call them here, right?” Even though she had moved to the United States only 5 months prior, she was well aware that her school was in a very poor district and dangerous area.

Gangs often serve to create a familial atmosphere for adolescents who lack confidants and crave acceptance. For Latina families, where communication is threadbare, many teens fall victim to the lure of gangs. As is evident from the aforementioned tales of

racism that exist within public schools, Latinas fall at the bottom of the social totem pole. Because neither home nor school provides a nurturing, communicative and open environment, these teens are willing to indulge in deviant behavior in order to attain the approval and attention they so desperately desire.

Family Dues

Although basic communication is lacking between parents and adolescents, the Latino family is tightly knit in other ways. Many Latina teens are expected to help with the care of siblings and home duties after school, which often precludes them from being able to try out for sports teams and participate in extracurricular activities. As mentioned in the literature review, many Latino parents believe that mingling with other cultures breeds acculturation. They worry that the more time spent away from home, the more likely they will lose their children to the dominant culture. The interviews with foreign-born teens clearly illustrated that their parents did not approve of them getting too involved with the social aspects of school. The father of an Argentinean teen blamed an after-school program for her academic problems. When one foreign-born teen was asked if she engaged in extracurricular activities, she responded:

No ... I would try out for cheerleading but then like the, the practices they're every Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and they're for an hour and thirty minutes so then later I can't, I don't have time to go cause we have chickens, dogs, cats and birds and then I have to go feed them and clean their cages and take a bath and like take out the trash and do the dishes, so if I get there like at four, by the time my Dad gets there I won't have time to finish and then he starts yelling.

When asked if she had communicated her desire to participate in activities after school to her mother, she replied:

Yeah. She said I could try out but then I have to come, like I have to try to come back really, really early and because later like I know what would happen. And then she would have cried, so I didn't try out.

Latina teens take on a lot of responsibility at home, whether it be helping out with chores or babysitting their siblings. This, combined with the emotional burden of hiding things from parents whom they feel would not be able to “handle it,” results in teenagers who get burned out before their youth is even over.

Summary

The stories shared in this chapter capture the troubling racial and social experiences that many Latinas face in school, most of which occur without parents' knowledge. Ethnicity and economics play a significant role in public schools, and Latinas have found themselves teased, bullied and ignored due to two factors that they cannot control—their race and money. Weak family communication has resulted in Latina teens taking matters into their own hands. Desperate for attention and acceptance, many of these adolescents turn to alcohol, drugs and gangs. Depression, violence and unhealthy sexual behavior are often borne of these activities.

Communication Failure—The Impact of Familism and Acculturation on Teens and Parents

Familism, acculturation, gender expectations and the role of race in schooling, are the dominant themes regarding Latino parent-to-teen communication that emerged in the NSYR interviews. Communication within a family is critical as it increases the probability that teens will have discussions with their partners before engaging in sexual activity, and thus make better decisions about their sexual health. It is apparent, through the NSYR interviews, that Latino parents are struggling to communicate with each other

for a variety of reasons. Stressful jobs, time spent apart, large families and financial strain often combine to limit the amount of energy and communication they have to devote to their children.

Latina teens often experience academic and social difficulties at school, which can result in stress and low self-esteem issues. Latinas are then left in a vulnerable position where they are easy prey for older boys, as one Latina stated. While it is common for teenagers of all different races to have trouble talking openly to their parents about sex this study revealed that such conversations differed in two key ways: 1) More usage of “cautionary” and “wives tales” in lieu of concrete information, 2) no discussion of birth control. The combination of poor factual information and lack of preventative measures has left young Latinas in a very sexually vulnerable situation.

Tales and Traditions

As few teens had direct conversations with their parents about sex, many teens referred to practical examples within their own family as guiding their views toward sexuality.

Latinas gather most of their information about sexuality from their parents and other family members, as well as “cautionary tales,” in which they were warned not to indulge in sex. Many of the respondents viewed their family dynamics as a lesson in caution.

They witnessed the hardships brought on by having children at a young age, and generally viewed these experiences as a deterrent. When one Latina was asked what was the greatest influence on her as far as her views toward sexuality, she responded “well, the stories I have heard.”

Many Latinas also discussed the idea of wearing a “White dress” at their wedding, which in Latino culture is only appropriate for those who are virgins when they marry. Another wives’ tale within Latino culture emerged, that parents have an innate ability to recognize if and when their daughters have sex. One respondent gave a very graphic account of a promiscuous girl at her school:

There was a girl in our school ... and there was a guy in our school ... they were having sex ... and then she got pregnant and then she got kicked out of school ... she’s pregnant right now ... she doesn’t even come to school, she don’t want to show up for this. He has. Cause I mean he’s not the one that got pregnant ... she got pregnant and then she had an abortion. And I heard that’s her second one. She’s 14. Well, she did, she was having sex with everybody. She’s a little ho ... like you know how people, when they’re having sex, and they’re not a virgin, people have gaps between their legs, she was skinny and had a big gap. And she had a huge gap ... you can see it.

White teens also used examples of siblings guiding their views toward sexuality. One teen stated:

My brother, Charles, he’s, he just turned 15 a week ago and he’s already gotten a girl pregnant ... and that just disgusts me cause I’m like, you’re too young you know, obviously you’re not responsible enough and you’re not mature enough and it’s not, it’s like, if you’re in a relationship and something comes up like that you’re gonna have to, you know, be strong about it, you know.

Another adolescent saw that her older brothers took advantage of girls sexually, and felt that it was not right. She had a hard time blaming them outright, but did comment that she personally felt that sexuality should be something special, and not casual. The majority of these teens received detailed information about sexual intimacy and its consequences from their mothers.

Vague Information for a Specific Subject

Almost without exception, all the Latina teens in the NSYR interviews expressed that their parents had given them one repetitive message about sex: “Take care of yourself.” This advice was expressed verbatim, across the board of foreign and native-born Latinas. The conversation did not explicitly tell the adolescents to refrain from premarital sex, but rather intimated in very vague terms that they should refrain as long as possible from becoming sexually active, and then do what was necessary to avoid pregnancy and disease. One teen with numerous sexual partners had been told by her parents to “be careful and don’t end up pregnant.” This teen did not manage to follow this advice to the letter—she participated in unprotected sex numerous times. However, she did understand that her parents would not approve of possible pregnancy, so she rectified the incidences of unprotected sex by taking the Morning-After pill.

It has recently come to light that some young Latinas have been performing self-induced abortions with off-label use of certain prescription drugs. The strong anti-pregnancy messages being given by parents without proper education on methods of contraception could be driving this disturbing phenomenon (Coles & Koenigs, 2007; Frost & Driscoll, 2006). Many Latina respondents reported that their parents would “kill them” if they got pregnant.

Because of the culturally instituted value of machismo, Latino fathers often struggle to relate and communicate with their daughters. According to the respondents, fathers told their Latina daughters that they were afraid of “losing them.” This heartfelt but misplaced sentiment often served to deter Latinas from telling their fathers about their boyfriends or having discussions about sexuality. Another strong message given to Latinas was do not

“let anyone touch you.” Some Latinas reported lying to their fathers about sex and dating because their fathers “hated” their boyfriends. When asked whether she had told her father about her boyfriend, one Latina struggled with her answer before finally admitting that she was more comfortable talking with her mother about dating.

It is interesting to note that the White and Black parents in this study give more detailed information about intercourse, and their children took it upon themselves to look through health textbooks and ask teachers additional questions. When asked where she obtained information regarding sexuality, one Black teen stated:

Like from books, health books, and I know they’re telling the truth, because ... I’m not like my sisters friends ... some of them have ... diseases and stuff like that ... I’m like you know that’s not cool ... you know, don’t go out if you’re not ready, honestly. Don’t stress, because some people feel like oh ... my friends are having sex, I feel so left out ... obviously you have a problem with yourself. Deal with that first. Don’t try to bring a boy into it and ... cause problems for yourself.

One Black teen stated that she wished her mother had given her exact instructions on how to have sex. She said that Health class taught her how to put on a condom, but she had no idea of the mechanics of what to put where during intercourse.

Clearly, parents of all races often suffer from discomfort when they are put in the position of talking to their daughters about sexuality. However, the ultimate result of vague information, misinformation and scare tactics is that teenagers are unprepared to make an educated decision about how and when to have sex.

Prevention Methods

Most White and Black teens had engaged in detailed discussions with their parents about sex and contraception. However, Latina teens rarely discussed the different types of

contraceptives with their parents. Table 2.1 shows that in the Add Health data, Latinas were the least likely to use birth control at first and last sex. It was very clear in the interviews that Latinas were not even comfortable with the terminology. Of the 19 teens interviewed, almost no one used the terms “the pill” or “condoms,” while these methods were frequently mentioned by the White and Black teens. White teens reported their mothers helping them obtain the pill as a means of contraception. White teens generally reported being very close to their mothers, and while they did not openly volunteer information about their sex lives to their parents, they were honest when asked. This facilitated more specific conversations about birth control than reported by Black or Latina teens. Even when White teens knew their parents would not approve of their decision to have sex, they were still able to ask their mothers for help with contraception.

One White teen stated:

Well ... my Mom ... I asked her to put me on birth control, and so we talked about that. We talk about stuff like that ... I tell her about how like if I've drank before and like if I've smoked before and stuff like that ... I mean, I don't tell her every time I do, but, if she asks, I mean, I won't lie to her ... she doesn't agree with a lot of things, but she doesn't really argue with me about it ... she'll tell me she doesn't like it if I do something but I mean, she won't really push the issue cause she doesn't want us to get far apart, she doesn't want me not to tell her things, she'd rather know and be disappointed then not know at all.

Black teens reported that their mothers talked to them about sex and birth control “all the time.” As a result, they seemed rather matter-of-fact, yet very articulate in their sexual knowledge. They used terms such as “pre-ejaculation” and were well versed on the consequences of sex, both financially and physically. Almost all of the teenagers who were sexually active used condoms. This information is supported by the findings in Add

Health, which show that Black teens are the most likely to use birth control at first sex (Table 2.1).

One Black Teen attended a Girl Scouts retreat with her aunt, where she learned about sexuality. She explained that it was very helpful to have a forum in which to discuss and formulate her thoughts. Learning about sexually transmitted diseases reinforced her commitment to wait to have sex. She also articulated that her parents would be very disappointed in her if she got pregnant as a teenager. Like many other girls in this study, this teen had a close family member who had a teenage pregnancy. It ultimately served as an example to her of what she did not want to happen with her life:

I think she was 16 or 17, she was ... about to graduate high school ... she got pregnant and ... she waited to tell her parents until like the last minute ... And that's like ... people in the family are disappointed, but what can you do after the child is there?"

Only foreign-born Latinas discussed condom-use, which was startling, due to their generally more conservative upbringing in Latin American countries. Interestingly though, these Latinas said they learned about birth control at church in their home country, but not directly from their parents. When asked about whether the Catholic Church prohibits birth control, one Latina stated "no, only Mormons say that."

Latina teenagers clearly suffer from a lack of direct communication about sexuality with their parents. The cultural taboo of having frank discussions about sex has led to a plethora of vague information about the act of intercourse, inadequate education about contraceptives and the transmission of STDs, and guilt associated with the female body. Because their parents have not provided the proper information and tools to handle their

daughters' budding sexuality, these Latina adolescents will be more prone to discovering the answers themselves and making a lot of avoidable mistakes along the way.

Let's Talk About Sex

White girls who had become sexually active did not necessarily tell their parents about it, however they did have conversations with their parents surrounding sexual activity and perhaps more importantly, engaged in discussions with their partners before deciding to become sexually active. A sexually active White teen with extremely strict, religious parents, stated that she decided to engage in sexual activity after "a lot of deliberation, debate, looking into every single possible contraceptive and like ridiculous caution."

Because of the amount of thought she and her partner put into the decision to have sexual intercourse, she felt that she "had a much more positive experience than most teenagers do." She continued, "I know most people I know have felt all guilty and all that stuff afterwards and like I think that we were like ready in our relationship and secure enough with each other and we were cautious enough that ... we weren't like freaking out or anything. So, I think it was an overall good experience." This teen stated that due to her level of independence and comfort with her sexuality, that she was able to schedule an appointment at a clinic to get contraceptives by herself.

Part of being a teenager in the United States, regardless of ethnic, cultural background, or religious background is exploring sexuality. The main difference in having a positive experience and overall outcome, was if these teens had parents who communicated with them about sex, contraceptives and responsibility.

To Wait, or Not to Wait—Sexual Relativism

Most teen girls were sexual relativists when it came to the question surrounding abstinence until marriage. While religiosity factored into whether teens felt that sex before marriage was appropriate, they seemed reticent to judge others who had made different decisions. Latinas generally expressed that their families were not against premarital sex, per se, but felt it necessary to strictly warn them against engaging in sexual promiscuity. Latino parents seemed most concerned about how promiscuity would affect their child's reputation, rather than the possible dangers of teen pregnancy or contracting a sexually transmitted disease.

Marriage is a distant thought for most teenagers, regardless of race. The majority of adolescents interviewed stated that abstaining until marriage was a "nice idea," but they did not seem particularly devoted to the idea of remaining virgins until marriage. Many felt that 18 years old or "college" was the appropriate time to have sex. One White teen stated that she thought it was important to wait until you think you are ready, and not be forced into making the decision.

White parents seemed reticent to tell their teens when they would be ready to have sex, unlike Latino parents who were very vocal about waiting until marriage. When a White teen was asked when her mother felt she would be ready for sex, she responded: "She said that it's up to me ... I don't think that your parents should decide ... if you're ready to have sex or not, it's not their decision, it's not their body."

Another White teen conveyed a similar sentiment:

My Mom and I talked about it when I was, you know, younger or whatever, and she's like you know, just don't do it, wait, wait, wait, wait. She never says wait until marriage, it's just wait until you're older, so I think that her just preparing me and us being open about it when I was younger prepared me so that when I became sexually active I knew how to be safe about it.

When one teen was asked if she would tell her mother when she did decide to become sexually active, she stated in the affirmative. She thought that it would be “a smart idea” because her mother would be a help and support. This teen had already discussed birth control with her mother, who had offered to help her go on the pill when she was ready to be sexually active.

Most adolescents understand on some level that they are expected to wait to have sex until they are old enough to assume financial, emotional and personal responsibility. The following quote is from a White teen who clearly understood those responsibilities, but was not shy about expressing her reasons for being sexually active before marriage. She matter-of-factly stated:

I don't see why sex is such a sacred thing to so many people. Um, I guess to some people sex is a way of expressing love. But to me it's not. It's just not. Um, I don't know, I don't have a problem with sex before marriage, at all. It's just pleasure, it's physical pleasure and that's what it is. Yes, you can express that you love someone through having sex with them, but just because you're having sex doesn't necessarily mean that you love the person ... um, I guess if they are mentally prepared and aware and they understand what can happen, that's really the main thing. I mean if you want to do it, go for it, just make sure you're safe about it and you understand Um, the girl should definitely be, if she's gonna be sexually active, needs to be on some kind of birth control. Um, and even being on birth control, a guy needs to use a condom, that's just how it needs to be.

Proactive vs. Reactive—Sexual Consequences for Latinas

One major consequence of the lack of parental communication in general, and conversations about sexual behavior specifically, is a vulnerability to older boys. The

lack of closeness they feel with their parents due to long hours and dissonant acculturation causes adolescent Latinas to seek closeness in romantic relationships.

One of the respondents commented that she thought that Latinas were more susceptible to being seduced by older men than other ethnicities. She expressed the opinion that Latino men know how to sweet-talk in a way that makes girls feel essentially weak. She reiterated this theme of weakness as she compared Latinas to Black young women. According to her experiences, she witnessed a lot of Latinas stop going to school when they became pregnant, whereas Black teens continued their education. She said, “I’ve seen a lot of Black girls. They get pregnant but they don’t give up, they still graduate ... [but] the Latinos, no. They give up.”

There is a perception amongst Latinas that their parents will abandon them if they become pregnant. This may be due to poor communication and the warnings to simply “take care of yourself” without giving any context of what would happen if they did not follow this advice. Black adolescents tend to have better communication about sexuality with their parents, and are more likely to have discussed responsibility and consequences of a teen pregnancy. This may result in Black teens feeling more comfortable asking their parents for help so that they can finish going to school, even after having a baby. The significance of the role that communication plays between parents and adolescents cannot be overemphasized.

Summary

Instead of providing their teenage daughters with practical advice about the responsibility and consequences of becoming sexually active, Latino parents have indulged in vague

cautionary tales, or “consejos.” Unfortunately, this may be the entire extent of their sexual education. While many teens do not have direct conversations with their parents about sex, White and Black girls generally have the agency to seek out information on their own, via trusted adults or health textbooks.

Latino parents instill the fear of pregnancy over STDs, which often leads to potentially harmful reactive measures being taken to avoid pregnancy. Vague messages about sexuality, lack of education about birth control, and the presence of predatory older men has resulted in Latina adolescents being especially prone to teen pregnancy.

Conclusion—Latinas Performing a Balancing Act

This chapter has shown the difficult balancing act that Latinas in the United States have to accomplish. The time constraints and cultural distance of parents leave Latinas floating in a sea of loneliness and confusion without a preserver. Violence in the home, harsh monitoring, and low self-esteem all serve to further alienate young Latinas from their nuclear families. All of this is compounded by the lures of the dominant culture, racial discrimination and bullying in school. All of these factors culminate in Latinas seeking safety and stability with older boys, as well as temporary escapes with drugs, alcohol, ditching school, and sometimes even self-mutilation. This ultimately sets the stage for negative sexual behavior. These situations are further complicated in blended families, families with staggered immigration, and single-parent families. Even when Latinas tried to become engaged in school activities they were either prevented from doing because of obligation to their families, or were ignored by White students and teachers. Using the knowledge gained from the stories told in the NSYR to narrow down variables, Chapters

4 and 5 will explore Latina adolescent sexual behavior using survey data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health.

Chapter IV

How Variations in Familism and Acculturation Are Associated With Aspects of Parent–Adolescent Relationship

Chapter 3 allowed for unique insight into the day-to-day lives of Latina teens in America and detailed how relationships between parents and their adolescent children can affect parental communication. This chapter now employs the same analysis but uses survey data to address the role of familism and acculturation in parent–child relationships and communication with a nationally-representative population sample in Add Health. To examine the association between different levels of familism and acculturation and parental communication, I conduct bivariate analysis. Bivariate analysis allows me to ascertain the connection between two variables directly, whether this connection differs by race and ethnic subgroup, and its level of significance. This chapter will explore how the varying levels of familism and acculturation in the Add Health dataset are related to the parent–adolescent relationship and parental communication for White, Black, and Latina teens.

The familism variables that will be used from Add Health are 1) whether parents chose their neighborhood of residence for its proximity to relatives; 2) whether parents thought it was important for a girl to learn to be popular, to think for herself, and work hard (encouraging independence) or to be well behaved and help people (a more traditional view of gender roles); and 3) whether the mother works for pay.

The acculturation/sociodemographic variables that will be used are 1) whether English was the primary language spoken in the home; 2) whether Spanish was the primary language spoken in the home; 3) whether a language other than English or Spanish was the primary language spoken in the home; 4) whether there was a father present in the home, and 5) whether the parent was born in the United States. I will examine these variables to ascertain their association with my four outcome variables as well as seven different parent–adolescent communication variables. The outcome variables are 1) ever had sex as measured at Wave I in Table 4.1; 2) use of birth control at first sex, as reported at Wave I in Table 4.2; 3) whether the respondent had a teen pregnancy, as reported at Wave III in Table 4.3, and 4) age at first sex, as reported at Wave III in Table 4.4.

The parent–adolescent outcomes that will be examined are 1) whether the parent understands his or her teen in Table 4.5; 2) whether the parent makes decisions with the teen in Table 4.6; 3) closeness to mother in Table 4.7; 4) whether the adolescent argued with the mother in the past 4 weeks in Table 4.8; 5) the parental monitoring factor scale in Table 4.9; 6) how comfortable parents are discussing sex in Table 4.10; 7) the amount of actual communication about sex in Table 4.11; and 8) whether the parents recommended a particular birth control to the adolescent in Table 4.12. Bivariate analyses are based on the sample used ultimately for multivariate analysis in Chapter 5, those who participated in the Wave I and Wave II interviews, with parent interviews and complete data on all selected Wave I and III independent variables (for the outcome birth control at first sex, the sample is restricted to those who were sexually active at Wave I).

Methodology

To determine the significance of a particular independent variable's association with the dependent variables, I examined the mean of the dependent variable under each condition of the independent variable. For example, 22% of Latinas who speak Spanish in the home had ever had sex compared to 35% of Latinas who do not speak Spanish in the home (see Table 4.1, column 4). To determine the significance of the difference in the means (13 percentage points in this example), I used STATA to run a *t*-test taking the survey procedures into account. In this example, I found that the difference was significant at the 0.01 level. In contrast, note that while 11% of Latinas who speak another language at home ever had sex and 35% of Latinas who do not speak another language at home ever had sex, the *t*-test reveals that the difference is only significant at the 0.10 level. Therefore, the association between speaking Spanish at home and ever having sex appears to be greater than the association between speaking other languages at home.

Onset of Sexual Activity: Fathers Matter

In Table 4.1, I show differences in the proportion of teen females who ever had sex at Wave I by familism and acculturation measures at Wave I by race and ethnicity. Results for the whole sample in column 1 indicate that those who spoke English at home were significantly more likely to have had sex at Wave I (35%) compared to those who do not speak English as their primary language in the home (19%). Twenty-two percent of those who speak Spanish at home were sexually active at Wave I compared to 35% of those who do not speak Spanish in the home, and this difference was statistically significant. Whether a teen lived with her father or not was a key variable in the initiation of sexual

activity by Wave I. Twenty-eight percent of those with a father present were sexually active at Wave I compared to 44% of those who did not have a father present.

Results for White teens shown in the second column of Table 4.1 indicate that, the presence of a father in the home proved to be an important association, as only 27% of those with a father present were sexually active compared to 40% of White teens without a father present. Column 2 shows that a high percentage of Black teens were sexually active when a father was present (41%), but it was significantly less than those who did not have a father present (53%).

An important reason to conduct bivariate analysis for this dissertation is to examine whether outcomes differ for different subpopulations of Latinas (different levels of acculturation, different family structures, and different family norms). As expected, language use was a significant variable for young Latinas. Column 4 indicates that more Latinas who speak English at home were sexually active at Wave I than those who do not (36% versus 21%). This confirms the extant literature, as well as the stories in the NSYR detailing the detrimental effects of acculturation when it comes to Latina adolescent sexuality. In a parallel finding, fewer Latinas who speak Spanish at home (22%) were sexually active at Wave I than those who did not speak Spanish at home (35%), demonstrating the protective effect of speaking Spanish in the home. In addition, among Latinas who spoke a language other than English or Spanish in the home, only 11% were sexually active at Wave I compared to 32% of Latina teens who did not speak a language other than English or Spanish in the home.

Birth Control at First Sex: Still a Mystery

Very few populations exhibited significant differences in birth control use at first sex.

Table 4.2 shows that for the whole sample (column 1), 69% of teens whose parents chose their neighborhoods for proximity to relatives used birth control at first sex, while 63% of teens with parents who did not choose their neighborhood for its proximity to relatives used birth control at first sex. Of teens who spoke English at home, 66% reported using birth control at first sex compared to 48% of teens who did not speak English in the home. Similarly, very few teens who spoke a language other than English or Spanish in the home used birth control at first sex (22%), while 66% of those who did not speak a language other than English or Spanish in the home used birth control at first sex.

In columns 2 and 3, we see that familism does seem to be associated with birth control use at first sex in different ways for Black and White teens. Seventy-one percent of White teens with parents who wanted to live near relatives used birth control at first sex compared to 60% of those with parents who did not consider relatives when choosing a neighborhood. For Black teens, 77% of those who had parents with more traditional values (thought it was important for daughters to be well-behaved and to help people) used birth control at first sex while 67% of those whose parents thought it was important to be more independent (to be popular, think for herself, and work hard) used birth control at first sex.

Language was the only significant variable for Latinas in their use of birth control at first sex (column 4). Those who spoke a language other than English or Spanish in the home had a much lower usage of birth control at first sex (11%) versus 56% of those who did not speak a language other than English or Spanish in the home.

Teen Pregnancy: Acculturation Associated with Enabling; Fathers' Influence as Deterrents

Parents in Add Health were able to state what they felt were the most important characteristics for a girl to learn. Parents who felt that it was important for daughters to learn to be well-behaved and to help people were coded as being more “traditional,” while parents who thought it was important for a girl to be popular, think for herself, and work hard were seen as having more progressive views of gender roles. In the general sample, column 1 in Table 4.3 shows that parents with more traditional views of gender roles reported higher rates of teen pregnancy (27%) as compared to 20% of “progressive” parents reporting teen pregnancy. There was a higher rate of pregnancy reported for teens whose mothers did not work for pay (26%) versus that reported for teens whose mothers did (20%). Language seemed to be a significant factor: none of the teens who spoke a language other than English or Spanish in the home reported a teen pregnancy compared to 22% of teens who did not speak a language other than English or Spanish in the home. Likewise, the presence of a father in the home appeared to be associated with fewer teen pregnancies: 17% of teens with a father present reported a teen pregnancy compared to 29% of teens who did not have a father in the home.

The findings in column 2 for White teen pregnancy parallel the general sample. Twenty-two percent of White teens with parents holding more traditional views on gender reported a teen pregnancy compared to 17% of teens with parents with more progressive views. Seventeen percent of teens with a mother who worked for pay reported having a teen pregnancy compared to 23% of those with mothers who do not work for pay. Fifteen percent of White teens with a father present reported a teen pregnancy compared to 24% of teens who did not have a father in the home.

Column 3 shows that the findings for Black teens are also in line with the general sample, with even more substantial differences. Forty-one percent of Black teens having “traditional” parents reported a teen pregnancy compared to 30% of teens with “progressive” parents. Black teens with mothers in the workplace report a lower percentage of teen pregnancies (31%) than those with mothers who do not work (41%). A father present in the home lowered the reported rate of teen pregnancy—26%, as opposed to a 38% rate of pregnancy reported for Black teens who did not have a father in the home. Only 8% of Black teens with foreign-born parents reported a teen pregnancy, while 35% with native-born parents did.

The findings for Latina teens (column 4) show the effects of different levels of acculturation. Less acculturation was associated with fewer teen pregnancies than more acculturated Latinas. Twenty-three percent of Latinas who did not speak English at home reported a teen pregnancy compared to 34% of those who did. Similarly only 25% of Spanish-dominant Latinas had a teen pregnancy compared to 33% of non Spanish-dominant Latinas. One percent of Latinas speaking a language other than English or Spanish had a teen pregnancy compared to 32% of those who did not speak another language.

Similarly, the presence of a father in the home was a substantial deterrent to Latina teen pregnancy. Twenty-one percent of Latinas with a father present reported a teen pregnancy compared to 43% of Latina teens who did not have a father in the home. Twenty-five percent of Latina teens with foreign-born parents reported a teen pregnancy, while 35% with native-born parents did.

Age at First Sex: Father Presence and Foreign-Born Parents Associated With Delay in First Sex

Across the entire Add Health sample, as shown in Table 4.4, column 1, those who spoke English in the home had an earlier average age at first sex (16.4) versus those who did not speak English in the home (17.4). The results were similar in Spanish-dominant homes, where teens had an average age at first sex of 17.4 and teens who were not in Spanish-dominant home had sex earlier (16.4). Teens who spoke a language other than English or Spanish in the home had an average age at first sex of 16.7 compared to an average age of 16.4 for those who did not speak an “other” language in the home.

The presence of a father in the home is has a powerful association with in delaying sex for teen girls. Teens with a father present had a later age at first sex (16.3) than those who did not (15.8). Teens with native-born parents had sex earlier (16.3) than those with foreign-born parents (17.0).

White teens with a father present had an average age of first sex of 16.7 versus 16.0 for those who did not have a father in the home (column 2). White teens with foreign-born parents had sex later (17.0) than those who did not (16.4).

Column 3 shows that father presence is again of utmost importance when we examine the outcomes for Black teens. Black teens with a father in the home had an average age at first sex of 16.3 while those without a father at home averaged 15.8 at first sex.

Additionally, those with a foreign-born parent had sex later (17.3) than those with native-born parents (15.9).

For Latinas, language and father presence both had important relationships with age at first sex (column 4). Latina teens who spoke English at home reported an earlier age at first sex of 16.4 than those who did not speak English at home (17.4). Those who spoke Spanish at home had an average age at first sex of 17.4 compared to 16.4 for those who did not. Latinas who had a father in the home had an average age at first sex of 17.1, over a year later than those who did not have a father in the home (16.0). Latinas with foreign-born parents had sex significantly later (17.0) than those with native-born parents (16.4).

Fostering Independence and Sharing Language Associated with Improvement in Parent-Teen Understanding

Table 4.5, column 1 shows that in the general sample, more traditional views toward gender roles were associated with less understanding relationships with teens than those parents with more progressive views. 53% of parents who wanted their daughters to be more independent rarely or never did not understand their teens, versus 48% of traditionally minded parents reporting the same. Language spoken in the home had a substantial effect on reported levels of understanding with teens. Of parents who speak another language in the home, only 28% reported a very understanding relationship with their teens, compared to 52% of parents who did not speak a language other than English or Spanish in the home.

For the White teen sample (column 2), when a father was present in the home, 56% of parents reported a very understanding relationship with their teens, compared to 52% of parents in a single-parent household who felt the same.

Views of gender roles were significant in the Black teen sample (column 3). Thirty-six percent of parents with more traditional views toward gender roles had very

understanding relationships with their teens compared to 46% of Black parents who wanted their daughters to be more independent. For Black families, when a father was present, parents had a more understanding relationship (49%) with their teens than parents in single-parent homes (39%). More Black foreign-born parents reported understanding relationships with their teens (60%) than native-born parents (42%), a significantly different finding from the general, White, and Latina samples.

Column 4 shows that only 38% of Latino parents with more traditional views of gender reported having very understanding relationships with their teens compared to 54% of Latino parents who want their daughters to be more outgoing and independent. When Latino families speak a language other than English or Spanish in the home, only 20% of parents reported a very understanding relationship with their teens compared to 48% of parents who did not speak a language other than English or Spanish in the home.

Making Decisions Together: Familism and Retention of Spanish in the Home Associated with Increased Cooperation

As explained in Chapter 2, the Add Health data asks parents if they make decisions with their teens (1-never; 5-always). In Table 4.6, column 1 shows that for the whole sample, choosing a neighborhood for their proximity to relatives was associated with making decisions more often with their teens (3.98), compared to parents who did not choose their neighborhood for its proximity to relatives (3.90). Teens who spoke English at home reported less joint decision-making with their parents (3.93) compared to those who do not speak English at home (4.19). Those families who spoke Spanish at home made more decisions together (4.19) compared to those who do not speak Spanish at home (3.93).

Families where a father is present make more decisions together (3.96) compared to families where there is no father present (3.90).

In White families (column 2), choosing their neighborhoods for their proximity to relatives was associated with making decisions with their teens more often (4.00), compared to parents who did not choose their neighborhood for proximity to relatives (3.90).

Black families (column 3) with a father present made decisions together more often (4.03) than families without a father present (3.81).

Latino families (column 4) that are English-dominance was associated with less joint decision-making (3.84) than non-English-dominant families (4.18). Similarly, Spanish-dominant families make decisions together more often (4.19) than families who do not speak Spanish at home (3.85).

Sharing a Foreign Language, Being Foreign-Born and/or Have Traditional Views of Gender Roles Associated with Closeness to Mother

As stated in Chapter 2, closeness to mother was measured on a Likert scale from 1–5, with 1 being not close at all, and 5 being extremely close. Table 4.7, column 1, shows that parents holding more traditional gender roles was associated with closer relationships with their mothers (4.53) compared to teens with parents who thought it was important for a girl to be popular, think for herself, and work hard (4.46). This finding seems logical, as parents who support less traditional roles foster independence in their children. Speaking a language other than English or Spanish at home was also associated with closer relationships with their mothers, with a mean closeness of 4.73 compared to a

mean closeness of 4.48 for those who did not speak a language other than English or Spanish. Teens with parents born abroad had closer relationships with their mothers (4.61) compared to those with parents born in the U.S. (4.47).

Paralleling findings in the whole sample, column 2 shows that for White teens, having parents who thought it was important for a girl to learn to be well-behaved and to help people was related to a closer relationship with their mothers (4.56) compared to teens with parents who thought it was important for a girl to be popular, think for herself, and work hard (4.45). Also, White teens with foreign-born parents had significantly closer relationships with their mothers (4.61) than those with U.S.-born parents (4.48).

For Black teens only (column 3), birthplace of parents was significantly associated with closeness to their mothers, with teens with foreign-born parents having a closer relationship with their mothers (4.76) than those with U.S.-born parents (4.49).

For Latinas (column 4), not speaking English at home was associated with significantly better relationships with their mothers (4.62) than for Latinas who spoke English at home (4.39). Latinas who know Spanish well enough to speak it at home might be acculturating more slowly, thus preventing some of the problems that we saw emerge in Chapter 3 as a result of dissonant acculturation. Latinas who spoke Spanish at home also had closer relationships with their mothers (4.61) than those who did not (4.40). Latinas with foreign-born parents had closer relationships with their mothers (4.60) than those with U.S.-born parents (4.37).

Arguments With Mothers: Independence Associated With Dissonance

Table 4.8 explores how familism and acculturation are associated with arguments with mothers. Column 1 shows that fewer teens with parents who hold more traditional views of gender roles (34%) reported having an argument with their mother compared to teens with parents who thought it was important for a girl to be popular, think for herself, and work hard (37%). Additionally, only 34% of teens who had a father present at home reported having a serious argument with their mothers compared to 39% of those who did not have a father present.

The findings for White teens paralleled that of the whole sample. Thirty-four percent of White teens with parents who thought it was important for a girl to learn to be well-behaved and to help people reported having an argument with their mother, significantly lower than the 38% of teens with parents who thought it was important for a girl to be popular, think for herself, and work hard. Only 34% of White teens who had a father present at home had a serious argument with their mothers compared to 41% of those who did not have a father present. There were no significant differences between populations for Black teens (column 3).

Among Latinas, the extent of acculturation was an important factor in parent–adolescent arguments. Forty-nine percent of Latina teens who spoke English at home had a serious argument with their mothers compared to 30% of those who do not speak English at home, perhaps capturing the tension of dissonant acculturation. Those who spoke Spanish at home had a lower probability of having an argument with their mothers (31%) compared to those who do not speak Spanish at home (48%). Those who spoke a language other than English or Spanish at home had a very low probability of having an

argument with their mothers (12%) compared to those who do not speak a language other than English or Spanish at home (43%).

The Presence of Fathers Associated with Decrease in Excessive Monitoring

An excessive amount of parental monitoring seems to have a negative relationship with teens' outcomes in both the NSYR and the Add Health data; therefore, it is reasonable that father presence would decrease harsh parental monitoring. Table 4.9, column 1 shows that speaking English at home was associated with a higher level of parental monitoring (0.35) compared to those who did not speak English at home (0.19). Those who spoke Spanish at home reported a lower level of parental monitoring (0.22) than those who did not speak Spanish at home (0.35). Those who spoke a language other than English or Spanish at home reported a lower level of parental monitoring (0.04) than those who did not speak a language other than English or Spanish at home (0.34). In the whole sample, those teens with a father present reported a lower level of parental monitoring (0.28) compared to those without a father present (0.44). Single parents might feel a need to monitor their teens excessively in order to make up for the lack of a second parent.

For White teens, having a father present in the home was associated with a lower level of parental monitoring (0.27) compared to those without a father present (0.40). For Black teens (column 3), those with a father present reported a lower level of parental monitoring (0.41) compared to those without a father present (0.53).

Again, language showed to be an important acculturation variable for Latinas (column 4). Latinas who spoke English at home reported a higher level of parental monitoring (0.36)

compared to those who do not speak English at home (0.21). Latinas who spoke Spanish at home reported a lower level of parental monitoring (0.22) compared to those who do not speak Spanish at home (0.35). Those who spoke a language other than English or Spanish at home reported a lower level of parental monitoring (0.11) compared to those who do not speak a language other than English or Spanish at home (0.32). Like all other samples, Latinas with a father present reported a lower level of parental monitoring (0.20) compared to those who do not have a father present (0.47).

Independence and Acculturation Associated With Increased Openness About Sex

Parent comfort discussing sex was measured by a factor scale from (1–5), with 1 being not comfortable and 5 being very comfortable and is examined in Table 4.10. For the whole sample, choosing a neighborhood for its proximity to relatives was associated with a lower comfort level discussing sex (4.41), while parents who did not choose their neighborhoods for proximity to relatives demonstrated a significantly higher comfort level (4.48). Thinking it was important for a girl to learn to be well-behaved and to help people was significantly associated with a lower amount of comfort discussing sex (4.29) compared parents who thought it was important for a girl to be popular, think for herself, and work hard (4.51). When the mother worked for pay, the comfort level discussing sex was significantly higher (4.48) than in those families where the mother did not work for pay (4.36). Speaking English at home was associated with a much higher level of comfort discussing sex (4.48) compared to those who did not speak English in the home (3.74). Parents who spoke Spanish in the home had a lower level of comfort discussing sex with their teens (3.68) compared to those who did not (4.48). Similarly, those who spoke a language other than English or Spanish in the home had a lower level of comfort (4.13)

compared to those who did not (4.45). When there was a father present in the home, parental comfort discussing sex was significantly higher (4.47) than when a father was not present (4.42). Parents born in the United States had a higher level of comfort (4.49), compared to that of parents born abroad (3.97).

For the White sample, choosing a neighborhood for its proximity to relatives was associated with a lower comfort level discussing sex (4.50), compared to parents who did not choose their neighborhood for proximity to relatives who had a higher comfort level (4.57). Parents who thought it was important for a girl to learn to be well-behaved and to help people had a significantly lower amount of comfort discussing sex (4.43) compared to parents of teens who thought it was important for a girl to be popular, think for herself, and work hard (4.57). When a parent was born in the United States there was a higher level of comfort discussing sex (4.54) compared to that of parents born abroad (4.40).

In Black families, when the mother worked for pay, the comfort level discussing sex was significantly higher (4.32) than in those families where the mother did not work for pay (4.14).

In Latino families, parents who thought it was important for a girl to learn to be well-behaved and to help people had a significantly lower amount of comfort discussing sex (3.81) compared to parents of teens who thought it was important for a girl to be popular, think for herself, and work hard (4.18). Latino parents who spoke English at home reported a much higher level of comfort discussing sex (4.21) compared to those who did not speak English in the home (3.70). Parents who spoke Spanish in the home had a lower level of comfort discussing sex with their teens (3.68) compared to those who did

not (4.21). When a parent was born in the United States there was a higher level of comfort (4.29) compared to parents born abroad (3.72).

Presence of Fathers Dampens Frequency of Discussions About Sex

As seen in Chapter 3 and based on the literature review, increased discussion about sex seems to have a contradictory effect in that it increases negative outcomes. This might be because parents begin to talk about sex only when they sense that their children are already sexually active. Table 4.11 shows that in the whole sample, speaking English at home was associated with a significantly greater amount of discussion about sex (3.30) than those who did not speak English in the home (2.98). Parents who spoke Spanish in the home had a significantly lower amount of discussion about sex with their teens (2.99) compared to those who did not (3.30). When there was a father present in the home there was a significantly lower amount of discussion about sex (3.21) than when a father was not present (3.40). When a parent was born in the United States there was a significantly greater amount of discussion about sex (3.30), compared to families where the parents were born abroad (3.12).

For the White sample, when there was a father present in the home there was a significantly lower amount of discussion about sex (3.21) than when a father was not present (3.36). There were no significant in-group differences for Black teens, reflecting Black families' relative openness about sex. For Latinas (column 4), parents who spoke English at home reported a significantly greater amount of discussion about sex (3.20) compared to those who did not speak English in the home (3.00). Parents who spoke Spanish in the home had a significantly lower amount of discussion about sex with their

teens (2.99) compared to those who did not (3.20). When there was a father present in the home there was a significantly lower amount of discussion about sex (2.99) than when a father was not present (3.33).

Parental Guidance on Birth Control: Presence of Fathers Associated With More Recommendations of Birth Control

The Add Health data asked parents whether they strongly disagreed, disagreed, neither agreed nor disagreed, agreed, or strongly agreed that they had recommended a certain method of birth control, coded from 1–5. In Table 4.12, column 1 we find, surprising but concurrent with findings in Chapter 3, that speaking English at home was associated with a parent being likely to recommend a specific birth control to their teens (3.22) compared with those who did not speak English in the home (3.94). Parents who spoke Spanish in the home were more likely to recommend a specific birth control to their teens (4.00) compared to those who did not (3.22). When there was a father present in the home parents were more likely to agree that they had recommended a birth control to their teen (3.42) than when a father was not present (2.99). Parents born in the United States were less likely to recommend a specific birth control (3.20) than parents born abroad (3.79).

Parents of White teens (column 2) with a father present in the home were more likely to agree that they had recommended a specific method of birth control to their teen (3.37) than those parents where a father was not present (2.95). Parents of Black teens (column 3) in families where there was a father present were more likely to agree that they had recommended a birth control to their teen (3.41) than those parents in families with no father present (2.93). When parents were born in the United States, they were less likely to recommend a specific birth control (3.07) than parents born abroad (3.95).

For Latinas, (column 4) parents who chose their neighborhoods for their proximity to relatives were less likely to agree that they had recommended a specific birth control to their teen (3.44) than parents who did not choose their neighborhood for proximity to relatives (3.81%). Parents who spoke English at home were less likely to recommend a specific birth control to their teen (3.49) compared to those who did not speak English in the home (3.99). Parents who spoke Spanish in the home were more likely to recommend a specific birth control to their teens (4.00) compared to those who did not (3.50). When there was a father present in the home parents were more likely to agree that they had recommended a birth control to their teen (3.85) than when a father was not present (3.38). When parents were born in the United States they were less likely to recommend a specific birth control (3.44), compared to parents born abroad (3.953).

Summary

Latina teens face a unique set of variables in the areas of familism, parent–teen communication and sexual attitudes and practices. Degrees of familism and acculturation have a number of significant relationships with adolescent behavior and the parent–teen relationship. As traditional cultural values within a Latino family are replaced by more typically White American values, and as the Latina teen learns to identify more with her peers than her familial culture, sexual behavior outcomes and parent–adolescent relations for Latinas increasingly resemble the general sample. Father presence was associated with an improvement in almost all areas. Fathers seem to lend stability to the family unit, at least in terms of parent–teen interaction, regardless of actual contribution or temperament. The higher the degree of acculturation for Latinas, the higher the association with more negative (but typically adolescent) outcomes—parent–teen

communication decreases with loss of shared language; a nurturing of independence invites more freedom and autonomy from the family; and Latinas look less to their families for role modeling and guidance. High-functioning among Latinas seems to be associated with being able to successfully navigate between two worlds, embracing the best parts of bilingualism, respect for both native family culture and American opportunity, and a respect for other family members that is not dependent on acculturation.

Chapter V

Making a Difference: The Vital Role of Parents in Adolescent Decision Making

The two previous chapters have demonstrated the importance of familism and acculturation with regard to communication and the parent-adolescent relationship. The purpose of this chapter is to push the analysis further—to ascertain the independent effects of these factors on teen sexual behavior. The previous chapters have culminated in an analysis of how day-to-day family life is associated with sexual behavior for White, Black, and Latina teens. The findings of this chapter parallel those of Chapters 3 and 4—that is, the role of parents cannot be overemphasized. However, parental influence, familism, and acculturation are most vital *before* the onset of sexual activity. There are more variables that are significant in preventing and delaying sexual intercourse than there are with regards to postcoital behavior, such as using birth control or becoming pregnant. Very few variables had a significant impact on teen pregnancy. The use of birth control at first sex was also mostly devoid of significant associations with familism, acculturation, and parent-child relationships.

As Chapter 3 revealed, an adolescent's family life plays a critical role in not only her views toward sexuality, but also in how she processes her school experiences and feelings of self-worth. The review of the literature confirmed that family life and sociodemographic variables influence Latina teens' decision-making about sexual behavior. The following multivariate analysis investigates the independent effects of these variables, in addition to the familism, acculturation, parent and adolescent variables

on four dependent variables. The four variables examined are 1) whether a teen has ever had sex in Table 5.1; 2) whether the teen used birth control the first time she engaged in sexual intercourse in Table 5.2; 3) whether the teen has experienced a pregnancy, as reported at Wave III of Add Health in Table 5.3; and 4) the age at which the teen had intercourse for the first time, as reported at Wave III of Add Health in Table 5.4.

Because three of the dependent variables are dichotomous, logistic regression techniques were employed in order to estimate the model. Cox proportional hazard modeling was used to estimate age at first sex to account for those who have not yet had sex at Wave III. These analyses were conducted for the sample as a whole, and then each model was run separately for White teens, Black teens, and Latina teens in order to observe the importance of each variable with regard to teen sexual behavioral outcomes across race and ethnic subgroups.

Different Sides of the Same Coin: A Comparative Look at Teen Sexual Behavior Among Blacks, Whites, and Latinas

Teenagers in the United States are bombarded with a myriad of different environmental and social factors that shape their attitudes and behavior regarding sexuality. The NSYR interviews detailed poignant differences by race on attitudes toward sexuality, with Black teens placing less importance on sexual chastity. Therefore, as shown in Table 5.1, Black teens had a higher chance (78%) of ever having had sex than White teens and a higher risk of early sex (Table 5.4). However, the interview data indicated that Black teens showed remarkable comfort with discussion of birth control and detailed very open discussions with their mothers about protection. So although Black teens, compared to White teens, have a higher probability of being sexually active, they have a 112% higher

probability of using birth control at first sex than White teens (Table 5.2). Unfortunately, birth control use at first sex does not statistically act as a protective mechanism against teen pregnancy, as Black teens in Add Health are 53% more likely to experience a teen pregnancy than White teens (Table 5.3). Although Black teens are more likely to use birth control, engaging in sex at an earlier age increases the risk that they will become pregnant.

Young Latinas in the NSYR expressed a lack of guidance when it comes to sexual matters and in turn had a 53% higher probability of ever having had sex than White teens in the Add Health data, shown in Table 5.1. However, there was no significant difference in birth control use or risk of early sex between Whites and Latinas in Add Health (Tables 5.2 and 5.4). The most troubling finding surrounding Latinas was in incidence of teen pregnancy. Latinas had a 136% higher probability of a teen pregnancy compared to White teens (Tables 5.3). As seen in Chapter 3, many Latinas were themselves products of teen pregnancy, and most had siblings who had experienced a teen pregnancy. Latinas do not differ significantly from White teenagers when it comes to birth control use at first sex or age at first intercourse. However, they are more likely to consider following a pregnancy to term if they are in a stable relationship. This may be because Latino families do not tend to view teenage pregnancies as uncommon or deviant within their familial setting.

Proactive and Reactive Parenting: Ever Had Sex

The survey data seem to mimic the findings of the qualitative data of the NSYR. Teens in the United States are inculcated with sexual norms by their parents; however, teens' own

views of sexuality play a key role in their sexual outcomes. Table 5.1 shows the results of multivariate analysis of ever had sex by Wave I in Add Health. Odds Ratios are presented for the key factors of familism, acculturation, parent-adolescent relationship and communication, teen attitudes, and sociodemographic controls. The whole sample results are shown in column 1, followed by the White, Black, and Latina results in columns 2–4. I focus my discussion of results on the significant effects, and the key conceptual measures of familism, acculturation, and parent-adolescent interactions.

Paralleling the findings of the NSYR, it was discovered that the parent-adolescent relationship, parental communication variables, having a father present, and church attendance had the most influence on teenage sexual behavior for the entire sample, White, Black, and Latina teens in Add Health and some of these effects were more important for certain race and ethnic subgroups. Familism did not serve as a significant deterrent for initiation of sexual activity for the whole sample, as we see there were no significant effects in Table 5.1. However, familism was a factor for Latinas. If parents chose their neighborhood of residence based on the closeness of relatives or if the mother worked for pay, the probability of ever having sex decreased. Although a mother in the workplace adds tension in the home, as we saw in Chapter 3, it also adds more income, which can give young Latinas access to more forms of capital to deter sexual behavior. Not only does the family have more financial stability, but a working mother may also act as a role model for daughters who want to succeed at career goals.

Very few White and Black teens were foreign-born, had foreign-born parents or spoke a language other than English at home. Therefore, acculturation was not a vital factor in determining sexual behavior for the whole sample. For the whole sample speaking a

language other than English or Spanish decreased the probability of ever having sex, however this is a very small population.

When beginning this study, I anticipated the acculturation variables to be strongly associated with Latinas sexual behavior. However in Table 5.1 we see that few acculturation variables are significant for Latinas in column 3. Latinas who lived in a high-density Latino neighborhood had 42% lower odds of ever having had sex. Although Latino enclaves are stereotyped as poor, they serve to preserve the cultural norms and mores that warn against having sex at an early age. Enclaves are like consolidated ethnic neighborhoods where everyone has an interest and a stake in each other's well-being. This creates an environment where young Latinas receive a higher degree of cultural and behavioral monitoring. I believe that the lack of significance of more acculturation variables is due to the cohort effect mentioned earlier. The first wave of Add Health was conducted in 1994–1995, whereas the Latino immigrant phenomenon is more recent. More recent immigrants tend to be younger, male, and from different regions (Central America). The respondents in the first wave of Add Health came to the United States earlier and during a time when there was distinct pressure to assimilate. Therefore, it is likely that the Latinas in Add Health may have come from more acculturated families.

The significance of the parent-teen relationship was clearly conveyed in the NSYR semi-structured interviews. The Add Health data lends a quantitative backing to this finding. For the whole sample in Table 5.1, teens are less likely to be sexually active when teens have more understanding relationships with their parents, make decisions with their parents, feel close to their mothers, and their parents are comfortable discussing sex. On the other hand when teens argue with parents or parents use high levels of monitoring, the

teen is more likely to be sexually active. Perhaps the monitoring is in response to the teen's sexual activity, rather than a potential protective direction.

Within this study, it was discovered that the sexual behaviors of White teenagers generally mirrored those of the whole sample (column 2). When White teens made decisions with their parents, it decreased the odds of ever having had sex by 37%. As was evident in Chapter 3, many White teens were able to have candid conversations with their mothers about sexuality, which led to closer relationships. The Add Health data also shows that closeness to mothers had a significant effect on the sexual behavior of White teens. More intimate connections between mother and daughter tended to decrease the odds of ever having had sex for White teens by 25%, while White teens who had an argument with their mothers in the prior 4 weeks increased their odds of ever having had sex by 32%.

The parent-adolescent relationship did not prove to be as influential on sexual behavior for Black teens as it was for White teens. The findings in Chapter 3 included the discovery that most Black teens felt they had more of a "friendship" with their mothers than a more traditional mother-daughter relationship. Results in column 3 shows that Black teens who had parents who understood them and were close to their mothers had a decreased probability of ever having had sex. But like Whites, a high level of monitoring increased a Black teen's odds of ever having had sex by 290%. From these figures, it can be concluded that Black teenagers are more likely to engage in intercourse when there is a rift in the maternal-adolescent relationship and harsh limitations are employed as a means of discipline.

Teens of all races who had parents who were comfortable discussing sex had a decreased probability of ever having sex. As shown in Chapter 3, the parents of White and Black teenagers seemed to be comfortable with helping them attain the pill as a means for contraception, which was shown to have a positive effect in the Add Health data. Having a parent that recommended a specific birth control decreased the odds of first sex for both White and Black teens but not for Latinas.

As in the whole sample, excessive discussion of sex seemed to have a counter-productive effect on teens of all races. Large quantities of parental communication had the opposite intended effect and increased the odds of ever having had sex.

Teens were also impacted by their degree of willingness to have a child out of wedlock. The NSYR interviews suggest show that many teens today would contemplate a nonmarital birth. White teens who see nonmarital births as a viable option have a 88% increased probability of ever having had sex, while Latinas had a whopping 226% increased probability of ever having sex. Within the NSYR, it was found that Black teenagers tended to have the most liberal attitudes toward nonmarital childbearing. This may be explained by the fact that many of them lived in single-mother homes and were comfortable with the concept and practice. Therefore it had no effect on Black teens' probability of ever having sex.

As Lareau (2003) showed in her work, parents' education has a significant influence on the quantity of social capital and the amount of time parents spend cultivating their children. This time spent together could serve to improve the parent-adolescent relationship. When compared to parents who did not graduate high school, the teenagers

of parents who have received some college education had a decreased probability of ever having had sex. This was true of the White sample as well (column 2).

Parents play an important role in shaping and influencing the decisions their teenagers will make about sexual behavior. Although many fathers work long hours, just having a father present in the home has a positive effect. It increases stability, capability of teen monitoring, and augments all forms of capital in the home—financial, human and social. Having a father in the home decreased the probability of ever having had sex for every population.

Although religion is often hailed as having a very positive and conservative affect upon child rearing, the views about sexual behavior of teens in the NSYR were not considerably impacted. However, declining family religiosity did signify a decrease in the quality of overall family relationships. This was confirmed by the Add Health data. As shown in column 4, religion was only significant for Latinas. It served to lower the probability of ever having sex. However church attendance affected every variable analyzed in the Add Health sample. Church attendance served to decrease the odds of ever having had sex for every population except Latinas. As seen in the NSYR, church attendance acted as a strong proxy for the amount of family time spent together.

Unfortunately, Latino families do not spend that much time together, as related in Chapter 3. Therefore, we would expect church attendance to play a more significant role in the lives of teens that attend regularly, more so than religiosity.

Whether or not a teen lived in the South was a variable of interest, given the region's quickly-changing demographic profile and increase in its school-aged population. Perper

and Manlove (2009) show that teens in the South are more likely to become teen mothers, while Franzetta et al. (2007) show that the South had the greatest increase in proportion of teen births to Latinas. In addition, Georgia had the largest proportion of repeat births to white teens (Franzetta et al. 2007). Therefore, as expected, teens who lived in the southern United States had an increased probability of ever having had. This was also true for White and Latinas teens in Add Health.

Few Variables Affect Birth Control Use at First Sex

Table 5.2 shows the multivariate results of use of birth control at first sex for the sample of teens already sexually active at Wave I. Column 1 shows that for the whole sample having parents who chose a neighborhood based on proximity to relatives increased the probability of teens using birth control at first intercourse by 51%. This finding would suggest that proximity of relatives increases the number of positive role models in a teen's life. It had a positive effect on birth control use for White teens as well. As discussed in the literature review, Blacks lie somewhere between Whites and Latinos in terms of the amount of familism they experience. Column 3 shows that Black teens with parents who voiced the importance of their daughters learning traditional values had a 90% increase in the probability of birth control usage at first sex. Speaking a primary language other than English or Spanish in the home decreased the probability of using birth control at first sex for Latinas, as demonstrated in column 4.

Few acculturation variables were associated with birth control use at first sex. White teens who lived in areas with a larger Latino population had an increased probability of

birth control use at first sex while for Black teens living in a Latino enclave decreased the odds of using birth control at first sex. Any ideas why?

Surprisingly, columns 1–4 show that virtually none of the parent-adolescent variables were significantly associated with birth control use at first sex and none of the parent communication variables were significant. The lone significant parent-adolescent variable was for Latinas. If Latinas had an understanding relationship with her parents, it increased the odds of using birth control at first sex by 367%.

While parents play a crucial role in helping to nurture and guide their children, ultimately it is a teenager's own view on nonmarital childbearing that has significant associations with birth control usage at first sex. Column 1 shows that for the whole sample, if a teen would consider a nonmarital birth, the odds of using birth control at first sex is severely diminished. The affect was mimicked for every race (columns 2–4).

Some sociodemographic variables were significantly associated with birth control use at first sex. Again, as column 1 shows, church attendance is positively associated with birth control use at first sex for the whole sample. It also significant for Whites and Latinas (columns 2 and 4). Column 3 shows that public assistance and having a parent with a high school education (versus dropping out of high school) is negatively associated with birth control use at first sex. However White teens with a parent with at least some college education had an increased probability of birth control use at first sex. Being older at Wave I increased the odds of birth control at first sex for Latinas (column 4). However, as discussed previously, Southern Latinos tend to be more recent immigrants who are subjected to intense discrimination. Therefore, it is not surprising that living in

the South would have a detrimental affect on young Latinas. Living in the South decreases the probability of Latinas using birth control at first sex.

Sociodemographic Variables Have Largest Association with Teen Pregnancy

Table 5.3 shows the effects of familism on teen pregnancy. Larger households were more likely to produce a teenager who would become pregnant. Each additional household member increased the odds of a teen pregnancy by 8% for the whole sample (column 1) and 10% for Black teens (column 2). This is perhaps due to the decreased attention that each child receives in a larger household. If a parent felt that it was important for a girl to be well-behaved and help people versus being popular, thinking for herself, and working hard, the probability of a teen pregnancy went up by 28% for the whole sample and 55% for Black teens. Perhaps girls with parents with more traditional views of gender roles are more likely to desire a family at an earlier age. In addition, if a White teen expected to be married by 25, it increased the probability of teen pregnancy by 14% (column 1).

Speaking a language other than English or Spanish decreased the probability of a teen pregnancy by 99% for both the whole and Latina samples (columns 1 and 4); however this population was so small that this significance is overstated. Similarly, living in a high-density Latino neighborhood decreased the probability of a teen pregnancy for the whole sample by 30%. This could be indicative of increased monitoring in more populated enclaves as well as less assimilation, which the literature review has linked to negative sexual behavior.

If a teen has an understanding relationship with her parents it decreased the probability of a teen pregnancy for the whole sample, White, and Latina teens (columns 1, 3 and 4). In

terms of discipline, the amount and type of monitoring a parent does can have varying effects. As we saw in previous findings, harsh monitoring weighed heavily on teens. In general, monitoring did not seem to have the same positive effect as communication. This is confirmed with teen pregnancy as well. For all teens in the sample, increased monitoring alarmingly increased the probability of a teen pregnancy by 146% (column 1). Similarly, monitoring increased the probability of teen pregnancy for Black teens by 278% (column 3).

Teens in the whole sample who had a parent who was comfortable discussing sex were less likely to have a teen pregnancy, as were White teens. The amount a parent discussed sex was positively associated with a teen pregnancy for the whole sample as well as White and Black teens (similar to Jaccard's findings in Add Health). When a parent recommended a certain birth control it decreased the likelihood of a teen pregnancy for the whole sample and for White teens.

Permissive teen attitudes toward a nonmarital birth increased the probability of a teen pregnancy for the whole sample and for Latinas.

Sociodemographic variables showed to have expected significant associations with teen pregnancy. Having a parent with a high school education decreased the probability of a teen pregnancy for teens in the whole sample as well as Black teens, compared to teens with parents who did not complete high school. In the whole sample, if a parent had some college education the probability of a teen pregnancy was reduced as well. Being on public assistance increased the probability of a teen pregnancy for Blacks. Having a father in the home was negatively associated with a teen pregnancy for the whole sample,

White teens and Latina teens. Interestingly, religion greatly increased the probability of a teen pregnancy for Latinas while at the same time church attendance greatly reduced the probability of a teen pregnancy for Latinas. Church attendance also decreased teen pregnancy for the whole sample and Black teens. Again, this could be indicative of church attendance serving as a proxy for quality family time together. In addition, being older at Wave I decreased the probability of a teen pregnancy for the whole sample and White teens.

Parent-Adolescent Relationship Has Pivotal Association with Early Sexual Activity

Table 5.4 shows multivariate Cox proportional hazard results comparing the age at first sex for the whole sample of White, Black, and Latina teens in Add Health. In this table, the numbers indicate the relative “hazard” of having sex at an earlier age for each independent variable. For example, teens who felt close to mom were 10% to 20% less likely to have their first sex at a particular age than teens who did not feel close to mom with a significance at the 0.01 level. As with the outcome variable, ever had sex, larger household size has a protective effect for Latinas (column 4). It decreases the risk of earlier sex compared to those in smaller households. The expectation of getting married before 25 increases the risk of earlier sex for White and Black teens (columns 2 and 3).

Acculturation again has negative effects on healthy sexual behavior outcomes. Teens who spoke English at home had an increased risk of early sex, as did Latinas who spoke English at home. Further evidence of enclaves’ protective effect—living in a high density Latino neighborhood decreased the risk of earlier sex for the whole sample as well as for Whites and Latinas relative to those who did not live in predominately Latino areas.

Following the trend set by other outcome variables, the parent-adolescent relationship had significant associations with age at first sex. Teens in the whole sample, White teens, and Latina teens with more understanding relationships with their parents had a decreased risk of early sex. When parent and teens make decisions together, the risk of earlier sex decreases for the whole sample, White and Latina teens. Teens of all races who had a close relationship with their mothers had a decreased risk of early sex. However, having an argument with their mother proved to be detrimental for teens in the whole sample, White teens, as well as Black teens. Monitoring increased the risk of earlier sex for the whole sample and White teens.

Consistent with the other outcome variables, teen in the whole sample who would consider a nonmarital birth were at an increased risk for early sex, as were White and Black teens.

Teens in the whole sample along with White teens who had a parent with some college education had a decreased risk of early sex. When a father was present for the whole sample, White teens, and Latinas the risk of early sex was diminished. Religion was protective against early sex for the whole sample in addition to the White sample. Church attendance was protective for all samples as was being older at Wave I. Living in the South increased the risk of early sex for the whole sample, Whites and Latinas.

Latinas and Blacks More Likely to Experience a Teen Pregnancy

Table 5.5 shows the results of an elaboration analysis in which each set of theoretical variables are entered into the model one at a time to identify the extent to which each set explains the overall race differences in teen pregnancy. The baseline race differences are

shown in model 1, indicating that Black teens and Latina teens are more likely than White teens to experience a teen pregnancy. Black teens are 118% more likely to have a teen pregnancy than whites and Latinas are 82% more likely to have a teen pregnancy than White teens. Consistent with the literature, Model 2 shows that familism serves to increase the risk of pregnancy for Black and Latina youth because when familism variables are controlled for, the probability of a teen pregnancy for both Black and Latina teens reduces. A parent with traditional values might deter teens from having sex, but might discourage open conversations about sexuality, thus increasing the probability of a pregnancy. However, a higher level of acculturation serves to protect Latina youth from teen pregnancy because when acculturation variables are entered into model 3, the probability of a teen pregnancy increases for Latinas i.e., acculturation suppresses the impact of being Latina on teen pregnancy). When speaking a language other than English or Spanish and living in a high density Latino neighborhood are controlled for, the risk of a teen pregnancy increases for Latinas. Model 4 shows that the parent-adolescent relationship explains some of the risk for teen pregnancy among Black teen girls, while controlling for parent communication seems to have a significant influence in decreasing Black teen pregnancy. As Table 2.4 shows, Black parents had the highest amount of communication with their teens, however their comfort level fell between that of White and Latino parents. The NSYR data suggests that Black parents had very open and detailed discussions with their children surrounding sex, compared to White and Latino parents, however perhaps this is because Black parents sense and acknowledge the increased threat that their children faced as most teens in the NSYR were of lower socio-demographic status. There were no significant differences in the bivariate analysis (Table

4.11). Therefore it is difficult to ascertain why parental communication for Blacks would increase the risk of a teen pregnancy. Perhaps, as research suggests, parents increase communication when there is imminent risk. If a Black teen would consider a non-marital birth it also explains much of the higher risk for Black teens to experience a teen pregnancy. Paralleling the literature, socio-demographics play a vital role in Black teen pregnancy. Controlling for these variables further explain the increased risk for Black teens, whereas for Latinas, controlling for socio-demographic variables actually increases Latinas' risk for a teen pregnancy. Therefore while socio-demographics serves to explain some of the increased risk for Black teens, it does not for Latinas.

Latinas do not Differ Significantly from Whites in Risk of Earlier Sex

Table 5.6 presents a similar elaboration model for age at first sex. As the literature review indicated, Table 5.6 confirms that Latinas do not differ significantly than Whites when looking at risk of early sex while Black teens to have an increased risk of early sex compared to White teen girls. As in Table 5.5, the parent-adolescent relationship, parental communication, teen attitudes, and socio-demographic variables all serve to explain the higher risk of earlier sex for Black teens. These finds lend credibility to the argument that negative outcomes among Black teens is more a function of class than a fundamental difference of norms.

Summary

The findings examined in this chapter indicate the critical nature of establishing healthy relationships between parents and their adolescents *before* the onset of sexual behavior. Although the role of parents in the lives of teens remains important, it is role-modeling

and establishment of open channels of communication that will help to protect the teen from unhealthy sexual behavior (e.g., early sex, teen pregnancy, and nonuse of birth control). As we've seen, teens' own opinions supercede their parents' regarding sexual behavior once teens become sexually active.

Latina teens, as opposed to Black or White teens, notably face a much higher probability of teen pregnancy. Part of this may be due to the Latino cultural norm of experiencing and accepting nonmarital pregnancies. The data notes that the mere consideration of a nonmarital birth greatly increases risk. As their American experience dilutes traditional Latin mores, Latina teens find both conflict and guidance at home. They are nurtured by a concentrated enclave of other Latinos and connection with a church, indicating the importance of community, and yet desire to be accepted by other teens who may not share their cultural background.

It is important to note that a Latina teen's relationship with her mother is critical to helping her make healthy sexual decisions. When coupled with a father present in the home, a strong mother-daughter relationship can be the foundation for good behaviors. Overall, and as seen in Chapters 3 and 4, acculturation seems to bring with it a higher level of risky sexual behavior, reflecting confusion and isolation by the Latina teen in the United States today.

Chapter VI
Conclusion
Struggling Latino Families Perpetuate Cycle of Risky Sexual Behavior

The Familial Struggle

Latina adolescent sexuality has been profoundly impacted by the larger familial struggle to attain the American dream. Ensnared in low socioeconomic conditions, many Latino families living in the United States suffer from low income, long working hours and limited time and communication with their loved ones. The decline in the revered elements of normative and behavior familism, established in the extant literature as so important to Latinos, has a detrimental effect on all concerned. Fractured relationships between Latina teens and their parents have led Latinas to seek solace in negative coping mechanisms. The NSYR showed that Latinas are experimenting with drugs and alcohol and skipping school, while the Add Health data illustrates the fact that Latinas have a high rate of teen pregnancy considering the percentage that are sexually active. During these highly formative adolescent years, Latina teenagers are struggling in silence, unable or unwilling to communicate with their parents about the problems they encounter. Arguments and hostility in the home environment often manifest into teen disengagement from school, experimentation with drugs and alcohol and engaging in sexual behavior.

The Focus: Family Life, Parent-Adolescent Communication and Latina Sexual Behavior

The three goals of this dissertation were to explore Latino family life, the decline in parent–adolescent communication and how familial experiences impact Latina sexual

behavior. The NSYR results demonstrate that long work hours, staggered immigration and strained relationships, has eroded normative and behavioral familism within Latino family units. In addition, familial ethnic socialization has been curtailed by lack of quality family time. This lapse has led to a decline in familism and an increase in acculturation—both of which carry negative repercussions.

Latino parents have attempted to grasp control of an increasingly untenable home situation by employing the use of harsh monitoring, such as corporal punishment and denial of extracurricular school activities, as a primary means of discipline. The restrictive and overbearing style of monitoring often causes more harm than good, as these busy parents rarely have time to counteract the negative effects with displays of loving affection and trust. These teens react by distancing themselves from their family.

Broken Families

This is the second theme of the dissertation—an in-depth exploration of how the decline of family togetherness has affected parent–adolescent communication within the Latino community. The NSYR and Add Health findings indicate that there is a cultural and ethnic barrier between Latina teens and their parents. Many teens are embarrassed by their heritage or feel that their parents have not acclimated sufficiently to the dominant culture within the United States. The loneliness and isolation felt by Latinas at home and at school then makes them more susceptible to the wiles of older boys and men. And familism, while protective against some elements of risky behavior, in this work is shown to increase the probability of a teen pregnancy for Latinas (Table 5.5). However, less acculturation was protective against a teen pregnancy.

While the presence of a father was shown to have beneficial effects in the Add Health findings, the NSYR showed that in blended Latino families and families where fathers experience an extreme amount of stress there was a higher chance of violence in the home, or silence among family members, both negatively impacting Latina teens. Presence is simply not enough. There must be positive interactions between father and teen in order to facilitate a healthy communicative relationship.

Some common assumptions in the literature still hold for Latinos in the United States. Traditional gender roles reign king, with men assuming roles of authority and women straddling the hardships of daily life as a mother and wife in the home. Working conditions and the pressures of acculturation take a heavy toll on all members of a Latino family. Fathers work hard at low-level jobs while mothers try to maintain a semblance of family life while often holding down another job. Young Latinas tend to be left to their own devices. While this does not sound all too dissimilar from the struggles of many American families during hard economic times, Latinas have to deal with the additional obstacle of facing alienation at school, manifested through mental bullying by Whites, physical bullying by Blacks, and often being ignored by teachers. As Chapter 3 showed, the cultural distance felt at school, coupled with not being about to have open discussions with their parents, serves as the final nail in the coffin for many young struggling Latinas.

Parenting as a Vital Force

There are some promising findings within this work. The third goal of this dissertation, to examine how familial experiences affect the sexual behavior of Latinas, uncovers the importance of parental influence. Parents are a vital force when it comes to delaying the

initiation of sexual activity and preventing teen pregnancy. More specifically, it seems that fathers play the most crucial role. When fathers were present in the home, young Latinas were less likely to have ever had sex, less likely to have a teen pregnancy, and have sex later compare to Latinas who do not have a father in the home. Moreover, Latinas were not significantly more likely to have early sex compared to whites, which shows the positive elements of the Latino family. Overall, the most encouraging finding was that teenagers who experienced quality family time tended to have more affirmative experiences with sexuality. Three qualities in the parent–adolescent relationship had particularly positive outcomes for all teenage girls, particularly Latinas: 1) the parental comfort level with discussing sex, 2) the closeness between daughter and mother, and 3) the specific recommendation of birth control. These variables generally served to decrease the probability of Latinas ever having sex and also served to delay the onset of sexual activity.

However, parents cannot control all of the factors that go into the equation of adolescent decision-making. If a teen was open to the idea of a nonmarital birth, it dramatically increased the probability of negative outcomes for teens of all races on all indicators, ever had sex, birth control use, teen pregnancy, and age at first sex. Many Latino parents spoke in the form of tales and traditions, as opposed to concrete information on how their children could protect themselves mentally and physically. This resulted in a severe surplus of misinformation and ignorance regarding birth control and prevention against sexually transmitted diseases.

Positive Influences and Impediments

This dissertation examined many elements of Latina life, and how they affect teenage sexual behavior. Chapter 3 revealed that because of economic stress and gender-role confusion, abusive relationships were present in many forms in some Latino families, with teenage Latinas seeking out similar dysfunction in their relationships to mimic their home life. It was helpful to learn of the protective nature of ethnic enclaves from the interview data, which has been noted in literature and confirmed in this work. Enclaves serve to reinforce Latino values by providing a broader sense of community, as well as more people to turn to for support and advice. Teenagers living in Latino neighborhoods had better experiences at school. Add Health results also indicated the positive impact on sexual behavior. Enclaves served to decrease the probability of Latinas ever having sex, while also decreasing the risk of earlier sex compared to those who resided in areas with a lower density of Latinos.

The bivariate analysis revealed that Latinas who spoke Spanish at home had better relationships and communication with their parents. The sharing of a special language that set home apart from the outside world seemed to help forge bonds between teens and parents. Foreign-born Latinas in the NSYR, who tend to have more traditional values and expectations regarding family life and sexuality, had healthier attitudes towards life and sexuality and actually spoke more of birth control use. The Add Health study revealed that Church attendance played a critical role in protection from early sex, teen pregnancy, and encouraged birth control use for teenagers of all different ethnicities. Unfortunately, a low socioeconomic level has necessitated long work hours for Latino parents, and

consequently led to a decrease in church attendance. This signifies yet another decline in a key element of Latino familism.

Conclusion: A Conceptual Model of Variables Affecting Latina Sexual Behavior

As shown in Figure 6.1, there are a number of variables which play a role in shaping teenage sexual behavior. This work focused on two primary areas: Latino traditional values and the situational and environmental aspects of minority life in the United States. Respeto, simpatia, machismo, marianismo, and the concept of ideal family life are the key strongholds of traditional Latino values. This conglomeration of bindingly specific gender roles, a hierarchy of familial roles and an unhealthy desire to maintain peace in the family at the cost of remaining silent, has resulted in stress and dysfunction within Latino homes. The U.S. situation for Latinos can be highlighted by the examination of acculturation, poverty, stress, bullying and conflict in school. The level and rate of each family member's acculturation ultimately determines the degree of peace and communication that exists between Latino parents and teenagers. Poverty causes stress within the household, which leads to tension when there is conversation, but more often that not, leads to silence. Bullying and conflict in school is often the result of low socioeconomic levels and poor acculturation. Latina teenagers desperately struggle amidst these obstacles to fit into the dominant U.S. culture.

These variables ultimately impact parental communication, religion, familism and the parent-adolescent relationship, which in turn shape Latina sexual behavior.

In summary, this conclusion has presented a raw, yet revealing portrait of the adversity that young Latinas and their families face in the context of economic uncertainty and the stress of fitting into a dominant culture which does not value what they have to offer.

Policy Implications

Although the focus of this research was Latina teens, there were significant findings about Latino families overall. The strain Latino families are feeling is the first piece of the puzzle of Latina adolescent behavior. Institutions that serve Latinos such as the Church, community organizations, and political organizations can implement programs to improve familial communication and provide help with conflict resolution and gender role strain. Parental conflict seems to weigh heavily on young Latinas, therefore community intervention could prove helpful. Moreover, the decline in Church attendance seems to be a proxy for familial deterioration. Churches can make an effort to reach out to Latino families who seem to be declining in attendance.

Another key finding of this work is the amount of difficulty Latinas face in school as well as the challenges young Latinas experience in discussing these school issues with their parents. Schools need to be aware of the particular issues that Latinas face and help to counteract these. It is clear that it is not just other students, but teachers as well who are unknowingly alienating Latina teens. Bullying in school has already been documented as a serious problem, however Latinas seem to be suffering in silence. Awareness programs could prove beneficial in this area.

As both the NSYR and Add Health show, parents matter. Giving parents effective means to communicate with their children could go a long way in preventing some of the negative outcomes documented in this work.

Limitations and Future Research

While this dissertation has provided critical insight into the lives of Latinas in the United States in a broad sense, more work is needed to pull out the intricacies of the experiences of different subgroups of Latinas and newer waves of immigrants. Because of the rapidly changing Latina demographic it is difficult to obtain a snapshot of what is occurring at any particular time. Both the NSYR and Add Health provide a comprehensive look at the lives of teens in the United States however, the situation of Latinos changes so rapidly that even trends seen as recently as five years ago, could look very different today. It is crucial to understand the experiences of the new groups, such as those hailing from Central America. New research has shown that the majority of teens in the United States are native-born with foreign-born parents, which is a marked change that has occurred in the past ten years (Fry & Passel, 2009). Future research on Latino teens needs to focus on the rising second generation of Latinos and their family lives, attempts to assimilate and effects on adolescent sexual behavior in the face of a historic decline in the U.S. economic situation.

Tables

Table 1.1: Income/Wealth by Race/Ethnicity, 2004–2005

Race/ethnic Group	Median Income	Net Worth	Poverty rate
White	\$50,784	\$118,300	8.3
Black	\$30,858	\$11,800	24.9
Latino	\$35,967	\$7,932	21.8
Asian	\$61,094	\$60,000	11.1

Source: Marger (2008), Kerbo (2007), Ibarra and Rodriguez (2006).

Table 2.1: Means of Dependent Variables

Explanatory Variables	Whole Sample	White	Black	Latina
<i>Complete Sample</i>	4810	3059	1113	638
Ever Had Sex	0.34	0.32	0.49	0.31
<i>Sexually Active at Wave I</i>	1719	971	519	229
Birth Control at First Sex	0.66	0.65	0.71	0.56
<i>Sexually Active at Wave III</i>	4188	2655	980	553
Teen Pregnancy	0.22	0.18	0.34	0.31
Age at First Sex	16.4	16.4	16.0	16.7

Table 2.2: Means of All Teen Girls in the Analytical Sample

Explanatory Variables	Whole Sample		White		Black		Latina	
	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE
<i>N</i>	4810		3059		1113		638	
<i>Familism</i>								
Household Size	4.44	0.04	4.32	0.05	4.70	0.09	5.03	0.13
Chose neighborhood for proximity to relatives	0.44	0.01	0.44	0.02	0.42	0.03	0.43	0.04
Important for girl to learn traditional values	0.27	0.01	0.24	0.01	0.37	0.03	0.38	0.03
Mother works for pay	0.76	0.01	0.77	0.01	0.74	0.02	0.69	0.03
Expectation for marriage at 25	3.30	0.03	3.40	0.03	2.79	0.06	3.31	0.07
<i>Acculturation</i>								
English spoken at home	0.96	0.01	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.66	0.05
Spanish spoken at home	0.03	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.32	0.05
Other language spoken at home	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.01
Density of Latinos in the neighborhood	1.10	0.03	1.02	0.01	1.05	0.02	1.85	0.20
Born in the United States (parent)	0.93	0.01	0.97	0.00	0.96	0.01	0.56	0.06
<i>Parent-adolescent relationship</i>								
Parents' ability to understand the teen	0.52	0.01	0.54	0.01	0.42	0.02	0.48	0.03
Make decisions together	3.94	0.02	3.94	0.02	3.91	0.05	3.95	0.07
Teen feels close to Mom	4.48	0.02	4.44	0.02	4.50	0.04	4.47	0.05
Teen had serious argument with Mom (4 weeks)	0.36	0.01	0.37	0.01	0.30	0.02	0.43	0.03
Parental monitoring factor scale	0.77	0.01	0.77	0.01	0.74	0.01	0.72	0.01
<i>Parent communication about sexual behavior</i>								
Parent comfort discussing sex	4.45	0.02	4.54	0.02	4.28	0.04	4.04	0.07
Amount parent discussed sexual activity	3.29	0.02	3.26	0.03	3.54	0.04	3.13	0.05
Parent recommended a certain birth control	3.24	0.05	3.22	0.05	3.10	0.07	3.64	0.09
<i>Teen attitudes</i>								
Consider a nonmarital birth	0.24	0.01	0.21	0.01	0.35	0.02	0.29	0.03
<i>Sociodemographic variables</i>								
On Public Assistance	0.08	0.01	0.06	0.01	0.19	0.02	0.10	0.02
Parent had high school education	0.35	0.01	0.34	0.02	0.39	0.03	0.33	0.04
Parent did not graduate from high school	0.12	0.01	0.09	0.01	0.17	0.02	0.27	0.04
Parent has some college	0.53	0.02	0.57	0.02	0.45	0.04	0.40	0.03
Father present	0.60	0.01	0.65	0.01	0.36	0.03	0.58	0.04
How important is religion	3.31	0.03	3.23	0.03	3.71	0.05	3.36	0.06
Church attendance	2.86	0.04	2.39	0.04	3.71	0.06	2.98	0.06
Teen age at wave 1	15.19	0.12	15.13	0.13	15.46	0.21	15.21	0.22
Teen lives in the southern United States	0.36	0.02	0.30	0.03	0.65	0.06	0.37	0.08

Table 2.3: Means of Sexually Active at Wave I Sample

Explanatory Variables	Whole Sample		White		Black		Latina	
	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE
<i>N</i>	1719		971		519		229	
<i>Familism</i>								
Household Size	4.40	0.06	4.25	0.07	4.77	0.13	4.60	0.15
Chose neighborhood for proximity to relatives	0.43	0.02	0.44	0.02	0.41	0.04	0.41	0.05
Important for girl to learn traditional values	0.27	0.02	0.23	0.02	0.37	0.03	0.35	0.06
Mother works for pay	0.76	0.02	0.77	0.02	0.73	0.03	0.70	0.04
Expectation for marriage at 25	3.27	0.04	3.44	0.04	2.74	0.07	3.24	0.13
<i>Acculturation</i>								
English spoken at home	0.98	0.01	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.76	0.06
Spanish spoken at home	0.02	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.24	0.06
Other language spoken at home	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.01
Density of Latinos in the neighborhood	1.08	0.03	1.01	0.00	1.04	0.02	1.78	0.25
Born in the United States (parent)	0.94	0.01	0.97	0.01	0.97	0.01	0.61	0.07
<i>Parent-adolescent relationship</i>								
Parents' ability to understand the teen	0.43	0.02	0.47	0.02	0.33	0.03	0.37	0.04
Make decisions together	3.72	0.03	3.70	0.04	3.80	0.06	3.71	0.09
Teen feels close to Mom	4.31	0.03	4.31	0.03	4.32	0.06	4.24	0.10
Teen had serious argument with Mom (4 weeks)	0.42	0.02	0.42	0.02	0.35	0.03	0.53	0.06
Parental monitoring factor scale	0.81	0.01	0.83	0.01	0.77	0.02	0.78	0.02
<i>Parent communication about sexual behavior</i>								
Parent comfort discussing sex	4.41	0.03	4.53	0.03	4.23	0.06	3.92	0.11
Amount parent discussed sexual activity	3.49	0.03	3.48	0.03	3.59	0.05	3.34	0.05
Parent recommended a certain birth control	2.64	0.06	2.58	0.07	2.65	0.09	3.17	0.16
<i>Teen attitudes</i>								
Consider a nonmarital birth	0.36	0.02	0.32	0.02	0.44	0.03	0.41	0.05
<i>Sociodemographic variables</i>								
On Public Assistance	0.11	0.01	0.07	0.01	0.23	0.03	0.09	0.03
Parent had high school education	0.38	0.02	0.38	0.02	0.36	0.03	0.41	0.05
Parent did not graduate from high school	0.15	0.02	0.12	0.02	0.19	0.03	0.26	0.04
Parent has some college	0.47	0.02	0.49	0.03	0.45	0.04	0.33	0.05
Father present	0.49	0.02	0.57	0.02	0.30	0.04	0.37	0.06
How important is religion	3.28	0.05	3.12	0.05	3.71	0.06	3.38	0.07
Church attendance	2.67	0.06	2.50	0.07	3.25	0.07	2.46	0.09
Teen age at wave 1	16.17	0.09	16.23	0.09	16.04	0.16	15.99	0.24
Teen lives in the southern United States	0.39	0.04	0.31	0.04	0.67	0.08	0.37	0.10

Table 2.4: Means of Sexually Active at Wave III Sample

Explanatory Variables	Whole Sample		White		Black		Latina	
	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE
<i>N</i>	4188		2655		980		553	
<i>Familism</i>								
Household Size	4.42	0.05	4.31	0.05	4.71	0.09	4.86	0.12
Chose neighborhood for proximity to relatives	0.44	0.02	0.44	0.02	0.43	0.03	0.47	0.04
Important for girl to learn traditional values	0.27	0.01	0.24	0.01	0.36	0.03	0.37	0.03
Mother works for pay	0.76	0.01	0.77	0.01	0.74	0.02	0.71	0.03
Expectation for marriage at 25	3.32	0.03	3.41	0.03	2.82	0.06	3.40	0.07
<i>Acculturation</i>								
English spoken at home	0.97	0.01	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.70	0.05
Spanish spoken at home	0.03	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.27	0.05
Other language spoken at home	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.01
Density of Latinos in the neighborhood	1.09	0.03	1.02	0.01	1.04	0.02	1.81	0.20
Born in the United States (parent)	0.93	0.01	0.97	0.00	0.97	0.01	0.58	0.06
<i>Parent-adolescent relationship</i>								
Parents' ability to understand the teen	0.50	0.01	0.52	0.01	0.41	0.02	0.44	0.03
Make decisions together	3.91	0.02	3.92	0.03	3.89	0.05	3.86	0.08
Teen feels close to Mom	4.45	0.02	4.45	0.02	4.46	0.05	4.43	0.05
Teen had serious argument with Mom (4 weeks)	0.38	0.01	0.38	0.01	0.31	0.02	0.44	0.04
Parental monitoring factor scale	0.78	0.01	0.79	0.01	0.75	0.01	0.73	0.01
<i>Parent communication about sexual behavior</i>								
Parent comfort discussing sex	4.45	0.02	4.54	0.02	4.28	0.04	4.01	0.07
Amount parent discussed sexual activity	3.33	0.02	3.29	0.03	3.54	0.04	3.19	0.04
Parent recommended a certain birth control	3.16	0.05	3.14	0.06	3.06	0.08	3.57	0.10
<i>Teen attitudes</i>								
Consider a nonmarital birth	0.25	0.01	0.22	0.02	0.37	0.02	0.31	0.04
<i>Sociodemographic variables</i>								
On Public Assistance	0.09	0.01	0.06	0.01	0.20	0.03	0.10	0.03
Parent had high school education	0.36	0.01	0.36	0.02	0.39	0.03	0.34	0.04
Parent did not graduate from high school	0.12	0.01	0.09	0.01	0.17	0.02	0.28	0.04
Parent has some college	0.52	0.02	0.55	0.02	0.44	0.04	0.38	0.04
Father present	0.58	0.01	0.63	0.01	0.35	0.03	0.56	0.04
How important is religion	3.29	0.03	3.20	0.04	3.72	0.04	3.31	0.07
Church attendance	2.81	0.04	2.45	0.04	3.28	0.06	2.92	0.06
Teen age at wave 1	15.26	0.12	15.22	0.13	15.42	0.20	15.28	0.22
Teen lives in the southern United States	0.36	0.02	0.30	0.03	0.66	0.07	0.36	0.08

Table 4.1: Differences in Ever Had Sex at Wave I by Familism and Acculturation at Wave I, by Race and Ethnicity

Independent Variables	Whole Sample	White	Black	Latina
<i>N</i>	4810	3059	1113	638
<i>Chose neighborhood due to proximity to relatives</i>				
No	0.34	0.32	0.50	0.32
Yes	0.34	0.32	0.47	0.31
<i>Most important thing for a girl to learn</i>				
To be popular, think for herself, and work hard	0.34	0.32	0.48	0.32
To be well behaved and help people	0.34	0.30	0.50	0.29
<i>Mom works for pay</i>				
No	0.34	0.31	0.50	0.31
Yes	0.34	0.32	0.48	0.31
<i>Speak English at home</i>				
No	0.19	—	—	0.21
Yes	0.35***	—	—	0.36***
<i>Speak Spanish at home</i>				
No	0.35	—	—	0.35
Yes	0.22***	—	—	0.22***
<i>Speak other language at home</i>				
No	0.34	—	—	0.32
Yes	0.04***	—	—	0.11*
<i>Father Present</i>				
No	0.44	0.40	0.53	0.47
Yes	0.28***	0.27***	0.41**	0.20***
<i>Parent Born in the United States</i>				
No	0.29	0.31	0.33	0.27
Yes	0.35	0.32	0.49	0.35

Notes: Sample includes all those participating in Wave I and Wave III of Add Health.

Proportions weighted.

** signifies significant differences in means at the 0.05 level using a *t*-test taking the survey procedures into account.

*** signifies significant differences in means at the 0.01 level using a *t*-test taking the survey procedures into account.

Table 4.2: Differences in Use of Birth Control at First Sex at Wave I by Familism and Acculturation at Wave I, by Race and Ethnicity

Explanatory Variables	Whole Sample	White	Black	Latina
<i>N</i>	1719	519	971	229
<i>Chose neighborhood due to proximity to relatives</i>				
No	0.63	0.60	0.72	0.60
Yes	0.69**	0.71***	0.70	0.51
<i>Most important thing for a girl to learn</i>				
To be popular, think for herself, and work hard	0.65	0.66	0.67	0.51
To be well behaved and help people	0.66	0.60	0.77**	0.65
<i>Mom works for pay</i>				
No	0.62	0.61	0.65	0.60
Yes	0.67	0.66	0.73	0.55
<i>Speak English at home</i>				
No	0.48	—	—	0.10
Yes	0.66*	—	—	0.50
<i>Speak Spanish at home</i>				
No	0.66	—	—	0.59
Yes	0.48	—	—	0.48
<i>Speak other language at home</i>				
No	0.66	—	—	0.56
Yes	0.22*	—	—	0.11**
<i>Father Present</i>				
No	0.64	0.62	0.72	0.54
Yes	0.67	0.67	0.69	0.61
<i>Parent Born in the United States</i>				
No	0.56	0.58	0.80	0.51
Yes	0.66	0.65	0.71	0.60

Notes: Sample is restricted to only those teens who were sexually active at Wave I in Add Health.

Proportions weighted.

** signifies significant differences in means at the 0.05 level using a *t*-test taking the survey procedures into account.

*** signifies significant differences in means at the 0.01 level using a *t*-test taking the survey procedures into account.

Table 4.3: Differences in Teen Pregnancy at Wave I by Familism and Acculturation at Wave I, by Race and Ethnicity

Explanatory Variables	Whole Sample	White	Black	Latina
<i>N</i>	4810	3059	1113	638
<i>Chose neighborhood due to proximity to relatives</i>				
No	0.23	0.19	0.34	0.30
Yes	0.21	0.17	0.34	0.32
<i>Most important thing for a girl to learn</i>				
To be popular, think for herself, and work hard	0.20	0.17	0.30	0.29
To be well behaved and help people	0.27***	0.22*	0.41***	0.33
<i>Mom works for pay</i>				
No	0.26	0.23	0.41	0.28
Yes	0.20**	0.17**	0.31**	0.32
<i>Speak English at home</i>				
No	0.21	—	—	0.23
Yes	0.22	—	—	0.34**
<i>Speak Spanish at home</i>				
No	0.22	—	—	0.33
Yes	0.25	—	—	0.25*
<i>Speak other language at home</i>				
No	0.22	—	—	0.32
Yes	0.00***	—	—	0.01***
<i>Father Present</i>				
No	0.29	0.24	0.38	0.43
Yes	0.17***	0.15***	0.26***	0.21***
<i>Parent Born in the United States</i>				
No	0.20	0.14	0.08	0.25
Yes	0.22	0.18	0.35***	0.35*

Notes: Sample is restricted to only those teens who were sexually active at Wave I in Add Health.

Proportions weighted.

** signifies significant differences in means at the 0.05 level using a *t*-test taking the survey procedures into account.

*** signifies significant differences in means at the 0.01 level using a *t*-test taking the survey procedures into account.

Table 4.4: Differences in Age at First Sex for Sexually Active at Wave III by Familism and Acculturation, by Race and Ethnicity

Explanatory Variables	Whole Sample	White	Black	Latina
<i>N</i>	4810	3059	1113	638
<i>Chose neighborhood due to proximity to relatives</i>				
No	16.4	16.5	15.9	16.5
Yes	16.4	16.4	16.1	16.8
<i>Most important thing for a girl to learn</i>				
To be popular, think for herself, and work hard	16.4	16.5	15.9	16.6
To be well behaved and help people	16.4	16.4	16.0	16.7
<i>Mom works for pay</i>				
No	16.3	16.4	15.9	16.8
Yes	16.4	16.5	16.0	16.6
<i>Speak English at home</i>				
No	17.4	—	—	17.4
Yes	16.4***	—	—	16.4***
<i>Speak Spanish at home</i>				
No	16.4	—	—	16.4
Yes	17.4***	—	—	17.4***
<i>Speak other language at home</i>				
No	16.4	—	—	16.6
Yes	16.7**	—	—	17.4
<i>Father Present</i>				
No	15.9	16.0	15.8	16.0
Yes	16.7***	16.7***	16.3**	17.1***
<i>Parent Born in the United States</i>				
No	17.0	17.0	17.3	17.0
Yes	16.3***	16.4*	15.9***	16.4*

Notes: Sample is restricted to only those teens who were sexually active at Wave III of Add Health.

Proportions weighted.

** signifies significant differences in means at the 0.05 level using a *t*-test taking the survey procedures into account.

*** signifies significant differences in means at the 0.01 level using a *t*-test taking the survey procedures into account.

Table 4.5: Differences in Parents' Ability to Understand the Teen by Familism and Acculturation at Wave I, by Race and Ethnicity

Explanatory Variables	Whole Sample	White	Black	Latina
<i>N</i>	4810	3059	1113	638
<i>Chose neighborhood due to proximity to relatives</i>				
No	0.52	0.55	0.42	0.50
Yes	0.52	0.54	0.43	0.44
<i>Most important thing for a girl to learn</i>				
To be popular, think for herself, and work hard	0.53	0.55	0.46	0.54
To be well behaved and help people	0.48***	0.54	0.36***	0.38**
<i>Mom works for pay</i>				
No	0.50	0.52	0.43	0.44
Yes	0.53	0.55	0.42	0.49
<i>Speak English at home</i>				
No	0.47	—	—	0.48
Yes	0.52	—	—	0.47
<i>Speak Spanish at home</i>				
No	0.52	—	—	0.47
Yes	0.50	—	—	0.50
<i>Speak other language at home</i>				
No	0.52	—	—	0.48
Yes	0.28***	—	—	0.20*
<i>Father Present</i>				
No	0.48	0.52	0.39	0.45
Yes	0.55***	0.56*	0.49**	0.50
<i>Parent Born in the United States</i>				
No	0.49	0.54	0.60	0.45
Yes	0.52	0.54	0.42*	0.50

Notes: Sample includes all those participating in Wave I and Wave III of Add Health.

Proportions weighted.

** signifies significant differences in means at the 0.05 level using a *t*-test taking the survey procedures into account.

*** signifies significant differences in means at the 0.01 level using a *t*-test taking the survey procedures into account.

Table 4.6: Differences in Decision Making by Familism and Acculturation at Wave I, by Race and Ethnicity

Explanatory Variables	Whole Sample	White	Black	Latina
<i>N</i>	4810	3059	1113	638
<i>Chose neighborhood due to proximity to relatives</i>				
No	3.90	3.90	3.84	4.02
Yes	3.98**	4.00***	3.96	3.86
<i>Most important thing for a girl to learn</i>				
To be popular, think for herself, and work hard	3.92	3.92	3.90	3.93
To be well behaved and help people	3.97	4.00	3.88	3.99
<i>Mom works for pay</i>				
No	3.93	3.95	3.80	3.98
Yes	3.94	3.94	3.92	3.95
<i>Speak English at home</i>				
No	4.19	—	—	4.18
Yes	3.93**	—	—	3.84**
<i>Speak Spanish at home</i>				
No	3.93	—	—	3.85
Yes	4.19**	—	—	4.19***
<i>Speak other language at home</i>				
No	3.94	—	—	3.95
Yes	4.19	—	—	4.01
<i>Father Present</i>				
No	3.90	3.93	3.81	3.90
Yes	3.96**	3.95	4.03***	3.99
<i>Parent Born in the United States</i>				
No	4.06	4.06	4.00	4.08
Yes	3.92	3.94	3.88	3.86

Notes: Sample includes all those participating in Wave I and Wave III of Add Health.

Proportions weighted.

** signifies significant differences in means at the 0.05 level using a *t*-test taking the survey procedures into account.

*** signifies significant differences in means at the 0.01 level using a *t*-test taking the survey procedures into account.

Table 4.7: Differences in Closeness to the Mother by Familism and Acculturation at Wave I, by Race and Ethnicity

Explanatory Variables	Whole Sample	White	Black	Latina
<i>N</i>	4810	3059	1113	638
<i>Chose neighborhood due to proximity to relatives</i>				
No	4.46	4.46	4.47	4.41
Yes	4.51	4.50	4.54	4.54
<i>Most important thing for a girl to learn</i>				
To be popular, think for herself, and work hard	4.46	4.45	4.50	4.49
To be well behaved and help people	4.53**	4.56***	4.50	4.42
<i>Mom works for pay</i>				
No	4.53	4.53	4.58	4.41
Yes	4.47	4.46	4.47	4.49
<i>Speak English at home</i>				
No	4.63	—	—	4.62
Yes	4.48**	—	—	4.39**
<i>Speak Spanish at home</i>				
No	4.48	—	—	4.40
Yes	4.61	—	—	4.61*
<i>Speak other language at home</i>				
No	4.48	—	—	4.46
Yes	4.73**	—	—	4.80
<i>Father Present</i>				
No	4.47	4.47	4.49	4.41
Yes	4.49	4.48	4.51	4.51
<i>Parent Born in the United States</i>				
No	4.61	4.61	4.76	4.60
Yes	4.47**	4.48*	4.49*	4.37*

Notes: Sample includes all those participating in Wave I and Wave III of Add Health.

Proportions weighted.

** signifies significant differences in means at the 0.05 level using a *t*-test taking the survey procedures into account.

*** signifies significant differences in means at the 0.01 level using a *t*-test taking the survey procedures into account.

Table 4.8: Differences in Arguments with the Mother by Familism and Acculturation at Wave I, by Race and Ethnicity

Explanatory Variables	Whole Sample	White	Black	Latina
<i>N</i>	4810	3059	1113	638
<i>Chose neighborhood due to proximity to relatives</i>				
No	0.37	0.37	0.30	0.45
Yes	0.36	0.36	0.30	0.39
<i>Most important thing for a girl to learn</i>				
To be popular, think for herself, and work hard	0.37	0.38	0.31	0.43
To be well behaved and help people	0.34*	0.34*	0.28	0.42
<i>Mom works for pay</i>				
No	0.36	0.37	0.28	0.42
Yes	0.36	0.37	0.31	0.43
<i>Speak English at home</i>				
No	0.30	—	—	0.30
Yes	0.36	—	—	0.49***
<i>Speak Spanish at home</i>				
No	0.36	—	—	0.48
Yes	0.31	—	—	0.31**
<i>Speak other language at home</i>				
No	0.36	—	—	0.43
Yes	0.25	—	—	0.12***
<i>Father Present</i>				
No	0.39	0.41	0.32	0.42
Yes	0.34**	0.34***	0.26	0.43
<i>Parent Born in the United States</i>				
No	0.34	0.30	0.20	0.38
Yes	0.36	0.37	0.30	0.46

Notes: Sample includes all those participating in Wave I and Wave III of Add Health.

Proportions weighted.

** signifies significant differences in means at the 0.05 level using a *t*-test taking the survey procedures into account.

*** signifies significant differences in means at the 0.01 level using a *t*-test taking the survey procedures into account.

Table 4.9: Differences in Parental Monitoring by Familism and Acculturation at Wave I, by Race and Ethnicity

Explanatory Variables	Whole Sample	White	Black	Latina
<i>N</i>	4810	3059	1113	638
<i>Chose neighborhood due to proximity to relatives</i>				
No	0.34	0.31	0.50	0.32
Yes	0.34	0.32	0.47	0.31
<i>Most important thing for a girl to learn</i>				
To be popular, think for herself, and work hard	0.34	0.32	0.48	0.32
To be well behaved and help people	0.34	0.30	0.50	0.29
<i>Mom works for pay</i>				
No	0.34	0.31	0.50	0.31
Yes	0.34	0.32	0.48	0.31
<i>Speak English at home</i>				
No	0.19	—	—	0.21
Yes	0.35***	—	—	0.36***
<i>Speak Spanish at home</i>				
No	0.35	—	—	0.35
Yes	0.22***	—	—	0.22***
<i>Speak other language at home</i>				
No	0.34	0.32	—	0.32
Yes	0.04***	0.00***	—	0.11*
<i>Father Present</i>				
No	0.44	0.40	0.53	0.47
Yes	0.28***	0.27***	0.41**	0.20***
<i>Parent Born in the United States</i>				
No	0.29	0.31	0.33	0.27
Yes	0.35	0.32	0.49	0.35

Notes: Sample includes all those participating in Wave I and Wave III of Add Health.

Proportions weighted.

** signifies significant differences in means at the 0.05 level using a *t*-test taking the survey procedures into account.

*** signifies significant differences in means at the 0.01 level using a *t*-test taking the survey procedures into account.

Table 4.10: Differences in Parent Comfort Discussing Sex by Familism and Acculturation at Wave I, by Race and Ethnicity

Explanatory Variables	Whole Sample	White	Black	Latina
<i>N</i>	4810	3059	1113	638
<i>Chose neighborhood due to proximity to relatives</i>				
No	4.48	4.57	4.30	4.10
Yes	4.41**	4.50**	4.24	3.97
<i>Most important thing for a girl to learn</i>				
To be popular, think for herself, and work hard	4.51	4.57	4.35	4.18
To be well behaved and help people	4.29***	4.43***	4.15	3.81***
<i>Mom works for pay</i>				
No	4.36	4.49	4.14	0.31
Yes	4.48***	4.54	4.32***	0.31
<i>Speak English at home</i>				
No	3.74	—	—	3.70
Yes	4.48***	—	—	4.21***
<i>Speak Spanish at home</i>				
No	4.48	—	—	4.21
Yes	3.68***	—	—	3.68***
<i>Speak other language at home</i>				
No	4.45	—	—	4.04
Yes	4.13*	—	—	4.15
<i>Father Present</i>				
No	4.42	4.54	4.25	4.06
Yes	4.47*	4.54	4.32	4.02
<i>Parent Born in the United States</i>				
No	3.97	4.40	3.99	3.72
Yes	4.49***	4.54*	4.29	4.29***

Notes: Sample includes all those participating in Wave I and Wave III of Add Health.

Proportions weighted.

** signifies significant differences in means at the 0.05 level using a *t*-test taking the survey procedures into account.

*** signifies significant differences in means at the 0.01 level using a *t*-test taking the survey procedures into account.

Table 4.11: Differences in Amount Parents Discuss Sex by Familism and Acculturation at Wave I, by Race and Ethnicity

Explanatory Variables	Whole Sample	White	Black	Latina
<i>N</i>	4810	3059	1113	638
<i>Chose neighborhood due to proximity to relatives</i>				
No	3.28	3.25	3.56	3.08
Yes	3.29	3.27	3.47	3.21
<i>Most important thing for a girl to learn</i>				
To be popular, think for herself, and work hard	3.29	3.27	3.53	3.16
To be well behaved and help people	3.27	3.24	3.50	3.08
<i>Mom works for pay</i>				
No	3.31	3.30	3.50	3.15
Yes	3.28	3.25	3.53	3.12
<i>Speak English at home</i>				
No	2.98	—	—	3.00
Yes	3.30***	—	—	3.20*
<i>Speak Spanish at home</i>				
No	3.30	—	—	3.20
Yes	2.99**	—	—	2.99**
<i>Speak other language at home</i>				
No	3.29	—	—	3.13
Yes	2.96	—	—	3.26
<i>Father Present</i>				
No	3.40	3.36	3.54	3.33
Yes	3.21***	3.21***	3.50	2.99***
<i>Parent Born in the United States</i>				
No	3.12	3.17	3.31	3.07
Yes	3.30**	3.26	3.53	3.18

Notes: Sample includes all those participating in Wave I and Wave III of Add Health.

Proportions weighted.

** signifies significant differences in means at the 0.05 level using a *t*-test taking the survey procedures into account.

*** signifies significant differences in means at the 0.01 level using a *t*-test taking the survey procedures into account.

Table 4.12: Differences in Parental Recommendations of a Specific Birth Control by Familism and Acculturation at Wave I, by Race and Ethnicity

Explanatory Variables	Whole Sample	White	Black	Latina
<i>N</i>	4810	3059	1113	638
<i>Chose neighborhood due to proximity to relatives</i>				
No	3.28	3.25	3.05	3.81
Yes	3.21	3.19	3.17	3.44*
<i>Most important thing for a girl to learn</i>				
To be popular, think for herself, and work hard	3.22	3.21	3.08	3.58
To be well behaved and help people	3.31	3.27	3.14	3.78
<i>Mom works for pay</i>				
No	3.25	3.22	3.10	3.61
Yes	3.25	3.22	3.10	3.67
<i>Speak English at home</i>				
No	3.94	—	—	3.99
Yes	3.22***	—	—	3.49***
<i>Speak Spanish at home</i>				
No	3.22	—	—	3.50
Yes	4.00***	—	—	4.00***
<i>Speak other language at home</i>				
No	3.24	—	—	3.65
Yes	3.62	—	—	3.97
<i>Father Present</i>				
No	2.99	2.95	2.93	3.38
Yes	3.42***	3.37***	3.41***	3.85***
<i>Parent Born in the United States</i>				
No	3.79	3.49	3.95	3.93
Yes	3.20***	3.21	3.07***	3.44***

Notes: Sample includes all those participating in Wave I and Wave III of Add Health.

Proportions weighted.

** signifies significant differences in means at the 0.05 level using a *t*-test taking the survey procedures into account.

*** signifies significant differences in means at the 0.01 level using a *t*-test taking the survey procedures into account.

Table 5.1: Multivariate Results for Ever Having Sex at Wave I in Add Health (Odds Ratios).

Explanatory Variables	Whole Sample	White	Black	Latina
<i>N</i>	4810	3059	1113	638
<i>Familism</i>				
Household Size	0.95	0.96	1.05	0.63***
Chose neighborhood for proximity to relatives	0.96	1.07	0.88	0.56
Important for girl to learn traditional values	1.09	1.07	1.02	1.32
Mother works for pay	1.06	1.06	1.38	0.42*
Expectation for marriage at 25	1.01	1.06	0.93	0.78
<i>Acculturation</i>				
English spoken at home	0.82	—	—	0.65
Other language spoken at home	0.12**	—	—	0.55
Density of Latinos in the neighborhood	0.73	1.05	0.86	0.58***
Born in the United States (parent)	1.31	—	—	1.61
<i>Parent–adolescent relationship</i>				
Parents' ability to understand the teen	0.73**	0.84	0.51***	0.53
Make decisions together	0.73***	0.63***	0.92	1.01
Teen feels close to Mom	0.45***	0.75***	0.67**	0.62***
Teen had serious argument with Mom (4 weeks)	1.42***	1.32*	1.25	4.01***
Parental monitoring factor scale	3.31***	3.47**	3.91*	2.22
<i>Parent communication about sexual behavior</i>				
Parent comfort discussing sex	0.66***	0.65***	0.55**	0.62*
Amount parent discussed sexual activity	2.35***	2.48***	2.77***	2.02**
Parent recommended a certain birth control	0.78***	0.78***	0.74***	0.93
<i>Teen attitudes</i>				
Consider a nonmarital birth	1.79***	1.88***	1.32	3.26***
<i>Sociodemographic variables</i>				
Black	1.78***	—	—	—
Latina	1.53	—	—	—
On Public Assistance	1.13	1.00	1.78	0.40
Parent had high school education	0.92	0.83	0.88	0.90
Parent has some college	0.68**	0.57***	0.89	0.56
Father present	0.67***	0.70**	0.74*	0.23***
How important is religion	0.89	0.90	1.28	0.45**
Church attendance	0.84**	0.84*	0.77*	0.88
Teen age at wave 1	1.51***	1.56***	1.66***	1.11
Teen lives in the southern United States	1.42**	1.62***	0.92	3.15***
<i>Model Fit Statistic</i>				
Pseudo R-squared	0.29	0.29	0.27	0.39

* $p \leq 0.1$; ** $p \leq 0.05$; *** $p \leq 0.01$.

Table 5.2: Multivariate Results for Using Birth Control at First Sex in Wave I of Add Health (Odds Ratios)

Explanatory Variables	Whole Sample	White	Black	Latina
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
<i>N</i>	1719	971	519	229
<i>Familism</i>				
Household Size	0.90	0.85	1.00	0.76
Chose neighborhood for proximity to relatives	1.51**	1.99***	1.24	2.54
Important for girl to learn traditional values	1.00	0.82	1.90**	1.24
Mother works for pay	0.80	0.86	0.79	0.46
Expectation for marriage at 25	0.98	0.98	0.96	1.69
<i>Acculturation</i>				
English spoken at home	0.60	—	—	1.15
Other language spoken at home	0.18	—	—	0.03*
Density of Latinos in the neighborhood	0.80	3.39*	0.17***	0.68
Born in the United States (parent)	1.02	—	—	2.55
<i>Parent-adolescent relationship</i>				
Parents' ability to understand the teen	1.32	1.28	1.12	4.67**
Make decisions together	1.04	1.01	1.20	0.72
Teen feels close to Mom	1.09	1.22	1.11	0.83
Teen had serious argument with Mom (4 weeks)	0.86	0.81	0.89	1.98
Parental monitoring factor scale	1.55	2.20	1.19	0.04
<i>Parent communication about sexual behavior</i>				
Parent comfort discussing sex	1.02	1.02	1.31	0.86
Amount parent discussed sexual activity	0.98	0.98	0.90	0.59
Parent recommended a certain birth control	0.97	0.97	0.88	1.05
<i>Teen attitudes</i>				
Consider a nonmarital birth	0.49***	0.51**	0.86	0.10***
<i>Sociodemographic variables</i>				
Black	2.12***	—	—	—
Latina	1.06	—	—	—
On Public Assistance	0.63	0.67	0.45*	0.81
Parent had high school education	0.90	1.39	0.33*	0.97
Parent has some college	1.43	2.19**	1.11	0.22
Father present	1.16	1.23	1.38	0.78
How important is religion	0.89	0.89	1.30	1.59
Church attendance	1.19**	1.20*	1.28	2.27**
Teen age at wave 1	1.13	1.03	1.31	2.62**
Teen lives in the southern United States	0.83	0.80	0.68	0.29*
<i>Model Fit Statistic</i>				
Pseudo R-squared	0.07	0.09	0.13	0.32

* $p \leq 0.1$; ** $p \leq 0.05$; *** $p \leq 0.01$.

Table 5.3: Multivariate Results for Reporting a Teen Pregnancy (Odds Ratios)

Explanatory Variables	Whole Sample	White	Black	Latina
<i>N</i>	4810	3059	1113	638
<i>Familism</i>				
Household Size	1.08**	1.10	1.10**	0.83
Chose neighborhood for proximity to relatives	0.83	0.80	0.87	1.02
Important for learn to learn traditional values	1.27**	1.17	1.55*	1.04
Mother works for pay	0.98	0.80	1.09	0.67
Expectation for marriage at 25	1.04	1.14*	0.92	0.96
<i>Acculturation</i>				
English spoken at home	1.21	—	—	0.53
Other language spoken at home	0.01***	—	—	0.01***
Density of Latinos in the neighborhood	0.70**	0.82	0.76	0.62
Born in the United States (parent)	1.51	—	—	2.56*
<i>Parent-adolescent relationship</i>				
Parents' ability to understand the teen	0.67***	0.66***	0.89	0.48**
Make decisions together	0.91	0.87	0.87	1.04
Teen feels close to Mom	0.94	0.89	1.12	0.78
Teen had serious argument with Mom (4 weeks)	1.10	0.96	1.43*	1.09
Parental monitoring factor scale	2.46***	1.75	3.78***	5.11
<i>Parent communication about sexual behavior</i>				
Parent comfort discussing sex	0.75***	0.62***	0.74	1.02
Amount parent discussed sexual activity	1.57***	1.68***	1.78***	1.02
Parent recommended a certain birth control	0.91**	0.86***	1.03	1.01
<i>Teen attitudes</i>				
Consider a nonmarital birth	1.22*	1.13	1.01	4.41***
<i>Sociodemographic variables</i>				
Black	1.53**	—	—	—
Latina	2.36***	—	—	—
On Public Assistance	1.12	0.96	1.84**	0.70
Parent had high school education	0.74**	0.70	0.57*	1.40
Parent has some college	0.66**	0.63	0.53	0.78
Father present	0.59***	0.58***	0.77	0.20***
How important is religion	1.10	0.94	1.49	5.15***
Church attendance	0.86**	0.95	0.70***	0.49***
Teen age at wave 1	0.85**	0.82**	0.98	0.92
Teen lives in the southern United States	1.12	1.16	0.87	2.11
<i>Model Fit Statistic</i>				
Pseudo R-squared	0.10	0.08	0.10	0.30

* $p \leq 0.1$; ** $p \leq 0.05$; *** $p \leq 0.01$.

Table 5.4: Multivariate Cox Proportional Hazard Results: Age at First Sex, Add Health reports from Wave III (Hazard Ratios)

Explanatory Variables	Whole Sample	White	Black	Latina
<i>N</i>	4810	3059	1113	638
<i>Familism</i>				
Household Size	0.98	1.00	1.01	0.86***
Chose neighborhood for proximity to relatives	1.04	1.03	1.00	1.23
Important for learn to learn traditional values	0.98	1.00	0.96	0.83
Mother works for pay	1.00	0.99	0.98	1.05
Expectation for marriage at 25	1.09	1.09***	1.07**	1.00
<i>Acculturation</i>				
English spoken at home	1.56***	—	—	1.46**
Other language spoken at home	1.06	—	—	1.68
Density of Latinos in the neighborhood	0.86***	0.83*	0.94	0.89**
Born in the United States (parent)	0.96	—	—	1.12
<i>Parent-adolescent relationship</i>				
Parents' ability to understand the teen	0.87***	0.87***	0.94	0.72***
Make decisions together	0.91***	0.91***	0.96	0.80***
Teen feels close to Mom	0.86***	0.85***	0.87***	0.82***
Teen had serious argument with Mom (4 weeks)	1.12***	1.10**	1.24***	1.03
Parental monitoring factor scale	1.53***	1.70***	1.27	1.07
<i>Parent communication about sexual behavior</i>				
Parent comfort discussing sex	0.87***	0.89***	0.87*	0.74***
Amount parent discussed sexual activity	1.30***	1.30***	1.24**	1.38***
Parent recommended a certain birth control	0.92***	0.91***	0.96	0.93
<i>Teen attitudes</i>				
Consider a nonmarital birth	1.18***	1.20***	1.13*	1.10
<i>Sociodemographic variables</i>				
Black	1.15***	—	—	—
Latina	1.04	—	—	—
On Public Assistance	1.04	1.11	1.10	0.81
Parent had high school education	1.01	0.94	1.13	1.14
Parent has some college	0.83**	0.78**	0.91	0.87
Father present	0.79***	0.76***	0.89	0.75*
How important is religion	0.91***	0.90**	0.98	0.99
Church attendance	0.91***	0.91***	0.90*	0.87***
Teen age at wave 1	0.89***	0.91***	0.86***	0.87***
Teen lives in the southern United States	1.10*	1.13**	1.05	1.07**

* $p \leq 0.1$; ** $p \leq 0.05$; *** $p \leq 0.01$.

Table 5.5: Nested Cox Modeling Results for Reporting a Teen Pregnancy (Odds Ratios)

Explanatory Variables	Model						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>N</i>	3273	3273	3273	3273	3273	3273	3046
<i>Ethnicity</i>							
Black	2.18***	2.10***	2.09***	2.07***	1.72***	1.68***	1.53**
Latina	1.82***	1.71***	2.59***	2.46***	2.40***	2.38***	2.37***
<i>Familism</i>							
Household Size	—	1.04	1.05	1.05	1.04	1.05	1.08**
Chose neighborhood for proximity to relatives	—	0.90	0.90	0.91	0.89	0.89	0.83
Important for girl to learn traditional values	—	1.27**	1.32**	1.32**	1.28**	1.29**	1.27*
Mother works for pay	—	0.75**	0.74**	0.74**	0.77**	0.76**	0.84
Expectation for marriage at 25	—	1.02	1.02	1.04	1.05	1.05	1.05
<i>Acculturation</i>							
English spoken at home	—	—	1.12	1.10	1.14	1.14	1.20
Other language spoken at home	—	—	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***
Density of Latinos in the neighborhood	—	—	0.72*	0.74*	0.72*	0.71*	0.70**
Born in the United States (parent)	—	—	1.57	1.57	1.50	1.49	1.51
<i>Parent-adolescent relationship</i>							
Parents' ability to understand the teen	—	—	—	0.65***	0.66***	0.67***	0.68***
Make decisions together	—	—	—	0.94	0.92	0.92	0.91
Teen feels close to mom	—	—	—	1.02	0.99	1.00	0.94
Teen had serious argument with mom (4 weeks)	—	—	—	1.24*	1.22	1.22	1.10
Parental monitoring factor scale	—	—	—	1.49	1.37	1.31	2.46***
<i>Parent communication about sexual behavior</i>							
Parent comfort discussing sex	—	—	—	—	0.72***	0.73***	0.75***
Amount parent discussed sexual activity	—	—	—	—	1.60***	1.60***	1.57***
Parent recommended a certain birth control	—	—	—	—	0.89***	0.89***	0.91**
<i>Teen attitudes</i>							
Consider a nonmarital birth	—	—	—	—	—	1.21*	1.22*
<i>Sociodemographic variables</i>							
On public assistance	—	—	—	—	—	—	1.13
Parent had high school education	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.74
Parent has some college	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.66**
Father present	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.59***
How important is religion	—	—	—	—	—	—	1.10
Church attendance	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.86**
Teen age at wave 1	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.86***
Teen lives in the southern United States	—	—	—	—	—	—	1.12
<i>Model Fit Statistic</i>							
Pseudo R-squared	0.019	0.025	0.032	0.044	0.066	0.067	0.096

* $p \leq 0.1$; ** $p \leq 0.05$; *** $p \leq 0.01$.

Table 5.6: Nested Cox Proportional Hazard Results: Age at First Sex, Add Health reports from Wave III (Hazard Ratios)

Explanatory Variables	Model						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>N</i>	4762	4762	4762	4762	4762	4762	4428
<i>Ethnicity</i>							
Black	1.26***	1.31***	1.30***	1.31***	1.13***	1.11**	1.13**
Latina	0.92	0.94	1.15**	1.11	1.12*	1.10	1.09
<i>Familism</i>							
Household Size	—	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98
Chose neighborhood for proximity to relatives	—	1.06	1.06	1.07**	1.05	1.05	1.04
Important for girl to learn traditional values	—	0.97	0.98	0.99	0.98	0.98	0.98
Mother works for pay	—	0.96	0.95	0.94	0.97	0.96	1.00
Expectation for marriage at 25	—	1.05***	1.05***	1.07***	1.06***	1.06***	1.09***
<i>Acculturation</i>							
English spoken at home	—	—	1.54**	1.47**	1.50***	1.49***	1.55***
Other language spoken at home	—	—	1.00	0.92	0.99	1.00	1.06
Density of Latinos in the neighborhood	—	—	0.92*	0.94	0.92*	0.91*	0.90**
Born in the United States (parent)	—	—	0.98	0.97	0.95	0.94	0.86**
<i>Parent-adolescent relationship</i>							
Parents' ability to understand the teen	—	—	—	0.82***	0.83***	0.84***	0.87***
Make decisions together	—	—	—	0.93***	0.92***	0.92***	0.91***
Teen feels close to mom	—	—	—	0.91***	0.89***	0.89***	0.86***
Teen had serious argument with mom (4 weeks)	—	—	—	1.20***	1.17***	1.16***	1.11***
Parental monitoring factor scale	—	—	—	1.28**	1.19	1.14	1.53***
<i>Parent communication about sexual behavior</i>							
Parent comfort discussing sex	—	—	—	—	0.87***	0.87***	0.87***
Amount parent discussed sexual activity	—	—	—	—	1.29***	1.29***	1.30***
Parent recommended a certain birth control	—	—	—	—	0.90***	0.91***	0.91***
<i>Teen attitudes</i>							
Consider a nonmarital birth	—	—	—	—	—	1.19***	1.18***
<i>Sociodemographic variables</i>							
On public assistance	—	—	—	—	—	—	1.05
Parent had high school education	—	—	—	—	—	—	1.00
Parent has some college	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.82**
Father present	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.79***
How important is religion	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.91***
Church attendance	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.91***
Teen age at wave 1	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.91***
Teen lives in the southern United States	—	—	—	—	—	—	1.10*
<i>Model Fit Statistic</i>							
<i>F</i>	13.11	6.28	8.40	17.34	20.13	20.58	19.31

* $p \leq 0.1$; ** $p \leq 0.05$; *** $p \leq 0.01$.

Figures

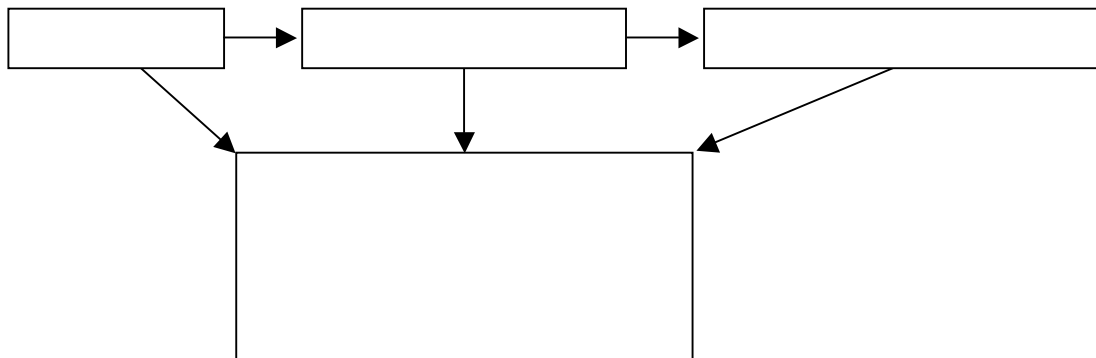


Figure 2.1. Conceptual model that guides this analysis.

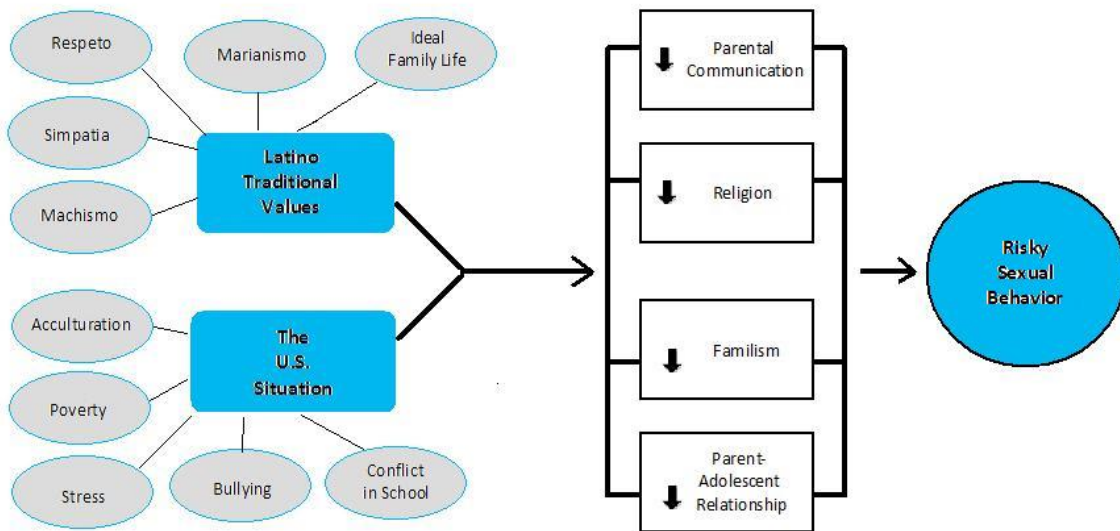


Figure 6.1. Conceptual model of the variables affecting Latina sexual behavior.

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