ABSTRACT

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                                  YOUNG CHILDREN: A QUALITATIVE
                                  APPROACH

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Latinos are the largest ethnic group in the U.S., yet little is known about how
these families socialize their children to function in the U.S. Based on ecocultural
theory, this study utilized focus groups interviews with 28 parents to explore the
socialization practices of low-income Latino immigrant parents with their young
children. Findings from this study suggest that parents model their expectations and
values according to environmental demands developing diverse strategies to combine
what they view to be Latino and American values. Research results also indicate that
participating parents cope with the challenges in socializing their children by being
optimistic and highly investing time and resources on their children. This study
provides a basis for generating hypotheses to be tested with larger datasets;
identifying areas that policies and programs might develop to support effective

parenting in Latino immigrant families; and, informing the development of culturally

sensitive measures to evaluate Latino parenting.

SOCIALIZATION PRACTICES IN LOW-INCOME IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR
YOUNG CHILDREN: A QUALITATIVE APPROACH

By

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Latinos constitute the largest minority group in the U.S. comprising 12.5 % of

the total U.S. population and it is projected that by 2050 this percentage will raise to

24.4% (US Census Bureau 2010). Moreover, Latinos constitute 30% of all children

living in poverty (Hernandez, Denton, & Macartney, 2007). In general, the literature

describes these families as at risk for poverty and segregation and Latino children as

underachievers and at risk for school failure (Harwood, Leyendecker, Carlson,

Asencio, & Miller, 2002). Additionally, recent studies show that this disparity starts

in early years. Latinos enter school with smaller vocabularies and weaker

understanding of print materials compared to their White counterparts (Kohler &

Lazarin, 2007; Reardon & Galindo, 2009). Overall, research shows that Latino

children have poor academic outcomes, are ill prepared for school, and are more

likely to drop out of high school (Fry, 2003).

Despite these grim statistics, an emergent line of research has highlighted the

protective factors and resilient aspects of Latino families (e.g., Galindo & Fuller,

2010; García Coll et al., 1996; García Coll & Szalacha, 2004; Perreira, Chapman, &

Stein, 2006). These studies suggest that there might be factors at the family and

individual levels that protect Latino children from the negative effects of poverty.

For example, some researchers have noted that Latino children enter school with

appropriate social skills (Galindo & Fuller, 2010), suggesting that this aspect of their

socialization may be functioning as a protective factor in their development. Findings

based on a national representative sample of kindergartners in the U.S. show that the

majority of Latino children enter kindergarten with strong social skills (Crosnoe,

2006; Galindo & Fuller, 2010), challenging the view that all low-income parents raise disadvantaged children. Social competence is important because it has been consistently related to school success (e.g., Hair, Halle, Terry-Humen, Lavelle, & Calkins, 2006; Malecki & Elliott, 2002). However, the research is limited in terms of showing how Latino families, many of whom are immigrants, socialize their children to function in the U.S. Research, most of it based on small-scale studies with select populations, has shown that despite the heterogeneity of this population, emphasis on *respect* and on strong ties with the extended family are central features of Latino parents' socialization goals (Harwood, et al., 2002; Leyendecker, Harwood, Lamb, & Schölmerich, 2002; Sabogal, Marin, Otero-Sabogal, Vanoss Marin, & Perez-Stable, 1987). In addition, recent studies show that although Latino mothers emphasize long-term socialization goals related to raising a respectful and obedient child, they also incorporate selected aspects of individualism, such as promoting their children's economic and personal potential in their rearing goals (Leyendecker, et al., 2002).

        While the extant research on Latino families has yielded important insights about mothers' socialization goals and beliefs, it also suffers from several limitations. First, the research has focused mainly on mothers' practices and thus little is known about fathers' socialization practices and goals. Given research showing that most Latino children live in two-parent households and that fathers make a unique contribution to children's development, it is an important oversight (Cabrera & García Coll, 2004). Second, research on Latino families has been conducted from a "deficit approach," which compares Latino immigrants with the dominant culture (i.e., White American middle-class families). This practice implies that the child-

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rearing values, attitudes, practices, and norms of the dominant culture are optimal and thus may prevent researchers from learning about the development of alternative competencies in children of immigrant backgrounds (García Coll & Szalacha, 2004). Consequently, less is known about family conditions that may support the capabilities of these children. Third, research has focused mostly in low-income and low-educated Latino families creating the perception that negative outcomes are characteristic of all Latino and ignoring the diversity existing within this population. Research to date has not disentangled SES and educational characteristics from culturally bounded aspects in Latino families. Fourth, studies tend to ascribe homogeneous cultural values to all Latinos, discounting contemporary approaches that have argued for the coexistence of orientations within cultures and underlined the context-specific characteristics (such as recent immigration) of socialization practices (for a review, see Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002).

In summary, existing research provides an incomplete view of the Latino immigrant families in the U.S. Research has mostly underlined negative aspects of this population and has not accounted for the specific socialization practices that may support children's positive development. Considering that families, especially parents are the central socialization agent for children (Bornstein & Lansford, 2010), it is paramount to strengthen our understanding of Latino parenting. Improving the knowledge base on families in this population may be pivotal given the importance of the family in Latino cultures; that is, family practices may be particularly important in promoting children adjustment (Leidy, Guerra, & Toro, 2010). This knowledge is

important to help understand culturally related practices and how these may promote children's positive outcomes.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

With few exceptions (Harwood, Miller, & Irizarry, 1995; Leyendecker, et al., 2002; Miller & Harwood, 2001) most studies on Latino children have focused on cognitive skills and learning deficits and thus less is known about how specific aspects of their home environment influences their social development during the first five years of life. A better understanding on how home characteristics such as parenting practices are linked to socialization processes is important because these practices are believed to be the most important antecedent for children's positive development (De Von Figueroa-Moseley, Ramey, Keltner, & Lanzi, 2006; Linver, Brooks-Gunn, & Kohen, 2002). In this study I addressed this gap by examining fathers' and mothers' socialization practices in a sample of Latino immigrant parents[1] in the Washington, DC area. Based on the ecocultural theory I conducted focus groups to address the following research questions: (1) What beliefs and values do Latino parents use in socializing their children? (2) How are parents' beliefs and practices incorporated into the daily interactions with their children? (3) How does

[1] It is important to highlight that the participants included in this study were immigrant parents from El Salvador, Mexico, Colombia, Nicaragua, and Peru (for more details see the method section). The term "Latino" is use throughout the paper to refer to the participants of the study in order to simplify the reading and should not be consider as an attempt to generalize the findings to the general Latino community.

living in the U.S. affect this process?; and (4) What constraints, set by resources,

characterize the context in which Latino parents socialize their children?

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

Ecocultural Theory

The view that humans do not develop in a social vacuum but rather in a sociocultural context is to date a fundamental part of many theoretical approaches in human development (e.g., Harkness & Super, 1996; Rogoff, 2003; Weisner, 1984). Vygotsky is recognized as one of the first and most influential scholars to support this idea. For him, development must be understood in both its social and cultural historical contexts (Vygotsky, 1934/1986). Following Vygotsky's reasoning, ecoculturalists have posed that parental goals, family adaptation and daily routines are key aspects of human development (Weisner, 1984, 2002b; Weisner, Matheson, & Bernheimer, 1996). More specifically, ecocultural theory considers that children's development is determined by family's ecological (resources and constraints) and cultural conditions (values, beliefs, schemata). These aspects, in turn, shape the cultural expectations, activities, and scripts that influence parents interactions with their children (Weisner, Gallimore, & Jordan, 1988). The multiple variables that influence parents-child interactions are of a transactional nature, which means that families shape and are shaped by the social world around them. Ecocultural theory treats families as proactive agents (Weisner, et al., 1996) that respond actively to the circumstances in which they live, dealing with ecological constraints and organizing meaningful environments (Arzubiaga, Ceja, & Artiles, 2000; Weisner, 2002a) (Figure 1).

In Figure 1, I present a graphic representation of the central aspects of Weisner's theory. According to Weisner, parents have to balance their family ecology with available resources and limitations (i.e., ecological context in Figue 1) and have to organize their routines in a meaningful way (i.e., cultural condition in Figure 1) (Weisner, Matheson, Coots, & Bernheimer, 2004). For a routine to be meaningful it has to have moral and cultural significance and value of the family members. In addition, Weisner states that scripts, activities, and expectations of the local context are also part of the niche in which development occurs; parent-child relationship is embedded in this broader context (i.e., socialization in Figure 1) (Weisner, 2002a). Finally, according to the ecocultural theory day-to-day practices or daily routines (i.e., parenting in Figure 1) correspond the operationzalition of what ecology (ecological context), culture (cultural conditions), and parents (socialization) jointly have constructed to achieve the developmental goals (Weisner, et al., 2004). Figure 1 illustrates the idea that altough the everyday routines of families are strongly affected by their broader ecological, cultural and socialization context, parent do influence how these forces affect they daily interactions with their children (Gallimore, Goldenberg, & Weisner, 1993).

A key aspect of Weisner's theory is that it pays special attention to *what* families do, as well as *how*, *when* and *why* they do it (Arzubiaga, Rueda, & Monzo, 2002). According to Weisner (2002b), a way to explore family's ecological and cultural dimensions is by examining everyday family activities; it is through these activities that culture is crystallized. Ways of greeting one another, bedtime routines, celebrating special occasions or preparing food are all part of family activities, and

are useful units for cultural analysis because they are manageable ways to 'operationalize' culture. In addition, the ecocultural approach offers a way to understand everyday activities and their role in the socialization process by incorporating values, goals, resources, interactions styles, emotions, and feeling in the analysis. According to the ecocultural theory, parents play an essential role in the socialization process of their children by configuring everyday activities; they construct settings that are consistent with family goals and values and are sustainable over time shaping, in such manner, their children's cultural pathway (Spagnola & Fiese, 2007; Weisner, 2002a, 2002b). Exploring these aspects, allows researchers to learn about the cultural setting in which family processes are embedded.

Weisner's theory about ecocultural niches resonates with the developmental niche approach (Harkness, 2002; Super & Harkness, 2002), which proposes a similar way to consider psychological and cultural aspects in human development. The developmental niche considers three interacting subsystems: (1) the physical and social settings of child's daily life; (2) the culturally regulated customs of childcare and rearing; and (3) the psychology of the caretakers (Harkness, 2004; Harkness & Super, 1996). In line with Weisner's approach, this perspective assigns a leading role to parental 'ethnotheories' or cultural models that parents hold regarding children, families, and themselves as they influence the organization of the physical and social setting of children's lives (Harkness & Super, 1996).

Both Weisner's ecocultural niche and Super and Harkness's developmental niche share the central idea that children develop by interacting with their cultural contexts in daily activities, which in turn are shaped by larger sociocultural,

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economic, and political conditions. However, Weisner focuses specifically on the process of constructing and sustaining daily routines that have meaning for cultural members and that are adaptive to the available resources/ competencies (Harkness & Super, 1996; Weisner, et al., 1996).

Specific to Latino parents, the ecocultural niche framework has been used to understand parenting practices in diverse settings. For example Arzubiaga and her colleagues studied adolescent children in low-income Latino neighborhood and concluded that family beliefs (regarding their neighborhood) and values (regarding children safety) shaped the parenting practices and the children's perceptions of their parent's role (Arzubiaga, et al., 2000). Similarly, she examined family routines in their impact in Latino children's literacy development. Findings indicated that children's value of reading was directly influenced by nurturance and inversely related to parents' workload (Arzubiaga, et al., 2002). Finally, Reese et al. analyzed longitudinally the antecedents of emergent Spanish literacy and subsequent English reader achievement (Reese, Garnier, Gallimore, & Goldenberg, 2000) concluding that early literacy experiences in Spanish or English supported subsequent literacy development for Spanish-speaking kindergarten children.

In summary, the ecocultural framework lends itself readily to the analysis of the cultural aspect of socialization; parents' beliefs, practices, and values help them shape daily routines, which are instrumental in how children are socialized to meet the expectations and norms of their cultural group (Cabrera, Aldoney, Kondelis, Kennedy, & Watkins-Lewis, 2011). This perspective allows us to observe Latino parents, specifically Latino parents' practices, as culturally meaningful systems that

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help them navigate the socialization process. Placing parenting practices and beliefs in a cultural context offers a way to comprehend cultural values specific to Latino parents.

Chapter 3: Review of the Literature

According to Weisner's ecocultural theory, to understand the process of socialization, it is important not only to consider cultural practices, but also the particular context in which this unfolds. For Latino families, this cultural context is shaped by their immigration experience and acculturation process, which is a source of variation in parent's beliefs and practices. Thus, for Latino parents who are raising a child in the U.S. acculturation and socialization occurs simultaneously. Understanding both processes is pivotal for addressing the main aim of this study, namely, exploring the parenting practices in Latino immigrants in this country.

Immigration and Acculturation

Latinos generally emigrate to the U.S. looking for better opportunities and living conditions for themselves and their children, which includes the opportunity to attain better levels of education (Fuligni, 1998; M. M. Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1995). Unfortunately, the social, economic, and cultural conditions some of these families confront in this country are usually discouraging. Latino immigrant families often face multiple stressors such as high unemployment, lower median incomes compared to non-Latino populations, and a higher probability to be living below the poverty line (Pew Hispanic Center 2009). In addition, they often are exposed to harsh and adverse conditions, including unsafe neighborhoods, limited community resources, language difficulties, discrimination, and crowded living conditions (Hernandez, 2004).

However, this unfavorable scenario is not a reality for all Latinos. The majority live above the poverty line and their families often exhibit positive factors such as strong work ethic, potential for bilinguism and biculturism (Dinan, 2006; Fuligni, 1998), higher probability of living in a two-parent household (Lichter & Landale, 1995), and strong ties to a broad network of families and friends in their country of origin (Garcia & Jensen, 2009; Hernandez, Denton, & Macartney, 2008). The diversity that characterizes Latino groups is also evident in their circumstances of immigration, educational background, and place of origin. These varied experiences result in different pathways to adaptation.

Related to the circumstances of immigration, variables such as the reason for migrating (e.g., voluntary immigrants versus refugees fleeing war or persecution) and condition of arrival (e.g., illegally versus legal immigration) affects the family's immigration experience in an important way (García Coll & Kerivan Marks, 2009). These variables may affect the levels of vulnerability and psychological stress immigrants have to deal with. In addition, educational background is also a decisive variable to take into account; an analysis of the 2000 Census data revealed that many of the risk factors associated with immigrant families are only found in immigrant groups who have as predominant characteristic low parental education (Hernandez, 2004). This finding is consistent with segmented assimilation theory that states that the process of adaptation is not linear, it depends on individuals' characteristics (e.g., human capital) as well as the characteristics of the receiving society (e.g., beliefs, values) (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Finally, circumstances related to the place of origin of the immigrant families or to the reasons for migration may have an effect on

their experience in the U.S. For example, for families coming from more proximal countries, such as Mexico or El Salvador, it may be relatively easier to maintain contact with their country of origin, compared to families coming from more distant countries (García Coll & Kerivan Marks, 2009). Compared to other immigrant groups, the of the majority of Latinos in the U.S. come from countries relatively close to the U.S. (Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and El Salvador), which may shape in a specific way their immigrant experiences. For example, it is know that families who migrate often do so in a "stepway" fashion; parents going ahead leaving their children in care of extended family. (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992). Some studies show a higher prevalence of this process in Latino immigrant families compared to other immigrant groups (C. Suárez-Orozco, Todorova, & Louie, 2002). Perhaps the relative closeness to their country of origin and tendency of strong ties to the extended family may explain this phenomenon. Some of the children left behind join their parents later in the U.S. and experience a reunification process with their parents; others arrive to the U.S. after forming their own family in their country of origin, replicating the process of parent-child separation experienced with their own parents. However, scarce research on this topic limits our understanding of this process (C. Suárez-Orozco, et al., 2002).

Despite the varied ways in which Latinos experience immigration, they also share many similarities. An important experience that all immigrant families share is the process of adaptation and change, or acculturation, as they interact with the new culture (Berry, 2006; Phinney, Berry, Vedder, & Liebkind, 2006). Acculturation is a complex processes that occurs at both the individual and societal levels (Berry, 2006).

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At the individual level, immigrant families must learn new customs and norms and adjust their behavior accordingly. At the societal level, social institutions, such as schools or business, also adapt and change to provide services for immigrant families.

Earliest efforts to understand the process of acculturation proposed a simple assimilation model, which assumes that the longer immigrants live in the host country, the more their behaviors, attitudes and values will resemble those of the mainstream society (Greenman & Xie, 2008). This unidimensional view of acculturation states that immigrants lose their original culture as they acquire a new one. In other words, this model conceptualizes cultural maintenance and cultural adaptation as opposites and inversely related (for review, see Greenman & Xie, 2008; Rumbaut, 1997). Later, scholars developed a bidimensional model, in which an increase in adaptation does not necessarily assume a decrease in cultural maintenance but, rather, an integration of the two cultures (sending and receiving). The most popular bidimensional model was developed by Berry (Berry, 2006; Phinney, et al., 2006) and describes the process of maintaining the native culture and adapting the new culture as two independent processes, thereby forming four acculturation orientations: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. According to this approach, a high -or moderate- level of involvement in both cultures is described as integration or biculturalism. On the other hand, assimilation refers to the loss of one's own culture and the total incorporation of the host culture. Separation is observable when people reject the majority culture and maintain almost all aspects of their home culture. The fourth and last dimension refers to the refusal of both cultures, or marginalization. This bidimensional model enables researchers to

examine the two sides of cultural change; the process of learning about and adapting to the host culture (acculturation) at the same time as the process of retaining and maintaining one's own culture (enculturation) (Berry, 2006; Calzada, Brotman, Huang, Bat-Chava, & Kingston, 2009; Cuellar, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1995; Gonzales, Knight, Morgan-Lopez, Saenz, & Sirolli, 2002).

In addition to this multilevel examination of acculturation, other authors have underlined the fact that acculturation comprises diverse dimensions (e.g., daily habits, participation in cultural activities, language use and preference, attitudes, beliefs, and values) (Cuellar, Nyberg, Maldonado, & Roberts, 1997; Marin, 1992). Changes on these dimensions occur gradually and affect different aspects of people's lives. For example, Marin (1992) describes three levels. The first is related to changes in more superficial aspects of life, such as learning facts about the cultural history, consuming typical food or use of media. The second level includes the changes affecting more central behaviors related to the person's social life such as language use. Finally, the third and deepest level comprises more significant changes in individual's life, such as transformation in values, norms, and interaction patterns. Although this might be an interesting model to explore, it requires a longitudinal design, which is uncommon in acculturative related research (Fuligni, 2001). Consequently, the understanding of how core values and family interaction change over time as product of acculturation and enculturation is still scarce (Gonzales, et al., 2002).

Another fundamental set of variables related to the acculturation process is the one related to context. Scholars emphasize that community characteristics, especially the ones related to school and neighborhood, play an essential role inhibiting or

promoting a positive adaptation (Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault, & Senécal, 1997; García Coll, et al., 1996; García Coll & Kerivan Marks, 2009; Phinney, et al., 2006). For example, ethnic enclaves may be isolated from the mainstream society, which in turn, can hinder the development of English proficiency. On the other hand, they can promote social support and positive self-concept, which in turn, may serve as buffer for discrimination or racism (García Coll & Kerivan Marks, 2009). For example, findings from a recent study with Mexican American adolescents showed that children who grew up in a context that promoted Mexican American values were more able to counteract the negative effects of discrimination (Berkel et al., 2010). The same is true for schools; bilingual programs may facilitate parents' involvement in school-related activities, and may function as a link to the host society. In sum, more integrated contexts are more likely to promote acculturation *and* enculturation, allowing families to develop a bicultural identity.

Current studies suggest that biculturalism might be the most positive form of acculturation. For example, biculturalism has been associated with better overall adjustment, lower levels of conflict and more support among family members, and better social, emotional and cognitive outcomes for children (Birman, 1998; Bornstein & Cote, 2010; Calzada, et al., 2009; Miranda, Estrada, & Firpo-Jimenez, 2000). These findings suggest that biculturalism provides flexible coping strategies that are helpful to deal with multiple, competing demands and social contexts. This capacity helps them benefit from knowledge and resources from the host culture, while they also retain the positive, protective factors of their traditional cultures. (Cabrera, et al., 2011; Gonzales, Fabrett, & Knight, 2009).

As described above, the process of immigration and acculturation are complex phenomena that bring unique challenges to individuals and family life. A specially demanding role is the one exhibited by parents, who have a double task in this process: While they deal with their own process of acculturation to the host culture, they also function as the main agent in their children's enculturation process. Thus, considering aspects of this adaptive process provides essential information to better understanding immigrants' adjustment. Unfortunately, few studies have examined the acculturative/enculturative processes related to family processes; thus, little is known about how this changes may impact socialization practices in particular with young children (Gonzales, et al., 2002).

In summary, incorporating parents' immigration experience and acculturation in models designed to comprehend parenting help researchers to understand how parents manage the possible tension related to being part of two cultures and how these processes may influence their parenting practices. I addressed this issue in this study by exploring the values and beliefs parents attribute to their Latino background and how they perceive these practices have changed as a function of living in the U.S.

Socialization

Children in any society have to learn how to develop into an effective and contributing member of the group; they have to acquire the beliefs, values, practices, attitudes, and skills of their culture (Gauvain & Parke, 2010). Diverse agents, such as peers, teachers or institutions, contribute to this process by creating and transmitting the expectations and cultural norms to the child. Although current research recognizes the multiple determinants of socialization, scholars have consistently

underlined that parents are the first and primary individuals responsible for the

socialization process of the child (Bornstein & Lansford, 2010). Parents teach their

children the social norms and expectations to participate in the family and in the

larger society through interpersonal contact and participation in cultural routines,

rituals, and day-to-day interactions, as well as through modeling and didactic teaching

(Weisner, et al., 1996). The nature of these expectations and goals is not universal;

culture affects the way parents structure different aspects of their environment. Thus,

parenting practices may differ in what knowledge they consider important to pass on

to children, how this knowledge is conveyed and when children should acquire it

(Bornstein & Lansford, 2010). In the case of immigrant parents, the socialization

practices acquire special characteristics because they comprise aspects of parents'

original culture, as well as aspects from the new environment in which they are

raising their children (Gonzales, et al., 2002; Howes, Wishard Guerra, & Zucker,

2008).

In the following section I present relevant research on Latino socialization

practices. In addition, I expose the gaps in the literature while I explain how this

research will address them.

Parenting (mothering) practices in Latino Immigrants

Latino parents are generally described as part of a relationship-oriented

society (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2008), that promotes a social group orientation as the

core socialization strategy. This does not mean that Latinos, or any other cultural

group, do not also value individualism (Oyserman, et al., 2002; Tamis-LeMonda, et

al., 2008; Wainryb & Turiel, 1994). The degree to which these two sets of beliefs are

adapted by Latinos depends on multiple factors, including SES, immigration history, and acculturation (Leyendecker, et al., 2002; Tamis-LeMonda, et al., 2008). Overall, research on Latino parenting has highlighted three main goals that Latino parents orient toward as they socialize their children: *respeto*, *familismo*, and *educación* (e.g., Halgunseth, Ispa, & Rudy, 2006; Harwood, et al., 2002).

In relation to the concept of *respeto* - a concept that emphasizes proper demeanor and respect for authorities and elders - research conducted with Latino parents revealed that *respeto* is a core cultural value in their everyday lives (García Coll & Pachter, 2002; Halgunseth, et al., 2006; Harwood, et al., 1995; Parra Cardona et al., 2009). For example, research shows that Latino (Mexican American and Dominican) mothers recognized *respeto* as an essential value they teach their children (Calzada, Fernandez, & Cortes, 2010). Mexican mothers teach their children from early age not to interrupt conversations between adults and not to challenge an elder's point of view (Valdes, 1996). Similarly, Livas-Dlott and her colleagues (2010) concluded that first and second generation of Mexican mothers encourage their children to respect parents and peers and conform to adult authority more that European American middle-class mothers.

Overall these findings reveal that parents promote *respeto* mainly by teaching children to obey adults and not challenge their authority. However, the degree to which it is promoted in children may depend on country of origin, acculturation status or SES background. Research examining within-group variation in a sample of Puerto Rican mothers showed that SES was related to the extent to which they promoted *respeto* (Harwood, Scholmerich, Ventura-Cook, Schulze, & Wilson, 1996).

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In addition to SES, acculturation may also be linked to the degree to which *respeto* is taught by parents. Studies have shown that in Mexican American and Puerto Rican families, the value of *respeto* declines through generations (Gonzalez-Ramos, Zayas, & Cohen, 1998; Okagaki & Sternberg, 1993).

Although being respectful and obedient may be valued in a homogenous Latino social group, it may also place children at a disadvantage in other settings because these values may differ from the ones promoted by the American school systems (which are more related to independence and autonomy) (Arzubiaga, et al., 2000; Reese, Balzano, Gallimore, & Goldenberg, 1995). For example, children who are taught not to challenge authority may be seen by their teachers as passive or not engaged. On the other hand, a recent study shows that Mexican prekindergarten children whose mothers more frequently mentioned raising a *bien educado* child (a child who is willing to meet or satisfy the needs and/or expectations of others, and be attentive to the teachings) as their main socialization goal also were rated more highly by their teachers in social skills (Zucker & Howes, 2009). The inconsistency of these findings merit further exploration to understand under what conditions culture-specific values can be integrated across cultural and groups setting. It would also be worth examining whether mothers and fathers emphasize *respeto* to the same degree or whether there are differences between them that might reflect the different socialization goals they have for their children. I addressed these inconsistencies in this study by exploring parents' perceptions of differences between the values they promote in their homes and the values the "American context" promotes, and by

examining how they incorporate these potential differences in their everyday parenting practices.

Regarding *familismo* - defined as a set of beliefs that emphasizes the importance of solidarity, obligation, reciprocity, and parental authority within family-research has found that Latinos tend to report higher levels of family cohesion than European American families (Knight, Virdin, & Roosa, 1994). Additionally, Sabogal and his colleagues reported that Latinos from diverse countries of origin reported similar attitudes toward their families, indicating that familism is a core characteristic in this ethnic group (Sabogal, et al., 1987). Furthermore, research on familism has shown that most Latinos tend to retain this value with some variation according to levels of English proficiency (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

A growing body of research has shown that familism may function as a protective factor for Latino families buffering or compensating for negative effects related to mental health problems or adverse social conditions (Aikens, Coleman, & Barbarin, 2008; Gamble & Modry-Mandell, 2008; Knight, et al., 1994). Although research shows consistently this value as being core for Latino families, data on the potential negative impact of familism on family functioning is more limited. Families who are very close and value the collective well-being above an individual's might also create tension and conflict because they may view individual members' goals (e.g., going to college and moving away from the family) as undermining the collective goal of being together. Similarly, research on the specific ways in which Latino parents promote this value in their young children is still scarce. There is some evidence suggesting that in the context of other equally held beliefs such as

education, parents may place a higher value on family (García Coll & Kerivan Marks, 2009). Thus, I addressed the question of how parents teach children the value of familism in this study by examining how parents organize their routines to encourage family ties in their children and how the familism value shapes the expectations they have for their children.

Finally, the value of *educación* -a set of beliefs and practices that emphasize moral upbringing and being a good person- is described by various scholars as an important indicator for Latino parents when evaluating their children's achievement (M. M. Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1995). *Educación*, unlike the English translation of the word, includes aspects of moral development as well as aspects of socially accepted manners and general developmental outcomes (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Grau, Azmitia, & Quattlebaum, 2009; Reese, et al., 1995). Reese and colleagues (1995) conducted an ethnographic study with families from Mexico and Central American, observing that parents perceived that morals were the basis for academics and that the teaching of correct behaviors, such as being respectful, constituted an essential part of parent's responsibility while rearing a child. Similarly, Latino parents consider social skills (i.e., the ability to establish and maintain positive relationships) as key elements of being *bien educado* (Parke & Buriel, 2006). But, research suggests that parents may experience important challenges while promoting this value. For example, qualitative research exploring the worries and barriers Latino parents face in the socialization process found that parents believed that the time children spent with peers and the influence that they might have over their children's behaviors were the greatest challenge to their

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children to become a *persona de bien* (a good person) (Azmitia & Brown, 2002).

These findings underline the need to understand the strategies parents use to teach

children to be *bien educado* and get along with others, while protecting them from

social interactions that may distract them from that goal. I addressed this issue by

examining the difficulties Latino parents perceived in their daily experience of raising

a child in the U.S. and how they think these difficulties may affect the values they

want to transmit to their children.

Additionally, the research has identified some parenting behaviors that are

believed to be specific to Latinos. For instance, in a literature review of cross cultural

studies, Halgunseth et al. (2006) found that Latino parents are more protective,

monitor their children more closely, and implement more rules than European

American parents. Other researchers have noted that Latino mothers tend to be more

intrusive and physically controlling than European American mothers (Carlson &

Harwood, 2003; Richman, Miller, & LeVine, 1992). Interestingly, research shows

that Latino children do not always exhibit negative outcomes from having more

controlling parents (Halgunseth, et al., 2006; Knight, et al., 1994; Parke et al., 2004).

Researchers have suggested that the use of these parenting strategies may be related

to the promotion of cultural goals, such as *familismo* underlining the necessity of

interpreting parenting behaviors in light of the specific context in which it occurs

(Halgunseth, et al., 2006; Harwood, Schölmerich, Schulze, & González, 1999). This

is true not only for the distinction between cultural groups (i.e., Latinos versus non-

Latinos), but also for variations within groups. For example, Cabrera and her

colleagues, using a nationally representative sample, explored Latino parenting

practices in various subgroups, showing that Mexican American mothers, compared to other Latinas, had lower mother-infant interaction scores (Cabrera, Shannon, West, & Brooks-Gunn, 2006). According to the authors, although most of the differences between groups were accounted for by SES, remaining differences were accounted for by levels of acculturation. Another study, this time exploring within-group differences in a sample of Mexican mothers, concluded that maternal schooling function as an important source of variation on maternal responsiveness (Richman, et al., 1992). Unfortunately, only a few studies have examined within-group differences (Harwood, et al., 2002); therefore, less in known about variation in core values related to country of origin, socioeconomic status, and levels of acculturation within Latino groups. In addition, research on Latino socialization practices tends to be atheorical and uses measures that were designed to assess socialization practices that are central to parenting in other populations and that often are not validated for use with Latino populations (Cabrera, et al., 2011). Thus, our understanding of Latino socialization practices is still sparse.

In this study, I explored parenting practices in Latino families from a qualitative perspective, which enables researchers to gain knowledge directly from the protagonists, without imposing preconceived categories or measures. In this explorative study, I also examined how diverse processes are experienced by a group of immigrant parents, which facilitates examination of within-group differences in the perception of the immigration experience, acculturation, and socialization process. In addition, theoretically framed qualitative research is useful in revealing patterns that

might be articulated in hypotheses than can be then systematically tested using quantitative methods (Sofaer, 1999).

Father's role in Latino families

Research that focuses primarily on minority fathers is scarce and little is known about the ways in which minority men socialize their young children (Cabrera, Tamis-LeMonda, Bradley, Hofferth, & Lamb, 2000; McAdoo, 1988; Tamis-LeMonda, Shannon, Cabrera, & Lamb, 2004). The growing body of literature exploring fathers' role in Latino families shows that they place a high value on their role as a teacher and role model for their children, they see themselves as educators (Fitzpatrick, Caldera, Pursley, & Wampler, 1999; Raikes, Summers, & Roggman, 2005), and that they are highly engaged with their children (Cabrera, et al., 2006). In addition, qualitative research on Mexican fathers on both sides of the U.S. border, reported that the main values fathers hope to give to their children are the importance of an education, a strong work ethic, and having respect (Taylor & Behnke, 2005). Similarly, in a study conducted with Mexican American fathers, Gamble, Ramakumar, and Diaz (2007) found that these fathers used parenting strategies associated with authoritative parenting, endorsed coaching on emotions and were observed to be supportive and responsive to their children. Hofferth (2003), on the other hand, studied fathers' involvement in two-parent families using a nationally representative database observing that Latino fathers of children under age 13 exhibited more responsibility for child rearing than White fathers. Finally, research has shown that involvement of father *and* mothers in children's academic activities at home promote better outcomes in school (Cabrera, Wight, & Fagan, 2011); neither

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mother's nor father's engagement in home learning activities alone was significant in children's academic outcomes (Reese, et al., 1995). Other studies have also shown that Latino fathers who engage in learning activities with their infants make a unique and independent contribution to children's outcomes at the entry to kindergarten, over and above mothers' influence, through its effects on fathers' later behaviors (Cabrera, Wight, & Fagan, 2011).

In summary, data to date are consistent in reporting the essential role fathers play in the socialization process of their children. Findings on Latino fathers support this claim showing that they are actively involved in the lives of their children (Cabrera, Hofferth, & Chae, in press). In addition, current research has challenged the traditional stereotype of Latino fathers being distant, obsessed with machismo, and as inspiring fear in children (Cabrera & García Coll, 2004; Roopnarine & Ahmeduzzaman, 1993). However, the number of studies that includes fathers and mothers in the exploration of children's socialization is still scarce. Little is known, for example, about similarities or differences between fathers and mothers related to cultural values or expectations for their children or the ways they coparent while socializing their children. In addition, the barriers and worries Latino families have to face coul be perceived differently by fathers and mothers. For example, aspects of family life such as allocating family time to daily routines may be different for fathers. I explored these aspects in this study by collecting data directly from fathers.

Chapter 4: Methods

Methodological Approach

To understand how Latino parents socialize their children, I used qualitative methodology. I selected this methodology because it enables researchers to capture rich descriptions of complex phenomena and helps to enhance understanding of how and why certain phenomenon affects people's live (Creswell, 1998; Daly, 2007). In addition, qualitative methodology is focused on capturing the inner experience of participants, especially of groups that are underrepresented in research, rather than testing and obtaining statistically significant relationships among variables, which characterize quantitative research. (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Daly, 2007; Sofaer, 1999). Specifically, qualitative research has been recognized as an essential tool for understanding family life; this methodology enables researchers to capture the diverse processes by which families create meanings and subjectively interpret their experiences, relationships, and environmental conditions (Daly, 2007; Gilgun, 1999).

Qualitative research data provide thick, detailed descriptions of people's perspectives and experiences using words and images rather than numeric data as source of information (Daly, 2007; Patton, 2002). In order to capture the dynamic and complex processes experienced by the participants, qualitative design is attentive to emerging conditions during the data collection or inquiry process. This methodology promotes the inclusion of new variables, questions, participants or strategies as it understands that particular phenomena may deepen or change (Daly, 2007; Patton, 2002).

The possibility of capturing rich information about complex processes, exploring family practices from the participants' perspectives, and adapting the inquiry in order to capture dynamic processes configure the main reasons why I chose qualitative framework to develop this study.

In this section I present detailed information about the participant's selection and recruitment, and the data collection and analysis. Additionally, I describe information about the strategies implemented in order to guarantee a high quality of the data.

Site and Sample

I recruited 28 parents in person at an Early Head Start Center in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. The majority of the families enrolled at this center are at or below poverty level, and more than 70% are immigrant families. I selected this site because of the significant number of Latino families enrolled in the programs (Latinos are the largest ethnic group in the Center) and because of previous successful experiences working with this Center. I conducted the recruitment process (an international graduate student from Chile) with support of a research team composed of three monolingual graduate students, two bilingual undergraduate research assistants with Latino backgrounds, and an academic advisor fluent in Spanish and English.

The participants were recruited in person from the Center, during drop-off and pick-up hours (7:40 to 9:30 AM and 2:30 to 4 PM). Parents were told that we were interested in hearing their stories about their experiences raising children in the U.S.

In addition, they were informed about the methodology and objectives of the study, the purpose for collecting these data, and confidentiality issues.

Recruitment of participants started in January 2010 and concluded in January 2011. Flyers (in Spanish and English), which included basic information about the study and the research team were given to the parents and displayed on the Center's information boards. If the parents showed interest in participating, then they were asked for their phone numbers, availability, and language. To be selected for the study, parents had to (a) identify themselves as Latino, and (b) have at least one child enrolled in the Head Start Center (i.e., a child between the ages of 0-5).

After scheduling the focus groups, possible participants were telephoned to confirm their participation. These phone calls were mainly carried out by myself, and two bilingual research assistants (one Ecuadorian male undergraduate student and a female undergraduate student from Bolivia). Using this strategy, 28 parents were recruited (20 mothers and 8 fathers) and 7 focus groups were conducted.

Parents provided informed consent and demographic information in their language of choice (90% preferred Spanish). The sample in this study was composed of people of various ethnicities, predominantly from Central America. The country of origin of the majority was El Salvador (n=13), followed by Mexico (n=9), Colombia (n=1), Peru (n=1), and Nicaragua (n=1). All the participants were first-generation immigrants, with exception of three mothers who were second-generations and whose parents emigrated from El Salvador (Table 1). Fifteen parents were married or cohabiting and most reported they did not finish high school (n=17) although a few had less than a third grade education (Figure 2). Foreign-born participants had lived

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in the United States for an average of 10.8 years (range 5- 22) (Figure 3). The ages of

the parental respondents varied from 19-47 with a mean age of 28.7; the mean

number of children per parent was 2 (range 1-4). Although many parents had more

than one child (Figure 4), they were asked to base their answers on the child who was

attending the Center. All the focal children were born in the U.S.; 15 were girls and

13 boys. Ten of them were first child.

Data Collection

I collected the data through focus group interviews. I selected this method

because of the characteristics of our target population. Focus groups have been

reported as a useful method to use with low-income participants because they may

see the group as an appropriate setting to share difficult experiences (Jarrett, 1993).

In addition, Umaña-Taylor and Bámaca (2004) underlined the effectiveness of using

focus group with members of underrepresented groups. Specifically, in the case of

Latinos, the authors suggested that talking to others who have faced similar

circumstances may make them feel that their experiences are valid and worth sharing

(Umaña-Taylor & Bámaca, 2004).

I conducted each focus group in a quiet room at the Center and each lasted

between 100 and 120 minutes. Refreshments and pastries were provided to the

participants and each session was video and audiotaped. Additionally, the research

team took field notes during the sessions. The conversation session started with an

introduction by the researchers and the general description of the study objectives.

The focus group protocol included five central topics with specific probes

(Appendix A). The focus group topics varied slightly from one focus group to the

next to reflect the input from the participants, which was used to modify the protocol. This 'less structured approach' is beneficial for better understanding participants' thinking and allows the possibility of exploring new directions according to the information that emerged in the conversation process (Morgan, 2001). All participants received a small educational toy for their children as a way of thanking them for their participation.

Data Coding and Analysis

All data were transcribed verbatim and translated into English by myself along with other bilingual research assistants and translated back to Spanish for verification in the Family Involvement Laboratory at the University of Maryland. All participants' names were changed to protect their identity. Once transcribed, I analyzed the English versions of the transcripts using the qualitative software package Atlas-Ti. This software allows for quick retrieval and organization of text units, as well as the possibility of linking them to methodological memos or field notes. This project produced a large amount of data; I selected relevant data to address the research questions of interest.

I analyzed the focus group data following the principles of Grounded Theory (LaRossa, 2005), specifically the constructivist Grounded Theory approach, which views data and analysis as created from shared experiences and relationships with participants (Charmaz, 2006). This approach allows for a data-driven analysis in that it is partially informed by pre-existing concepts that guide analysis, but it is primarily conducted through discovery of emergent themes in the data. (Daly, 2007; LaRossa, 2005). The incorporation of 'sensitizing concepts' or pre-existing concepts into the

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coding process can be conceptualized as a "modified Grounded Theory" approach in the sense that this allows the inclusion of key theoretical concepts and relevant findings from previous research. This information indicates relevant aspects to take into account during the design of the research and analysis of the data. It is important to underline that although these sensitizing concepts function as a guide, they should not constrain the emerging salient themes or categories during the data analysis.

During the analysis process Grounded Theory relies on three main stages of coding: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Daly, 2007; LaRossa, 2005). During the first stage, open coding, data are broken down into discrete units of analysis. This process is done by a line-by-line analysis in which researchers create labels to group data segments under a unifying code (LaRossa, 2005). Data are examined looking for salient words, phrases, paragraphs or ideas participants repeatedly used to describe their experience. For example, in this study participants talked about the long hours they have to work and how this situation prevented them from spending time with their children and participating in family activities. I coded these segments of the narrative as one specific concept "balancing work and family."

The second stage, axial coding, is concerned with organizing the open codes by drawing relationships between categories and subcategories (LaRossa, 2005). Open coding focuses on identification and naming, while axial coding focuses on links and relationships. This process allows the researcher to create a web of meaning for the experience shared by the participants. During this stage similar categories may be collapsed into a larger and more abstract category. These categories enable the researcher to build some ideas and interpretation about the phenomenon under study

and relate the more significant experiences in the participant's narrative to the research questions. For example, during first stage of coding, the categories 'balancing work and family' and 'lack of educational background' emerged as important concepts to understand the experience of raising their children in the U.S. In order to further explore these categories and observe possible connections between them, I created the broader concept of 'challenges to adaptation"; later, I grouped more categories under this umbrella term. This process that entails comparing and linking codes to the new category is often described as the most complex and overwhelming part of the interpretative process (Daly, 2007). In order to organize the data in a way that supports a representative interpretation of the narrative, the codes and categories have to be contrasted and modified constantly. This back and forth between stages of data analysis constitutes the main process by which the researcher attempts to capture the authentic story emerging from the participants' experience (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Daly, 2007).

Finally, the third stage of data analysis, or the selective coding, involves selecting a core category to which all other categories will be related, developing a single story line (LaRossa, 2005). This core category represents the main theme, issue, or problem faced by the participants of the study. For a category to be considered 'core' it should present relationships with previous codes and categories, be easily related to them, and appear frequently in the data. In this study, 'adaptation' emerged as a core concept; this concept captures the dynamic and complex process parents face while they are raising a child in the U.S. In addition, during this process the researcher links the data with the theoretical framework that guides the study,

creating an interpretation of the data that explains relationships and processes (K.

Roy, personal communication April, 15, 2010). In this study, I used sensitizing

concepts (e.g., ecological constraints and resources and cultural bounded values)

derived from Weisner's ecocultural theory as a framework to understand participant's

experiences.

Data Quality (trustworthiness)

Data quality in qualitative research is related to the process by which

researchers construct and evaluate the meaning and relevance of their findings (Daly,

2007). Qualitative scholars propose diverse strategies to improve the trustworthiness

of the qualitative research (e.g., Daly, 2007; Guba, 1981; Krefting, 1999). Several of

these strategies were used in this study. First, I wrote field notes during the focus

groups, recruitment process, and data analysis in order to keep track of key concepts,

ideas and questions that emerged during these experiences. These notes were revised

and shared with the lab members during each stage of the coding and interpretation

process. This process contributes to the credibility of the research, term that has been

related to the quantitative concept of internal validity (Guba, 1981; Krefting, 1999;

Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Additionally, in this study I applied the 'triangulation of investigators'

strategy. A research team, rather than a single researcher, participated in the process

of coding the data. After each stage of coding, I shared with the team the

interpretations of the data (emerging themes and story line) in order to receive

feedback. This strategy, which is comparable to the reliability in quantitative

research, introduced me to a diversity of approaches and made me constantly rethink

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previous assumptions and interpretations of the data. In addition, coding with people from diverse ethnic and disciplinary backgrounds in the research team, made the discussion and coding process even richer and meaningful, enhancing the quality of the data presented in this study.

Finally, 'transferability' refers to the degree to which the qualitative findings can be generalized to another situation or setting under similar, but not identical, conditions (Krefting, 1999; Patton, 2002). This characteristic involves the awareness that in studies that deal with complex and dynamic processes, such as the one explored in this research; a direct and exact transferability is not possible. However, scholars argue that the significance of qualitative transferability lies in the extent to which the data are useful in understanding new settings or participants (Daly, 2007). In order to reach this quality, the researcher should provide thick and deep descriptions, not only about the processes and conditions under which the data were collected, but also about the context surrounding the participants' experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002). This information should help readers connect with the research process and the participants' meanings and impressions.

In this study, I created a description of the research team characteristics, the interactions with the participants, and their demographic and contextual conditions. This information is pivotal for the readers to decide how well these findings may transfer to other contexts.

Chapter 5: Findings

In this section the major findings of this study will be presented as follows:
First, I provide a detailed description of the participants and of the context in which
they are raising their children. This description constitutes an essential part of
qualitative research as it contributes to readers' judgment about the applicability and
transferability of the findings. Next, I present the themes that emerged to answer
each of my research questions: (1) What beliefs and values do Latino parents use in
socializing their children? (2) How are parents' beliefs and practices incorporated into
the daily interactions with their children? (3) How does living in the U.S. affect this
process?; and (4) What constraints, set by resources, characterize the context in which
Latino parents socialize their children? The narrative I present is supported by
relevant quotations from the transcripts, which help to illustrate the relevance of the
emerging themes and serve as supportive evidence for the findings.

Descriptive and Contextual Characteristics

A central contextual characteristic that the participants of this study share is
having a child enrolled in the Head Start Center. This is an important characteristic
from which significant inferences can be made in order to better understand the
findings presented later in this section. First, the fact that these parents have a child
enrolled in a Head Start Center suggests that these parents have at least some
familiarity with American institutions, and specifically with the American school
system. Although parents who use Head Start are a select group, they learn from other
parents or from community services about the "don't' ask, don't tell" policy (which

means that the Head Start staff do not ask about their immigration status when parents

enroll their children) thus they feel comfortable in enrolling their children in Head

Start centers. The Center offers diverse activities to assist parents with issues such as

housing, the health care system, school opportunities (for parents and children), and

recreational activities, which give parents the opportunity to interact with other

parents and staff members. Through these activities parents have the opportunity to

learn about the 'American culture,' this information helps parents 'fit in' and

integrate with mainstream values, and diminishes the likelihood of remaining isolated

and marginalized. The majority of parents who enroll a child in this Center are at or

below poverty level and many are immigrants (around 70%). The majority of

enrollment spaces are reserved for disadvantage families; however the center

promotes the interaction of families from a variety of socioeconomic levels. In its

2008 annual report it says that the "Economic diversity, through introduction of more

tuition-paying families to our Center […] made [the Center] sustainable and stronger,

providing additional funding streams and life experiences to share."

Second, the fact that these parents enrolled their children in a preschool

program suggests that they are concerned with formal educational opportunities for

their young children. This is particularly important in this sample because data show

that Latino parents tend to display low levels of enrollment in center-based programs

(Liang, Fuller, & Singer, 2000). Perhaps under certain conditions, Latino parents are

just as likely to use center-based care as other parents. The parents in our study talked

about the importance of "early learning" for their children. Also, they liked the fact

that most of the workers (and families) at the Center were Spanish-speaking and felt

comfortable interacting and communicating with them. Researchers and policy makers have suggested that the value of familism may lead some Latino parents to primarily choose family members as caregivers for the young children. However, data from this study suggest that this decision might be based on a number of factors including the lack of affordable center-based care, the lack of center-based care with Spanish-speaking staff, and the lack of family close by to take care of their children. In this study, the families embraced familistic values (as it will be shown later in this section), but also said that their children's education was important and the Center will help them to learn and succeed.

Third, another contextual aspect these parents share is the neighborhood in which they live. All the participants in this study (with exception to one mother who recently moved) live in the same Latino-enclave neighborhood close to the Center where the study was conducted. This area can be described as an area in transition that has undergone gentrification. It is an economically diverse neighborhood composed of a combination of public and middle-income housing, as well as traditional and new constructed buildings/lofts, restaurants, and shops. In addition, the composition of this neighborhood is ethnically varied comprising 58% of African American, 34% of Latino, and 5.4% of White residents (Urban Institute, 2003). As a consequence, this area is characterized by the presence of several restaurants offering Latino food, many advertising signs written in Spanish directed to the Latino immigrant population, and numerous stores with Spanish-speaking employees. Scholars studying immigrant parents have argued that the characteristics of the immediate environment in which parents interact may have an important effect on

their adaptation process (García Coll, et al., 1996). For example, a neighborhood with high density of Spanish speaking persons may constrain the use of English, which in turn may promote linguistic isolation. On the other hand, this neighborhood offers opportunities to maintain a bond to their culture of origin (through food or other cultural activities) and may support a more integrated process of acculturation. In addition, the social context in which immigrants are received is one of the major factors of segmented assimilation theory. In general, immigrants with low levels of education tend to enter into a low-income class status in the U.S. If families settle in inner-city neighborhoods with poorly performing schools and high levels of school dropout rates, then maintaining the culture of origin can have a protective effect for children (Xie & Greenman, in press). Together these characteristics create the specific context in which the participants of this study socialize their children. In addition, it can be hypothesized that the Center and the neighborhood may serve socialization agents for the participating parents. The parents' perceptions in this study about what the "American culture" is may be strongly influence by these two contexts: the Head Center and their neighborhood. Thus, this background information is important in order to understand and evaluate the data that emerged as answers for each of the research questions.

In the next section, I present a general overview of parent's perceptions of their socialization practices followed by a narrative and supportive quotes from the focus groups that address each of the research questions stated at the beginning of this study. In addition, I show how the findings of this study match with each of the aspects of Weisner's theory represented in Figure 1.

Socialization Practices in Latino Immigrants

The themes that emerged from the coding of the data illustrated Latino parents' perceptions of their experiences of raising a child in the U.S. Raising children is the process by which parents socialize their children to learn the necessary repertoire of habits, beliefs, skills, and values, the appropriate patterns of behaviors, skills, and knowledge necessary to perform as a functioning member of their society. This process is more complex for Latino immigrant families because they have to adapt resources and constraints, and socialize their children by incorporating aspects of the Latino and American cultures while at the same time acculturate to the new society at the same time.

This complex and dynamic experience is described by the participating parents as the process of teaching their children values and beliefs from their culture of origin they consider will help their child succeed in the new context. These values and beliefs, together with the strategies parents use to teach their children, reflect a bi-socialization process in that parents must socialize their children to be members of their family and also of the larger society while at the same time learn the skills and behaviors valued by the American culture. Parents in this study recognized this bi-socialization process as being shaped by a series of resources and constraints related to contextual (working conditions), individual (human capital and their own parenting experience) and social (place of origin versus place of settlement) conditions. These resources and constraints and the way parents deal with them determined their capacity to successfully manage daily life in the new cultural context.

Research Question 1: What beliefs and values do Latino fathers and mothers use in socializing their children?

Socialization contents: Respeto, familismo, and optimism. Parents transmit to their children the values, beliefs, rules, and standards about the way of thinking and behaving and reflect the competencies parents consider instrumental to succeed in certain environments (Ogbu, 1988; Super & Harkness, 2002). Although transmission of beliefs and practices from parents to children is universal, the content of such beliefs and practices varied widely across cultures (Harwood, et al., 2002). Parents in this study talked about the beliefs and values they attributed to the "Latino culture", making social comparisons between the norms of their own country and the norms and values of American culture. For example, when asked about what characterizes 'Latino people' values, almost all the participants spoke of *respeto* and strong ties to the family. Both mothers and fathers across country of origin and social class believed that teaching these values to their children was central to being Latino. A respectful child is considered "*un niño bien educado*" (a well-bred child) whose parents did a good job. The view of a second generation Latino mother of a one-year-old girl exemplified the centrality of *respeto*; teaching a child to be respectful is such an important task and it is closely tied to the identity of "Latino," that even the means (e.g., using physical punishment) justifies the end:

> Oh, in that [*respeto*] we are different from Americans, like I have seen how some Americans get disrespected by their children… Once I was disrespectful to my mom and she hit me across the face and I remember that day she told me "No one should hit you in your face," but she hit me in my face that day

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and she told me "You don't ever talk back to your elders"… I now this was

not a proper way, but it worked for me… .

However, being respectful is viewed as being compatible with success; being

respectful and getting along with others is a pathway to success. As others have

argued, respect towards oneself and others is thought to promote independence

(functional dependence) (Tamis-LeMonda, et al., 2008). Being respectful will open

doors for their children and it is a vital complement to formal education for their

success. A Nicaraguan father of a three-year-old girl underlined the importance for

the children to be well prepared, go to school and later college, but when asked about

the most important value they would like to teach to his children he answered:

Values? Well mainly respect for people, respect in one of the most important

things someone can have… respect the property of others; respect for parents

mainly, that a lot of the time you don't see that here; respect for yourself,

know your value.

Connection to the family is described as a central characteristic of various

ethnic and minority groups in the U.S., including Latinos (Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam,

1999). Constructs such as *familismo* are conceptualized to encompass three

dimensions: desirability to maintain close relationships (support and emotional

closeness), importance of tangible care-giving obligation (obligation to family), and

the reliance on the interpersonal relationships to define the self (family as referent)

(Knight et al., 2010). Participating parents considered the family unit as fundamental

and distinctive to Latinos. Many parents spoke with pride of this characteristic and

viewed it as a central aspect of their ethnic identity. The narrative of a Colombian

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mother who explained that she is always talking to her two-year-old son about his extended family also illustrated this point:

> … we are by ourselves here, my husband, son and I, everyone is in Colombia but we try to go every year…I have eight siblings and my husband has four and there is my dad and his mom and I have cousins, there are hundreds…and when we go we bring videos and we show them to [her son] and now that were are almost about to leave we show him and "do you remember him, little man?"…even though we are distant, we are not separated, we talk over the phone…it is important.

In addition, parents in this study value the fact that Latino families 'are very together' and that they maintain closeness to their children, even as the children get older. A Nicaraguan father of a three-year-old girl explained:

> Mainly the Latino people are very united in family. We are used to the fact that our children are 22, 23 years old and they live in the house with us and that is very nice. It's nice to have the children always there and know what they are doing. A lot of times American parents… they have an 18 years old and the child… has left, disappeared and comes back every month, two months…

The stories of the parents in this study also reflected the belief that positive and optimistic attitudes are helpful overcoming adversity and for succeeding. Being optimistic about their lives may help them and their children perceive the process of adaptation in a more positive light, which is seen as an important predictor of happiness and psychological health (Mesquita & Walker, 2003; Peterson, 2000). For

example, parents may feel that by encouraging their children to have a positive outlook, their ability to be successful may be strengthened. One Mexican mother of a three-year-old noted:

> And our kids are going to be our reflection and if we always are taking in the bad things, the first thing is going to be destroyed…if we look at life positively, they are going to see things positively and they will go on overcoming the obstacles that are presented to them in life…

Parents also expressed this optimistic view while describing the U.S. as a 'land of opportunity' where individuals who are self-motivated can achieve their goals. A Mexican father of a three-year-old girl, said: "I think that it is not difficult, at all, the difficulty is created by one alone, everyone is able to do it here… here there are opportunities for all."

The socialization content participating parents described represent the "cultural conditions" (e.g., values, beliefs, and practices) illustrated in the model of Weisner's theory I present in Figure 1. From the model we can see that cultural conditions guide the socialization process; in the case of the participating parents these cultural conditions correspond to *respeto*, *familism* and optimism. Parents in this study acknowledged that these values describe their Latino culture. As shown in Figure 1, cultural conditions are influenced by resources and constraints of the environment (e.g., long working hours) and the context's expectations, activities, and scripts (e.g., the perception of the 'American way' to raise children). Thus cultural conditions are not static and evolve in a dynamic way responding to changes or conditions of the

broader context. Detailed information about the process of change and adaptation is described in research question three.

Research Question 2: How are parents' beliefs and practices incorporated into the daily interactions with their children?

Socialization strategies: Modeling, consejos, and routines. Psychological and behavioral control are important ways that parents use to shape the behavior of their children across developmental periods (for review, see Grolnick & Pomerantz, 2008). The use of psychological control (e.g., I will be sad, if you don't do as I say) is believed to be more detrimental than the use of physical control (e.g., monitoring) because it instills in children fear and anxiety to comply (Hudson & Rapee, 2001; Pettit, Laird, Dodge, Bates, & Criss, 2001).

The use of behavioral control as a parenting strategy has been found to be prevalent among some Latino mothers (Ispa et al., 2004). The extent to which this strategy is also endorsed by fathers is unclear. In this study, I found that although fathers and mothers value the possibility of raising their children to be more independent, fathers report more instances with their children that support this attitude, for example, promoting risk-taking behaviors. A conversation between two Mexican parents of a three-year-old girl illustrated this point:

Mother: "… or when we [the Latinos] take them to the park, we are paying attention so they don't fall or if they are climbing… and one is nervous …they [the Americans] don't, they leave them… " Father added: "that is what I tell her "leave him to fall, they will be learning with the bruises …because if one tries to be take care of them all the time…they don't learn…and the least expected day….pumm."

In this study, I also found evidence of psychological control. Many mothers used their own negative experience as a way to control their children from taking the wrong path. Parents in this study believed that telling their children about the sacrifices they have made for them and the hardship they experience will help them stay focused and motivated. As one mother of a three-year-old boy from El Salvador commented: "I explain to them if I have sacrificed myself it is so that you all are better because I do not want you to pass through the same works that I have passed through…"

In addition, research with Latino families show that Latino children are taught to model themselves after adults; as a result, modeling is a preferred teaching style for these mothers (Laosa, 1980). Parents in this study strongly believed that being a good role model, teaching by example, was the best way to socialize their children, which gave them the confidence that their children will do much better than themselves. Parents in this study felt an enormous responsibility of being a good example for their children, because they recognized the central role of parents in child's socialization. In the words of a Mexican mother of a three-year-old girl:

> … a good mom, a good dad is to give the kids a good example, to give them a good education… everything, because the school had teachers and we are at home and they know the example, well actions are what speak, because one is the example for their children, they are one's reflection… because we are the models, the parents…and our kids are going to be our reflection.

Being a good role model for children refers not only to being a good *moral* role model, but also promoting academic motivation by example. According to the

parents in this study, this belief together with transmitting children the sense of sacrifice and motivation will help them to succeed in life. The same Mexican mother later added:

> My girls always ask me "mommy, why do we go to school?" or "why do you go to school?" and I tell them that I go to school because I want to learn and I want to study because it is very important to study, because in life…you are going to grow up and things are hard, only if you have studies and preparation are you going to move forward, so you all have to study." You have to give them a desire to go to school and with them, well, I do my homework on the weekends and there I give them a book that they read [or] painting and as they see me learning English… it also helps.

In addition, fathers and mothers believed that communicating their expectations and reasoning with children through the use of *consejos* (advice or mores) especially when the children are young will guide them to the *good path of life*. A Salvadorian father of a two-year- old girl explained the importance of talking and giving advice to his young daughter:

> … that is something that I am going to explain to my daughter… how she has to behave, so she knows the consequences that come with it [consequences of joining a gang]. I have to tell her "this is bad and do not do this because it is going to cause problems … look at what happens," put the example of other people; tell her what to do, give her advice… I believe it is very important also so that she can look and say "oh yes, that is bad"

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The good path includes being respectful, educated (having formal education and good manners), and family oriented (Cooper, Brown, Azmitia, & Chavira, 2005). Parents teach these social skills - do chores and get along with others - to children as young as two years of age. They firmly believed that they must do so when the children are very young or else parents miss an opportunity to shape their children into good persons. For example a Salvadorian father of a two-year-old girl said:

> …from childhood one must teach them the responsibility that they have to carry with them. What I mean by a child's responsibility is to do their homework, and behave well and from a young age be good friends… and that is what I believe is the most important thing […] I think that the most important thing is to teach since they are kids…the good thing is to say "listen. Do you think it is good for these kids to do this or that? No, that is bad" telling from when they are little kids, that is the most important "Look at those kids over there, they are not doing the right thing" then they start developing a sense of what is right and was is not and they say "OK"

The establishment of routines is another important way parents use to socialize their children. Parents in our study spoke of their struggles to sustain meaningful routines for themselves and their children given their work schedule and felt that that many times they did not succeed in this task. For example, the majority of the parents in our study recognized that it is difficult for them to do activities they consider important, such as visiting family members, going to church, and 'being there' for their children because of the competing demands of work.

But, despite feeling stressed because of their inability to sustain meaningful routines, parents expressed hope that they can overcome potential barriers. A Salvadorian mother of a four-year- old girl described herself as religious and expressed her desire to transmit her religious beliefs to her child. Her always-changing work schedule did not allow her to take her daughter to mass every Sunday, but she shared with us her efforts to overcome this barrier:

> My life is… I don't have a routine and it worries me because you all have a life and I don't have a life…" later she added "I am catholic, but it is hard because of time, it costs me and when they give me Sunday off, the first thing is to go to church and when I go I have to explain to the girl, once the mass is over I go from image to image… "this is so-and-so and he did this and this because he was a good person and followed Jesus' example, he is not Jesus, he is not God, but he fought to do good for a lot of people" I explain to her who he was…

Other parents also commented how their work obligations impede them from sharing time and establishing routines with their children. A Nicaraguan father talked about the stressful work schedule during the week that leaves him with little time to share with his two children. However, for him weekends are the time to spend with the family:

> … every day the same thing, except Saturdays, for example today she woke up first and she came "daddy, I want waffles, I want to go to *Los Gringos*"… Saturdays we automatically have a meal together in *Los Gringos* …

For some parents, weekends were a great opportunity for teaching established routines. A Mexican mother of a four-year-old girl spoke of her efforts to make sure her child got visit with family:

> …almost always from Friday to Sunday we go to Delaware because we have my whole family there…we always go there. …we rarely spend a weekend at home, normally when it is Friday they know and they say to me "mommy, we have not gotten the clothes ready" because Friday night we are leaving.

The findings related to the socialization strategies used by the participating parents illustrate the day-to-day family interactions. According to the model presented in Figure 1, these interactions are a window to explore the process through which families adapt to the environmental conditions (e.g., parent's low educational background, long working hours) in a meaningful way relation to their values and beliefs (e.g., combining values and practices from both cultures: American and Latino). For example, the stories of the participating parents reflect the effort they make to incorporate in their interactions with their children the parenting practices they value (e.g., *consejos* and being a role model) while they adapt other practices to the constraints set by the environment conditions (e.g., visit family members only during weekends).

> Research Question 3: How does living in the U.S. affect the socialization process of their children?

> *Mix and match: biculturalism.* Adaptation is, in part, an intentional process based on some cognitive appraisal of the society that one left and the society that one currently lives in (Berry, 2007). In the process of acculturation, immigrants are

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exposed to the dominant culture's view of what is a good parent, valued parenting practices, and parents' expectations for them and their offspring. Although many participating parents expressed pride in the 'Latino ways' of being close to their children, teaching them respect, and maintaining strong ties with the family, many also spoke candidly about the importance of teaching their children good 'American values' such as autonomy/independence. These parents expressed interest in adopting them as strategies to use for rearing their children.

Several parents said that teaching their children to be more independent and for parents to be less controlling is a better strategy than monitoring the child all the time. The following conversation between three Salvadorian mothers illustrated this point: "we are more protective, the Latinos" one mother said, "aha, we are like 'where are you going? When are you going to come?", to which another mother added "Yes, I believe that they [Americans] are more independent."

In the process of socialization, parents in this study spoke of trying to "mix and match" aspects of both cultures because they believed that this can be beneficial for their child's development. Discussing the importance of promoting autonomy by giving children more freedom and the option to make their own decisions a Mexican mother of a four-year-old girl shared with the group the following thought:

> … because for me it is very important that my daughter knows how to make
>
> decisions for what you all said before, prepare them for life, but if I am
>
> making all of their decisions, in what moment are they learning to make their
>
> own?

The co-existence of parents' beliefs, either personal/cultural, and of what parents perceive to be American values is also evident in this study (Tamis-LeMonda, et al., 2008). When asked about the ways in which American parents socialize their children, a Mexican mother of a four-year-old girl said that she liked her child 'being independent' but she underlined that it should coexist with a familistic orientation:

That they be self-sufficient, that they struggle to move forward, that they be self-sufficient but not too liberal either… that when they get older that they make their life over there and they forget that they have a mom and their other siblings…no.

Parents in this study want their children to adopt aspects of the American lifestyle, but without losing the "Latino identity". Participating parents spoke of the importance of making their children feel proud of being a Latino living in the U.S. Many parents in this study described their children as Mexican American or Salvadorian American reflecting a way to unite both words. A Salvadorian mother of a three- year old boy exemplified this by saying: "…so when they ask them [her children] "where are you from?" they say "I'm Salvadorian through my mom, but I was born in the U.S"… because they know the race that we bring…"

The process of combining both words is evident in daily decisions parents make, which can also cause tension or apprehension. Although many parents want their children to be both independent and dependent there is less awareness of the potential conflict between these two ideals as children get older and make decisions that might take them away from the family. A Nicaraguan father of a three-year-old girl said that he wants their children to go to college because he understands that it is

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necessary for their children's success. But, he also wants to keep them close because he values those aspects of the Latino culture, which he identifies with:

> I understand the system because the children look for opportunities, look for jobs and studies. I understand the topic and I think I am going to experiment with her –I hope-…not so much [laughs]. But I do think that it is something very beautiful of the Latino family, have the children, be aware if they need anything, help. If he decides to move, perhaps at 18, 20 that he wants to go, I would not like that he would go from one state to the other. For example, I know about one that left from here, from DC to I believe California. So it is something from the Latinos that I would like to stress …we call that the family always stays united, close. Even though the American maintains everyone united, it is not as close like the Latinos do.

The process of adaptation also includes strategies and approaches that teach their children about their cultural heritage, process known as enculturation. Participating parents underlined the importance of consuming ethnic food, listening to Spanish music, and speaking Spanish. Fathers and mothers in our study paid special attention to promoting bilingual skills in their children. They believed that it is the parents' job to teach Spanish to their children and it is the school's job to teach English to their children. Some parents, especially second generation and those who have lived in the U.S. for many years struggled in this task and even felt shame. A second generation mother Salvadorian mother of a one-year-old girl confided:

> … and it is weird because now lot of Americans speak Spanish, it is kind of embarrassing, I am embarrassed because I can't put my daughter into to that

school. …she doesn't speak that much Spanish, her dominant language is English, and as much as I've tried, it doesn't happen.

Similarly, the majority of parents stressed the importance of speaking Spanish at home because they recognize the big influence that peers and school can have on their children's language preferences. However, few parents talked about enrolling their children in Spanish classes so they can learn to read and write. Parents did not seem to be aware that this process of parents teaching Spanish at home and schools teaching English does not always result in bilingual children. A Salvadorian mother of a four-year-old boy said:

> …because sometimes they say it is because you don't teach them or they don't like it… and it is not that they don't like it or that we don't teach them, because remember that they spend more time in school than time with us…

Consistent with past research, parents in this study recognized schools as an important socialization agent for children (Wentzel & Looney, 2007). School is especially significant for children of immigrant parents because in that context they may have better opportunities to learn the language, the norms, and even the food of the receiving society than at home. A Salvadorian father said that his child insisted many times to go to McDonald's until he agreed. The story of a Mexican mother illustrates how children learn new behaviors at school and display them at home. This mother stressed the initiative of her four-year-old daughter: "…she grabs her book and looks for me all over the house until I sit down to read it…"

An important aspect of the receiving society that parents in this study noted is the focus on literacy and the focus on the role of parents in this process. This

underscores the importance of quality early childhood education for immigrant children (Duncan, Ludwig, & Magnuson, 2007). By establishing literacy-related routines and reading often to children, parents can teach children to love reading. Child-initiated reading has been found to be a strong predictor of children's language and literacy skills (Farver, Xu, Eppe, & Lonigan, 2006). In response to the messages parents receive at the Center their children attend, some parents have incorporated literacy activities in their daily routine. For example encouraging their children to read for a determined amount of time each day or reading a book as part of the bedtime routine. However, many parents said that reading to their children did not come naturally to them. Often, they were tired and did not want to read themselves, but were receptive when their child initiated it. Parents who said they initiated reading also reported higher educational levels than others in the group or by those who reported taking parenting classes in the U.S. For example, a Mexican mother of a three-year-old girl, who participated in parenting classes, shared with the group her literacy routine:

> I have a rule, the boy when he comes home at six, I have always given him the
> rule that he has to read his little sister a book. He reads… he is three years old,
> but he reads to his sister, he cannot read it but he reads the figures…[…] so
> she comes and the teacher asked me How do I do it?...it is because I have a
> rule… I received a course on how to be better parents […] it helped me a lot.

Another area of socialization that all parents expressed concern about is how to best discipline their children. The strategies parents bring from their culture of origin play out in the context of the strategies and expectations of the receiving

society. Parents explained this process as combining 'their way of disciplining' their children with the 'American way' of doing so. A Mexican father of a three-year-old boy said:

> …it is that in this country you can't hit your children like before in your country… because at six or seven years of age the children here already go to school and they tell them, if their parent wants to punish their children, they say "No, I am going to call the police."

Perhaps motivated by the fear of losing their children to a system they do not understand, many parents said that they look for other forms to discipline their children. For example, they use *consejos* and adopt some aspects of the "American system that uses other types of punishments and things, like *time out*". Both mothers and fathers said that to discipline their children they often take away privileges, such as TV or favorite games, and use time out.

Together, the findings related to how living in the U.S. affects parents' socialization process illustrate the interaction between the contextual expectations, activities and scripts and the values, beliefs, and practices of the family (represented in Figure 1 as socialization and cultural conditions respectively). The 'mixing and matching' process described by the participating parent exemplifies how the values and beliefs related to the socialization practices of their children evolve in response to the expectations and practices they observe from the "American culture". Although Weisner did not account specifically for the acculturation process in his theory, his conceptualization of culture as a dynamic process influenced by several contextual conditions (Figure 1) is helpful to understand the process of adaptation of immigrant

parents. Parents in this study, for example, talked about the process of incorporating apparently contradictory values in the socialization process their children (e.g., independence versus interdependence) because they believed this will help their children adapt to the U.S. society without losing key Latino values.

Research Question 4: What constraints, set by resources, characterize the context in which Latino parents socialize their children?

Resources and constraints: challenges to adaptation. A robust body of theoretically-driven research shows that parents' pathways to success or adaptation are directly linked to their personal, social, or cultural resources and constraints. In addition, the way parents manage these resources and constrains facilitates or hinders the adaptation to new environments.

Participating parents in our study described these resources/constraints as related to their working conditions, their personal backgrounds, and the differences between their place of origin and their current environment. The challenges associated with each of these aspects were recognized by the parents as important influences in their adaptation and their children's socialization to the U.S. Three major sets of constraints/resources emerged in this study: Contextual (balancing work and family), individual (building human capital and parenting experiences), and social (living here and there).

Contextual background: Balancing work and family. According to recent statistics, most children in the U.S. live in households where both parents work (U. S. Census Bureau, 2000). Dual-earner families are commonplace, driven by both economic necessity and personal choice. As most jobs are structured around 9:00 am

to 5:00 pm, parents must find appropriate care for their young children who are not in school, and both morning and after care for their school aged children. The demands of work (long hours at work) compete with the demands of being a parent (spending time with children and accommodating to a shorter school day). This balance, between being a parent and a worker, often creates tension, conflict, and stress (Judge, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1994; Parasuraman, Purohit, Godshalk, & Beutell, 1996). The balance of work and family may be experienced by all parents, although little is known about balancing work and family among low-income immigrant families. The participants described difficulties in balancing work and family at the core of the set of adversities they faced in adapting to life in the U.S. Both mothers and fathers felt that because they work long hours, they have no time for their children and this causes them stress. Being a good parent means spending time with children and if this is not possible; this led parents to question their efficacy and whether they were good parents. On the other hand, they also knew that if they did not work, then they would not be able to provide for their children and would also be considered 'bad' parents. The majority of the parents in our focus group talked about the lack of time they had to spend with their children and how this stood in the way of being a 'good parent.' They felt that the pace of life in the U.S. is very hectic, leaving little time to do the activities they value with their children. Exemplifying this aspect a Mexican mother of a four-year-old girl explained:

> It is difficult to raise the children here...here I feel like it is harder to give them time…here if you don't work, you don't pay the rent… and time… I feel that one is always over time, that you run to school […] so, I feel that it is time,

time to be with them, to pay attention to them, to what they do or don't do… time.

Similarly, a Mexican father of a four-year-old boy spoke with stress about the lack of time he has to spend with his child in fun activities:

…once I get out of work I pick him up from her [grandmother's]house … and once we get home, we cook something, and then it is already too late to go out, so I can't take him out, since it is 7 or 8:30.

Parents in this study shared the stress that having little time for their children caused them; they wanted to be there for their children, but they have to work, usually in menial jobs with inconvenient schedules. A Salvadorian mother of a four-year-old girl exemplified this situation:

I have only one daughter, but it is difficult because I don't like the kind of life I have…for example, they give me two days off in a row and those days I have to take advantage of them as much as I can with my daughter and quality of time with my daughter and to do what I don't do with her…and that is the problem with every morning with me, to bring her here when the time comes to say goodbye everyday its hard and when I have to go in later, for example, now it is going to make me come in at 6 pm and I need to leave and go and pick her up and what am I going to do with that time? I have to prepare myself well, so I can see what I can do with her so she can feel good and in every way, every time I am going to be away from her it is hard for both of us…

Individual background: Building human capital and parenting experiences.
Parents viewed their limited human capital as a major constraint to raising children in

the U.S. A low level of education or English proficiency may limit immigrant parents' possibilities for access to good jobs or to interact satisfactorily with American society. Parents in this study were aware that these limitations not only affected their own adaptation to the new environment, but also the socialization process of their children. The majority of our participants reported limited formal education and low English proficiency and recognized that this made it difficult for them to be help their children succeed in school.

One Salvadorian father of a two-year-old girl spoke about this:

Yes, I believe that it [formal education] is the most important thing…It is good to go to school, not like us who we did not go, they [the children] want us to help them with their homework…but, how can I help?

Similarly, a Mexican mother of a four-year-old boy noted: "… sometimes, since one does not know the language, one cannot help."

Parents in this study were aware of these barriers for succeess; however, some parents were able to use these limitations as both a teaching opportunity for their children and a motivating factor for themselves. Many parents expressed regret for the low level of educational and used it as a teaching tool when interacting with their children. The story of a Mexican father who did not finish third grade reflected this point:

I tell him [his son] all the time that he needs to study hard, because he can't be like me, I want him to be better than I am…I did not study, never went to school, because my parents…well we were all working, I don't know what my parents were thinking… they never sent me off to school.

Other parents, despite their tight schedule and multiple obligations, made important efforts to build human capital, for example a father who works in the construction field and described the hard condition of his job stated:

If we had a better education… My education was through GED, but I missed out and that is what I am working on right now …. Give more advantage, many more advantages, to look for a better job. For example, at my work, I work outside for 8 hours in the cold or heat or for many more hours…and there are days when I don't want to, that I wake up and ajj!… I am studying now, what is English and after that I am going to start with my GED and after I am going to see if I can look for a career, something technical …

Another aspect of their individual backgrounds that the participating parents recognized as playing an important part in raising their child is their own experiences with their family of origin. Parents recognized that these experiences are important sources of influences in their current lives and parenting practices and stressed what they have learned from them. Many of participating parents shared painful memories of their experiences with their own parents, some of whom left them behind as they migrated to the U.S. in search of a better life. These separations were painful and may have disrupted attachment bonds with their own parents. Several parents shared spontaneously with the group their experiences of not being raised by their biological parents or feeling the pain of not being loved as something that have influenced their way of thinking about parenting. A Mexican mother of a three-year-old boy said:

…for example in my case I grew up without a dad, without mom because my parents came for the American dream. I stayed three months with my brother,

all my siblings were born there... I grew up as "why did my parents leave me behind?" we were five, all my siblings were brought here, all but me, and when I was fourteen my mom came back and my dad was already dead, I never met him and then I say is, "I did not have that, so I'll give that to my children," then I say that many parents make the mistake of coming here and leaving the children there, and it is not worth it, many parents are dedicated to work, not to their children, they are not dedicated to the children and the children grab gangs, walk in the streets… and they often do not realize that they leave school.

A similar situation of abandonment, this time for different reason, was narrated by a Mexican father of a three-year-old who said: "… my mother worked and left me alone, I stayed with my brothers… we took care between siblings."

These negative experiences with their own parents may speak of a difference between the participating parent's ideology (importance of strong ties in the family) and their psychological reality (not having a close relationship with their parents). As with most people, the ideal belief (e.g., familism) is often difficult to attain because of barriers or challenges (e.g., family is not close by) but it is still a worthy goal. Similarly, other circumstances described previously, such as the difficulty of sustaining meaningful routines or the lack of time to share with the family may also illustrated this dissonance by showing how participants' personal beliefs in the importance of familism contrast sharply with the difficulties they have in staying in touch with family.

Social background: Living here and there. Besides parents' current working conditions and their past experiences in their country of origin, participating parents also recognized that divergences in social conditions between their countries of origin and the U.S. influenced their own process of adaptation.

At the macro level, these social differences included economic opportunities, public health policies, and lifestyles. Although some parents talked with nostalgia about aspects of their lives back home, despite the difficulties and adversities they faced here the majority viewed the U.S. as the 'country of opportunities' with more advantages compared to their home countries. These perceptions might also reflect broader rural versus urban differences. From the parents' narrative, it is evident that many of the participants came from rural areas, which makes the process of adaptation to an urban center such as Washington, D.C., even more complex and disparate. For example, a Salvadorian father of a two-year-old girl said:

> … there we are like free birds…in the morning we can go and run, or walk
>
> freely….I live in the fields there… there we go to the *caserios*[2] and there is
>
> no problem…Here we are stock in a cage from work to the house, that's it…

The complexity of their lives as well as the trade-offs of both their experiences back home and in the U.S. was evident as parents explained how, despite having freedom and social support the opportunities were more limited in their home countries:

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[2] Rural area with a group of houses of very poor people

Like how over there it is poorer and you are concentrated on what your child

is going to eat tomorrow, am how I going to be able to pay for the house, the

shots…In El Salvador they do treat you with vaccines and that, yes, they

always treat you with vaccines they help you with all that, but not with the

education, they have something else to concentrate on, but not anything on

their children's education…it is more like for example I remember when I was

little "wash your vegetables…wash your hands before you eat" there were

more commercials about health than education…here it is more with

education…it is because it is so poor that the parents have to work more and

some kids have to leave school to help their parents, like my mom that only

completed up to ninth grade…and my dad only the sixth grade…and my dad

can't write well because he had to leave it, for work…only if you have money

in El Salvador you are going to school, if not you don't go.

These findings illustrate the ecological context in which the socialization

process occurs for the families in this study. As shown in Figure 1, the ecological

context includes resources and constraint of the environment, and influences the

expectations, activities and scripts of the broader context (socialization) and the

values, beliefs and practices of the family (cultural conditions). The dynamic

interaction among these three aspects (ecological context, socialization, and cultural

conditions) affects the daily family interactions. Parents in this study, for example,

perceived that their long working hours or low human capital constitute a barrier to

meet the expectation related to being a good parent. In addition, participating parents

recognized that differences in the macro conditions between their country of origin

and the U.S. have influenced their parenting practices. For example, by interacting

with the Head Start Center or attending parenting classes they have learned the

importance of including literacy activities in their interactions with their children.

Chapter 6: Discussion

In this qualitative analysis, I examined the process of socialization of Latino immigrant parents with their young children. I conducted seven focus groups with Latino immigrant fathers and mothers in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. Guided by Weisner's ecocultural theory (Weisner, 2002b; Weisner, et al., 2004) I explored the following research questions: (1) What beliefs and values do Latino parents use in socializing their children? (2) How are parents' beliefs and practices incorporated into the daily interactions with their children? (3) How does living in the U.S. affect this process?; and (4) What constraints, set by resources, characterize the context in which Latino parents socialize their children?

After analyzing the data following the principles of Grounded Theory, four distinct but interconnected themes emerged, which revealed a complex process of adaptation that includes both child's and parent's socialization processes: (1) Socialization contents; (2) Socialization strategies; (3) Mix and match: acculturation/enculturation; and (4) Resources and constraints. Parents in this study described the socialization process as being shaped by environmental and individual resources and constraints: Lack of time and human capital as well as aspects of their own family of origin together with macro differences between their place of origin and the U.S.

These findings suggest that participating parents are constantly adapting their parenting practices to fit in the American context and help their children succeed without completely losing their cultural background. This process shows parents as active agents in this adaptation process; they selectively chose values from both

cultures and created conditions for their coexistence, and actively used their personal

characteristics to overcome the constraints given by the context.

Coexistence of Two Worlds and Two Socialization Processes

The complex process of adaptation parents describe in this study is best

understood in term of the content (values and beliefs) Latino parents pass on to their

children and the specific strategies they use to teach these values and beliefs. In this

study, parents' intentional or selective adaptation of American and Latino values is

characterize by the *coexistence* of apparently contradictory values.

In line with previous research (Harwood, et al., 1995; Leyendecker, et al.,

2002; Parra Cardona, et al., 2009), mothers and fathers in this study talked about the

importance of *respeto* and strong ties to the family as characteristics of their culture

of origin; these Latino attributes however, were shaped by the expectations and

activities they experienced in the U.S. Parents are willing to adopt values and beliefs

they consider American, such as independence, in order to create a meaningful

context of socialization for their children. Participating parents seem to model their

expectations and values according to environmental demands, developing diverse

strategies to combine the promotion of family obligations and compliance to authority

('Latino' values) with personal choice of self-maximization ('American' values).

These findings support the view that cultures cannot be classified as 'collectivist' or

'individualist' or that socialization practices cannot be described as valuing either

relatedness or autonomy (Keller, 2003; Shweder et al., 1998; Tamis-LeMonda, et al.,

2008). Consistent with new thinking about cultural traditions a dichotomous

framework that describes cultures as individualistic versus collectivistic falls short in explaining how parents socialize their children.

In addition, these findings resonate with DuBois's well-known idea of double consciousness that brought to light the struggle that Black people face in "being part of two worlds" (DuBois, 1903/1989). While the Black experiences referred by DuBois correspond to another context and time period, Latino immigrant today may experience similar tensions of "living up to the expectations and norms of two worlds".

The efforts parents make to create a meaningful context that promotes positive adaptation for themselves and their children suggests the existence of a double process of socialization; while they are socializing their children, parents are being socialized themselves. For example, participating parents talked about the importance of teaching Latino cultural aspects in their daily interactions, which also included concrete practices such as preparing ethnic food and learning Spanish, at the same time as they try to teach them aspects they value from the receiving society. This child-oriented process occurs in parallel to parent's own developmental needs and goals shaped by their process of acculturation. This adaptation process for the participating parents involves a graduate process of losing some feature of their culture of origin and acquiring new features of the new culture, sometimes as replacement, but often in addition to them (Berry, 1992). These findings support the idea that culture is a dynamic concept that shapes and is shaped by parents' adaptation process, which in turn influences parents' socialization practices in a transactional way (Weisner, 2002a, 2002b).

The process of socialization occurs in a context characterized by the interaction among individuals and between individuals and the environment. These interactions are shaped not only by cultural practices, but also by ecological conditions, which include resources and constraints. Together these two aspects, culture and context, influence the activities, expectations, and day-to-day practices of families (Weisner, 1984; Weisner, et al., 2004).

Parents in this study described four significant context related challenges while raising their child in the U.S.: balancing work and family, building human capital, their own parenting experiences, and living in two words. Participating parents perceived these conditions as important difficulties in their parenting practices; they were constantly thinking about ways to overcome these barriers in order to create a meaningful socialization context for their children. In overcoming these barriers, in order to create a meaningful socialization context for their children, parents in this study said they used mainly two strategies: promoting a positive attitude in their children and investing highly in them.

Optimism and positive outlook. Despite the multiple stressors parents encounter, fathers and mothers in this study also believed that they had many opportunities to promote positive outcomes in their children. Participating parents spoke about optimism and self determination as important dispositions that helped them create teaching opportunities from the barriers they face. The disposition to look on the more favorable side of events has been conceptualized as a protective factor in immigrant families (immigrant optimism hypothesis) and a condition that may help

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explain the immigrant paradox (Kao & Tienda, 1995). Although findings linking optimism to later outcomes in immigrant families are not consistent (e.g., Ogbu, 1992), studies show that a positive attitude in life is related to better mental health and general well-being (for a review, see Peterson, 2000). Parents in this study consider it as an important dimension in the socialization process that will help their children succeed.

High parental investment. Another way parents felt they shaped the environment for their children's positive development despite the constraints of the context is by investing highly on their children. They may be not able to spend as much time as they would like with their children, but they are willing to sacrifice diverse aspects of their lives and put their children's wellbeing above their own. Participant parents revealed various ways in which they sacrificed for their children, for example, by staying in this country although they do not feel happy here (some parents even expressed their desire to go back 'home'), accommodating their work schedule (e.g., the mother worked at day and the father at night) in order to closely monitor their child, or waking up early after working late in order to ensure their child's attendance to Head Start. Parents used the example of their sacrifice and perseverance as important modeling techniques for their children to learn from these experiences, helping them to succeed in life. In line with previous research (Azmitia & Brown, 2002), the use of *consejos* is the main strategy parents in this study said they used to support this process. All participating parents spoke highly of the importance of communicating to their children the expectation they have for them.

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These expectations include learning from parents' limitations and strengths and taking advantage of the possibilities they have in this country.

These findings suggest that the way parents in this study cope with the constraints of the context may function as protective factors for their children's development. The exploratory character of this study, however, constrains the possibility of making definitive statements about the impact of these parental characteristics on children's outcomes.

In conclusion, the findings of this study show some of the diverse aspects of the socialization process of Latino immigrants in the U.S. These findings suggest that although cultural aspects are essential to understand human development, these factors solely cannot be used as the explanatory factors for all differences in parenting practices. Culture is dynamic and crystallizes in different ways according to conditions found at the individual (social and human capital), community (living conditions, social class, discrimination), and societal level (other resources and constraints). These aspects of adaptation seem to operate in conjunction to ethnic bounded values and beliefs (Lamont & Small, 2008; Roosa, Morgan-Lopez, Cree, & Specter, 2002). For example, research has shown that minorities inevitably encounter discrimination (García Coll, et al., 1996) and that discrimination experienced by ethnic minority children has adverse effects on a wide range of outcomes (Chao & Otsuki-Clutter, 2011). However, studies have identified a variety of moderators of the relationship between perceived discrimination and children adjustment, including racial identity (e.g., Chavous, Rivas-Drake, Smalls, Griffin, &

Cogburn, 2008), parenting style (Brody et al., 2006; Smetana, Campione-Barr, &

Daddis, 2004), and racial socialization (e.g., Berkel, et al., 2010).

Latinos, like people from any other ethnic groups, differ on a number of

important dimensions (place of origin, reason for migrating, SES, years in the U.S.)

and have to adapt to specific contextual characteristic that shape their everyday lives.

Thus, different pathways to adaptation depend on the combination of these varied

factors. Linking Latino immigrant parents' practices, behaviors or attitudes in the

U.S. exclusively to their 'Latino culture' might result in a superficial and weak

understanding of the complex process of adaptation.

Which of these factors has a stronger influence on parents' and children's

outcomes is still an empirical question that needs further examination. Qualitative

research like this study helps to understand significant aspects of a phenomenon from

the perspective of the population under study and poses research hypotheses that can

guide future studies.

Strengths and Limitations

In evaluating the findings and contribution of this study it is important to

acknowledge the strengths and limitations associated with it. An important

contribution to the field of parenting is the qualitative methodology used in the study.

Diverse scholars have criticized research done with underrepresented populations for

not being culturally sensitive and relying on preconceived ideas of what is normative

or ideal based on White middle class findings (García Coll & Szalacha, 2004; Knight,

Roosa, & Umaña-Taylor, 2009). Qualitative methodology, especially focus group

studies, have been recognized to overcome this limitation; letting people talk in their 'indigenous language' about their own experiences allows the emergence of the processes considered relevant for the participants, without the constrains of preexisting concepts (Daly, 2007; Umaña-Taylor & Bámaca, 2004). In this study Weisner's ecocultural model helped to shape the research questions and guide the analysis, but special attention was given in avoiding that the theoretical framework's assumptions control the themes emerged from the data.

A second strength of this research is the study of an understudied population. Research on immigrants tends to limit its samples to second-generation or mainly English speaking participants (Knight, et al., 2009). This study, on the other hand, included mainly first- generation immigrants who predominantly defined Spanish as their language of preference (89% of the sample presented these two characteristics). In addition, parenting research tends to include only mothers, neglecting the opinions or perceptions of the fathers (Cabrera & García Coll, 2004). By having a third of the sample composed by men, this study contributed to better understand the role of fathers in Latino children's socialization in addition to revealing important aspects of coparenting activities displayed by these families.

A third strength is related to the Latino component of the research team. Being an international student from Chile facilitated the process of creating a bond with the participants. Not only being able to speak to them in their native language, but also the fact of experiencing living away for our country of origin created a special connection. In addition, the research team was composed by two undergraduate research assistances with Latino backgrounds and fluent in Spanish.

They helped in the recruitment and following-up process. These conditions, together with the fact that focus groups are recognized as useful in establishing trust in hard-to-reach populations (Umaña-Taylor & Bámaca, 2004), may be the responsible in promoting that the participants felt comfortable and shared significant and sensitive information with the research team. It is worth mentioning that other qualitative research (ethnographies) done with Latino families, did not report this favorable reception from the participants (L. Burton, personal communication April 22, 2010). Perhaps, the unique combination of methodology and research team characteristics may have created the ideal conditions to achieve this favorable rapport.

On the other hand, this study faces three main limitations. First, as is common to qualitative research, this study has the limitation of being based on a small non-random sample. Furthermore, participants shared a particular characteristic, namely, having a child enrolled in a Head Start Center. This shared goal may make them more likely to be in direct contact with the American system of socialization, influencing their parenting practices. In addition, this sample may suffer from self-selection-bias; parents who participated in the focus group signed up voluntary; thus, they may be especially sensitive to parenting related issues. These sample characteristics restrict its generalizability to other Latino parents raising children in the U.S.

Second, this study relied exclusively on parents' perceptions. Observational data of parent-child interaction may have contributed with direct information about their daily routines and socialization practices. However, in light of this limitation, using narrative data may be beneficial in the sense that parents are able to share their

thoughts, explanations, and perspectives related to the phenomenon under examination. While sharing their stories in a narrative format, parents are able to express an elaborated account of their experiences, helping the researcher understand the how and why of the process under analysis.

Third, this study is essentially explorative. This characteristic limited the possibility to draw definitive conclusions based on these findings. Therefore, the results of this study are tentative and need to be further explored and developed through future research.

Chapter 7: Implications and Future Research

This study revealed that socialization practices in Latino immigrant families are influenced by various factors including, cultural, individual, and macro-level. In this sense, the findings are consistent with ecocultural views that human development is determined by family's ecological and cultural conditions, which in turn shape the expectations and activities of the individual's socialization process. In this section, I discuss the implication for research, policy and programs of the main findings of this study.

Socializing by 'Mixing and Matching'

Teachers, school counselors and other educators working with this population need to be aware and support parents in their double process of socialization. For example, they can assist Latino parents and children adaptation to their life in the U.S. by helping them combine their Latino values with specific behaviors and strategies that are valued in the American context. Thus, programs that encouraged biculturalism or bilingualism might be more effective because they are attentive to parents' socialization process and match the child's home experiences.

Contextual Variables

Although parents recognize constraints (e.g., limited human capital, long working hours), they also revealed diverse strategies they used to overcome these difficulties. This speaks to their intrinsic motivation to succeed, their desire to improve their own conditions by going to school, and their optimism for a better future for their children. Early childhood teachers and professionals can use this

information to tailor the intervention building on these perceived strengths instead of focus on their limitations. In addition, future research could test causal relationships between the specific parenting practices described by the participants and their children's outcomes exploring, for example, the protective role these strategies may have in child's development. In line with this idea, the data from this study will guide the construction of a culturally accurate measure to evaluate Latino children outcomes. This quantitative project is planned to be conducted in Dr. Cabrera's lab and will explore the effect of the parenting strategies highlighted by the parents in this study, such as optimism and use of *consejos,* on child social and cognitive outcomes. Additionally, aspects related to discrimination, which were not explored directly in this study, but mentioned by some fathers and mothers, require further examination. Previous research shows that a common reaction to experiencing discrimination is for parents to prepare their children for the negative or discriminatory experiences they may encounter as a result of their race (Killen & Smetana, 2009). Future research should explore how discrimination may shape Latino parents' socialization practices, examining, for example, how these parents prepare their children for a world of discrimination. Similarly, future research based on the findings of this study should include the exploration of parents' attachment to their own parents and resource and limitations set by the ecological context. According to participating parents' perceptions, both aspects may have an important influence on their parenting practices.

Fathers Matter

In this study fathers are engaged in the socialization of their children. Practitioners need to move away from a stereotype approach that characterizes Latino fathers as distant and uninvolved. Participating parents spoke of significant coparenting strategies and high emotional involvement from fathers. The majority of mothers and fathers reported sharing similar expectations and strategies in the rearing process although many of them do not live together. These findings support previous research that account for the important role of Latino fathers in their children's development (Cabrera, et al., 2006; Cabrera et al., 2011) and should be considered by researchers and practitioners as a motivator to include fathers in their studies and interventions. Fathers may have different ways to get involved in their children socialization process; thus, educators and policymakers should develop specific strategies for including fathers in their interventions (e.g., gardening, helping around the Center, or organizing sport activities).

Culturally Sensitive Measures

Latino parents in this study spoke about unique socialization practices; thus, researchers, practitioners, and educators evaluating Latino children need to incorporate these aspects into   assessments. For example, future research may use findings of this study to move away from the "deficit model" and explore alternative culturally based practices that come from a strength perspective. To achieve this goal, existing parenting surveys or questionnaires based on White middle-class American families have to be modified to reflect aspects of Latino families' practices that are relevant to the socialization process. In fact, based on the findings of this study, a

culturally accurate measure will be developed by the family Involvement Lab in the

University of Maryland. This survey will be used to examine the link between

parenting practices and child outcomes in Latino families living in the DC

Metropolitan area.

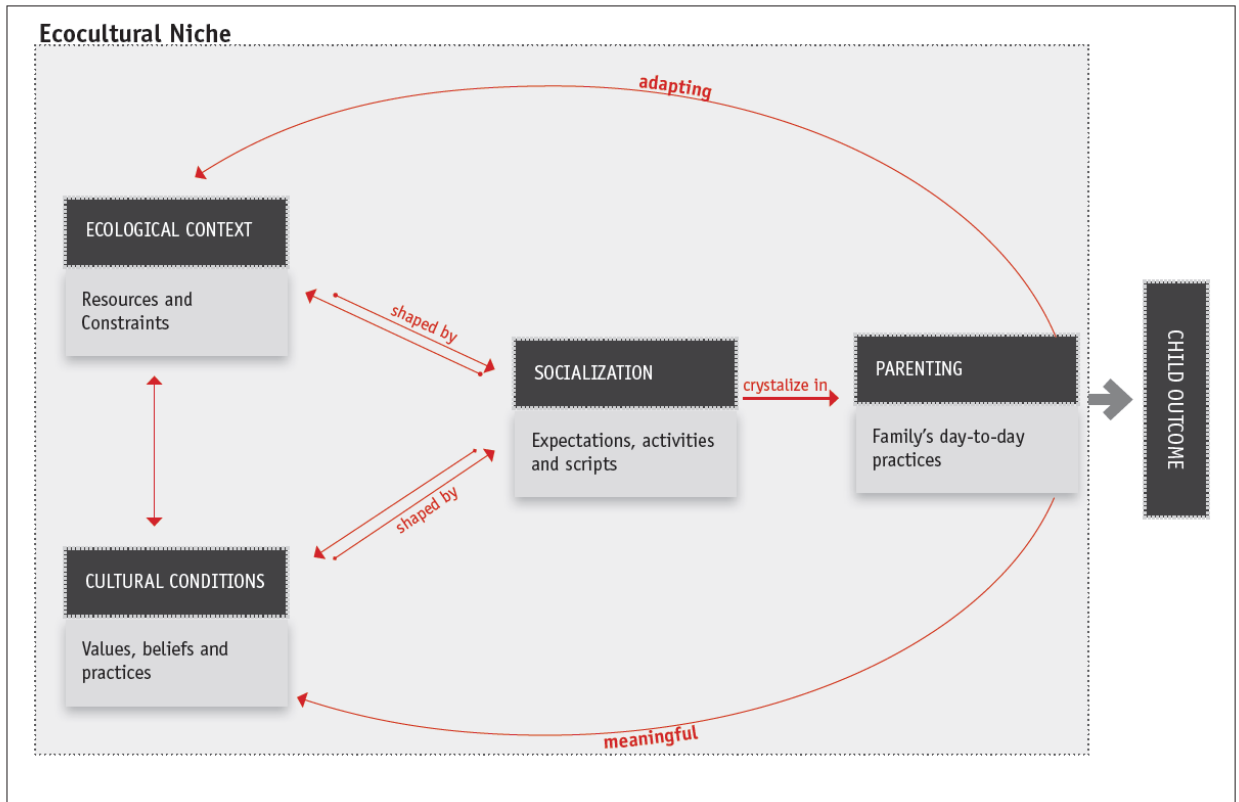# Figure 1. Graphic representation of Weisner's Theory

Figure 1: Graphic representation of Weisner's Ecocultural Model

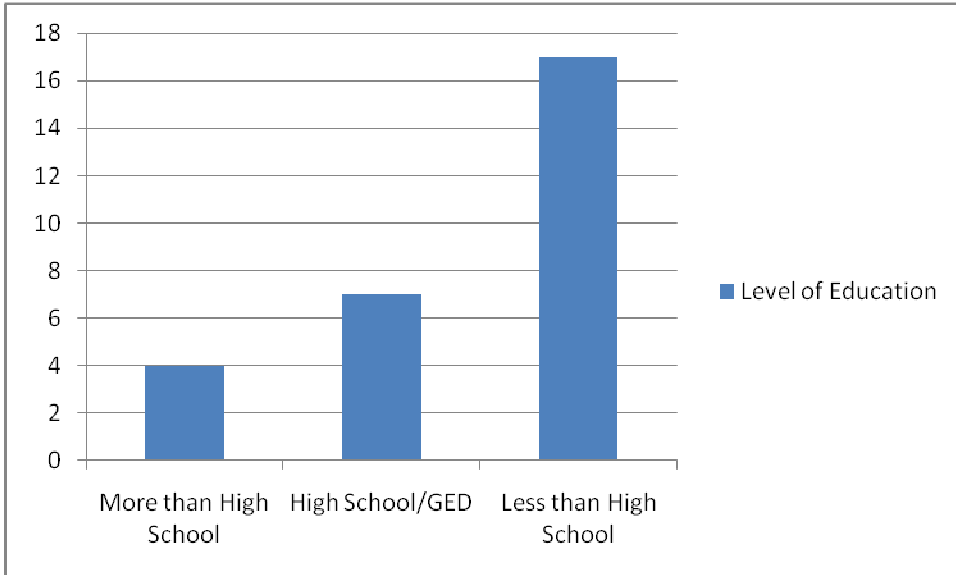Figure 2. Participants' levels of education by range

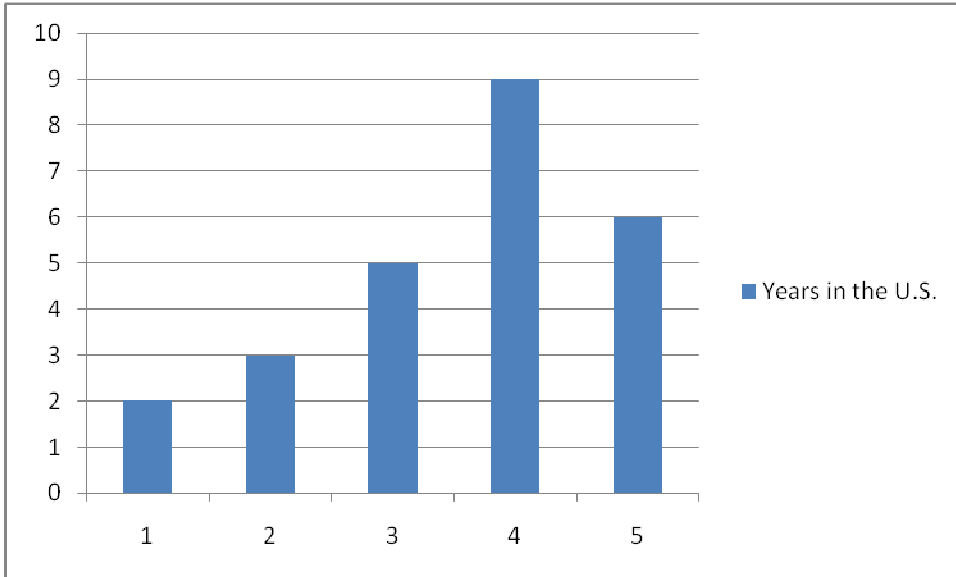Figure 3. Parents' years in the U.S. by range

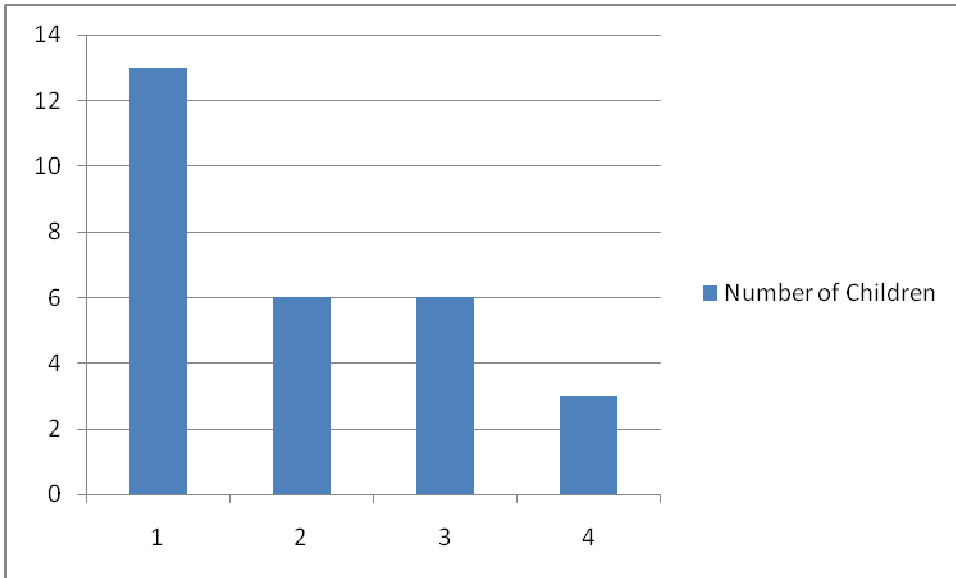Figure 4. Participants' number of children by range

Table 1

Participant's characteristics

Participant Characteristics (*N=28*)	
Number of mothers	20
Number of fathers	8
Participants' mean years in the U.S.	10.8* (Range = 5-22 years)
Married or cohabiting	53.5%
Spanish as primary language	90%
Mean number of children	2
Countries of origin	El Salvador (n=13), Mexico (n=9), Colombia (n=1), Peru (n=1), Nicaragua (n=1)
* Excludes native born participants (n=3)	

Appendix A

Focus Group Protocol

TOPIC 1: Good Parenting (Fathering-Mothering) Values/Practices

- What are –for you- the characteristics of a good father/mother? Give examples.
- How do you perceive your role as a mother/father?
    - What do you do with your children?
- What are some barriers to you being the mother/father you want to be?
- How did you learn to be a mom/dad?

TOPIC 2: Ecocultural family interview - Routines: Socialization

- Walk me through your day. Are these activities done with your partner/wife?
- How do you make sure you do these activities every day?
- How do you teach your children to follow routines?

TOPIC 3: Comparison Latino vs. Americans (acculturation/enculturation and adaptation)

- Every culture has its own unique ways of rearing children. Latino families value certain things and raise their children in ways that might be different from American families
    - What are the most important values that you teach your children?
    - Do you think American families teach their children different values from Latinos?
        - PROBE → What are these? Do you like them? Why or why not? What do you think of American fathers and Latino fathers?

TOPIC 4: Child Outcomes/expectations

- We have talked about the values that you think are important to teach your children, here we want to talk a little bit about HOW you teach your children…
- In most families, children have responsibilities at home such as cleaning up toys, and helping out around the house
    - How's it like in your family?
- Think about your child, what makes you most proud of your child? (non-normative outcomes)
- What are the goals and dreams you have for your child?

TOPIC 5: Extended kin – are they here? Social support -socialization
- Who do you turn to for support?
- We also know that families can get help and support from their religion/church/HSC

TOPIC 6: Neighborhood, community
- How many close friends and relatives live in your neighborhood?
- Does your neighborhood support you in any way? (Community support?)

TO END: Where do you see your child 20 years from now?

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