

Being *Bien Educado* in the United States:
Mexican mother's childrearing beliefs and practices in the context of immigration

by

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A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Approved December 2011 by the
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May 2012

ABSTRACT

This multiple case study examined Mexican mothers' beliefs on social and moral development in light of their adaptation to the United States. Super and Harkness' (1986, 2002) ecocultural framework and more specifically, the concept of the developmental niche, guided the analysis. Participants were five Mexican immigrant mothers living in the Phoenix metropolitan area with children between three and four years old. Using participant observation, mothers were shadowed during the day for a period of nine months and were interviewed four times. Additionally, a Q-sort activity on cultural values and a vignette activity were conducted. Evidence of continuity in the importance given to traditional beliefs such as being "*bien educado*" (proper demeanor) and showing "*respeto*" (respect) was found. However, the continuity on the teaching of cultural values was accompanied by changes in beliefs and practices. The traditional construct of a "*chipil* child" (a needy, whiny child) was connected to the idea that mothers somehow need to restrict how much affection, time and gifts they give to their children. This concern was in turn related to the higher access to consumption goods in the United States. It is argued that acculturation is lived differently by mothers, according to their educational attainment, use of expert advice and contact and knowledge with American mainstream culture.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my friend Mayra Marín for helping me transcribe a very long interview, to Amber Johnston, Gerald Blankson and Marco A. Cabrera for being my special messengers in the United States, to Cristina Ahumada for providing information about the participants she interviewed, to Hugo Marengo for reviewing my writing, to Josefa Cavazos for all her moral support, to Rolando Pérez y Vanessa Smith for providing me with space and resources at the Instituto de Investigaciones Psicológicas of the University of Costa Rica , to Iván Sancho for his encouragement and technical support, to Rafael Monge for providing me a physical space to work, to Armel Brizuela for his good job coding and to my parents for putting up with me all this time. Last but not least, I want to thank my advisor Angela Arzubiaga, for answering my e-mails so quickly and for her detailed reviewing and to my committee members for not giving up on me.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

From the moment of arrival to everyday in the new land, immigrants have to go through a process of adaptations. The absence of the immigrants' extended family as well as new cultural, geographic and legal features, create constraints and opportunities to which families need to adapt, producing in consequence, a particular form of making use of the new society's cultural resources. The immigration experience creates challenges for parents, who need to improvise new practices and beliefs which are adaptive to their every day experiences in their new home. This process of change has been labeled in many ways, including "adaptation" and "assimilation", but more commonly, "acculturation". Although there is considerable literature on the acculturation of immigrants in the US (Buriel & DeMent, 1997; Portes, 1997; Zhou, 1997), little has been written about how parents' beliefs on child development and childrearing practices change due to the process of immigration.

For some time, research on parents' behavior towards their children did not address cognitive dimensions (Miller, 1988). That is, parents' behaviors were studied without attending to the parents' explanations of behaviors. However, parents' beliefs need to be studied because they inform parental practices. According to Goodnow (1996), it is important to study parents' ideas because they are: 1) an interesting form of adult social cognition and adult development, 2) a way of helping to account for parents' actions, 3) a way of pinning down that amorphous term 'social context' and 4) a way of exploring cultural transmission or 'cultural change' if one considers the ideas held by two generations (Goodnow, 1996, p.315).

Although the family is not the only institution in charge of raising and educating children (peers, formal education institutions and the media also play a part) families traditionally have been the first and most important agent in preparing children to live in society. Thus, it is important to study parenting practices and beliefs. In particular, changes in beliefs and parenting practices of immigrant families need to be studied in order to understand the environments the immigrant parents are able to afford their offspring. This study is concerned with Mexican immigrant mothers' beliefs and practices on social and emotional development, and how these mothers are confronting the challenge of raising children within a culture different than their own.

I understand social development as the processes through which children and adolescents learn to relate to others and moral development as the development of understandings of ethical issues, or in other words, learning what is right and what is wrong and emotional development as the process of the expression of emotions. Since I am also interested in how parents think children learn ethics and social behavior, I am also interested in parents' theories of learning, which might be considered to be part of the domain of cognitive development.

Pioneer studies in child-rearing

Beatrice and John Whiting are two of the pioneers in the study of cultural variations of child rearing. Beatrice Whiting (1963) and her colleagues considered the ecological setting of the society under study and the subsequent form of subsistence (herding, agriculture, hunting, and gathering), as a determinant in how children are raised. In her classic *Six Cultures* book she wrote:

The ecology of the area determines the maintenance systems, which include basic economy and the most elementary variables of social structure. In other words, the type of crops grown, the presence or absence of herding, fishing, and so on, depend on the nature of the terrain, the amount of rainfall, the location of the area vis-à-vis centers of invention and diffusion. These basic economic conditions determine in part the arrangement of people space, the type of houses, and household composition. These in turn set the parameters for child rearing practices (Whiting, 1963, p.4).

LeVine, a student of the Whiting, expanded this idea by conceptualizing the “agrarian model” of human development. According to him, in contrast with the industrialized economies of the Western world, agrarian societies, evolve moral codes favoring filial piety and intergenerational reciprocity, gender-specific ideals of social and spiritual values rather than specialized intellectual ones, concepts of childhood learning that emphasize the acquisition of manners and work skills without competitive evaluations, and concepts of the adult years as the prime period for significant cognitive development (LeVine & White, 1986, p.3).

Cognitive anthropology approaches

From the field of cognitive anthropology comes the term “cultural models”, which has been used to refer to the study of parents’ beliefs. According to Holland and Quinn (1987) cultural models are “presupposed, taken for granted models of the world that are widely shared (although not necessarily to the exclusion of other, alternative models) by the members of a society and that play an enormous role in their understanding of that world and their behavior in it”

(Holland & Quinn, 1987, p.4). Cultural models have also been referred to as “ethnotheories” or “cognitive schemas”. But cultural models are not just ways of organizing cultural information; they also have a motivational force, establishing goals and desires (D’Andrade, 1992). Although culture in anthropology was traditionally considered a monolithic and undisputed entity, recent work on cultural models has put a spotlight on how innovation and resistance promote the creation and recreation of culture:

If our cultural-ideological milieu were unchanging, unambiguous, and internally consistent, there would be no need to study how social messages are appropriated by individual minds. Yet as we now recognize, conflicting messages, ambiguity, and change are found in all societies, even “traditional” ones (Strauss, 1992, p.8).

Even if we agree that there are cultural models that preexist parents’ own ideas about parenting, it is also necessary to address parents’ own contributions. Parents for example also build knowledge based on their own experiences with children, theirs and other’s (Goodnow, 2002). Valsiner and Litvinovic (1996) also emphasize the process of innovation in cultural beliefs. They posit that cultural models canalize parents’ understanding of the child but do not define the possibilities of parents’ reasoning. They believe that the process of creation of parenting beliefs is a combination of inductive and deductive processes. The application and elaboration of these models happen as a response to particular situations with children. For example, Harkness and Super (1992) studied American parents’ ideas on child development. In their study, they interviewed couples from the Boston Area, who were mostly of European descent. Two concepts were particularly salient for these parents: the idea of “stages” and

“independence”. For example, when a three-year-old boy attempted to help with chores, the mother understood this behavior as part of the child’s “stage” of establishing “independence”. In this way, the mother’s explanation of the boy’s action fell within a culturally appropriated manner. Although parents make use of cultural models that they somewhat share with other parents in their culture, the process of using these models might be unique, in what Valsiner calls the “personal culture”, that refers “to not only the internalized subjective phenomena (intra-mental processes), but to the immediate (person-centered) externalizations of those processes” (Valsiner, 2007, p. 62).. As Valsiner proposes, people do not simply reproduce culture, but construct it, producing “cultural novelty”.

The ecocultural model

Even though Whiting and Whiting are precursors of the ecocultural model, now different ecocultural approaches to the study of child-rearing exist. Berry and Poortinga (2006) define this approach in the following manner:

The ecocultural perspective is rooted in two basic assumptions. The first (the “universalist” assumption) is that all human societies exhibit commonalities (“cultural universals”) and that basic psychological processes are shared, species-common characteristics of all human beings on which culture plays variations during the course of development and daily activity. The second (the “adaptation” assumption) is that behavior is differentially developed and expressed in response to ecological and cultural contexts (Berry & Portinga, 2006, p.57).

Weisner, another student of the Whitings, understands culture “as shared cultural models lived out in practice, in the context of everyday routines of life” (Weisner, 1997, p. 182). In this approach, culture is not a fixed set of practices

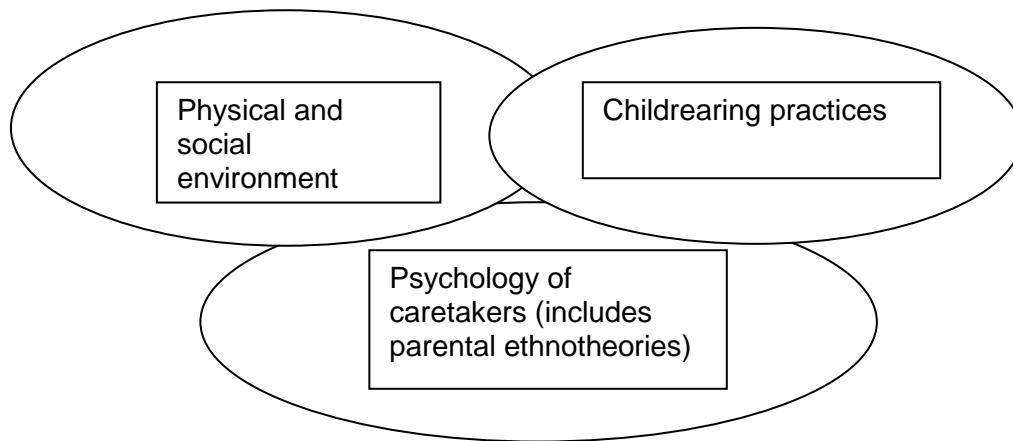
or beliefs that people hold throughout their life. Quite the contrary: this model emphasizes the particularities of the settings in which people live and how people adapt their cultural models to different settings. Through the observation of family routines, researchers can better understand what these adaptations are:

“Organizing a daily routine involves balancing ecology (resources, constraints), culture (beliefs, values) and the needs and abilities of individual family members” (Arzubiaga, Ceja & Artiles, 2000, p.98).

Super and Harkness’ work (1986, 2002) have also been situated within the ecocultural framework (Miller, 2006). As well as Whiting and Whiting, they have stressed the importance of contextual factors in children’s development. However, they have emphasized the importance of parental ethnotheories or parental cognitive models in affecting the context in which children develop. In order to explain how different systems interact, they have advanced the concept of children being raised in a “developmental niche”:

The developmental niche has three major subsystems which operate together as a larger system and each of which operates conditionally with other features of the culture. The three components are: 1) the physical and social settings in which the child lives; 2) culturally regulated customs of child care and child rearing; and 3) the psychology of the caretakers. These three subsystems share the common function of mediating the individual’s developmental experience with the larger culture (Super & Harkness, 1986, p.552).

Figure 1 The Developmental Niche



Included in the psychology of the caretakers are parental ethnotheories, which in turn, include beliefs on children’s nature and the needs of children, socialization goals, and beliefs about the best child-rearing strategies. The caretakers’ psychology “provides immediate structure to children’s development through the meaning it invests in universal behavior and processes” (Super & Harkness, 1986, p.557).

Consequently and for the purpose of this study, culture will be understood as an ever-changing process, and although recognizing the importance of cultural models and the existence of cultural “thematic continuities” (Super & Harkness, 1986), I will assume an ecocultural approach to the study of parental theories. More specifically, I will understand children’s development as occurring in a developmental niche and will assume that parental ethnotheories create an environment for children’s development.

European-American families' child-rearing practices and beliefs

American parenting practices are usually studied along with other cultures, and in contrast to them. Studies on American parenting practices and beliefs also tend to be studies of middle-class parents of European descent, excluding other ethnic and SES groups. For example, as part of the Six Culture research project, Fischer and Fischer (1963) found that European-American parents of Orchard Town, New England believed that children were born with “potential” or innate abilities.

In a more recent study, Harkness and Super (2006) used data from the International Study of Parents, Children and Schools (ISPCS) and the International Baby Study (IBS). Parents in this study were interviewed and asked to keep “parental diaries” (records of children’s routines). Analysis of data of the Dutch and American samples showed two contrasting themes: the concept of “special” or “quality time” (one-on-one) discussed by American parents and the idea of “family time” for Dutch parents. Accompanying these concepts, American parents preferred to spend time with their children on an individual basis, while Dutch parents tended to stress family activities, such as dinners. Additionally, and compared to parents from Australia, Italy, Netherlands, Spain and Sweden, American parents used more cognitive-related adjectives (such as “intelligent” or “cognitively advanced”) to describe their children. Similarly, Onagaki and Sternberg (1993) found that European-American gave more importance to cognitive skills (problem solving, verbal ability, creativity) than to non-cognitive characteristics (motivation, social skills and practical skills) in their understanding of intelligence, compared to immigrant parents from Cambodia, Mexico, the Philipines, Vietnam and Mexican-American parents.

Using a mostly European-American, middle-class sample from North Carolina, Reid and Valsiner (1996) found a set of interconnected themes in parents' ethnotheories of child rearing: consistency, praise, love, reward, and the goal of teaching between "right" and "wrong". The authors considered the importance given by parents to teaching children to distinguish "right" from "wrong" to be related to the strong moral religious emphasis in the USA. Wierzbicka (2004), based on a study of current English language use and old texts, also found a puritan origin to a current American practice: the use of the expression "good boy/good girl" as a form of praise. However, an interest in children's sense of morality is also common in Mexican parents, as will be discussed later.

Western culture has often been considered a culture based on individualistic values. Triandis (1996) developed the categories "individualistic" and "collectivistic" as a way to describe two major orientations of societies around the world. According to him, in individualistic societies, such as the ones found in Western Europe and North America, the self is construed as independent and autonomous, priority is given to personal goals, and social behavior is based on attitudes and enjoyment. In contrast, in "traditional" cultures and many of the cultures of Africa and Asia the self is defined as an aspect of the collective, personal goals are less important than collective goals, and norms, duties, and obligations shape social behavior.

However, a problem with the use of individualism and collectivism in the research on parenting is that it has not been well defined and it includes multiple cultural meanings (Kusserow, 1999). Many researchers now consider that all groups nurture both sociocentric and individualistic orientations in their children

(Pope Edwards, Knoche, Aukrust, Kumru & Kim, 2006). Additionally, although Western culture has long been considered a homogenous cultural block, there is mounting evidence that this is not the case (Suizzo, 2004), as has been shown in the previously reviewed Harkness and Super study.

Even within the same region American parents have shown more diversity in their beliefs than previously thought. In order to better understand American parents' ideas about individualism, Kusserow (1999) studied three communities in the New York area. The author observed the verbal and non-verbal socialization of children in four preschools. She also used semi-structured interviews with the parents of these children. She found that the lower-middle class, racially mixed parents of a community she calls South Rockaway taught their children not to rely on others, to keep to themselves, and to stand up for oneself. They did so by teasing their children, using humor and using a loud voice. Kuserow calls this form of individualism, "hard individualism". In contrast, the white upper-working class mothers of Beach Channel developed what Kusserow calls an "offensive individualism" understood as a group of values that include self-confidence, leadership, perseverance and self-determination important values. Finally, although the White and more privileged parents of Charter Hill parents were also concerned with self-confidence, autonomy, and individuality, they also talked of the importance of helping children to be aware of their feelings and desires. Interestingly, the more privileged parents, just like parents in the Six Culture study, saw their children as having "potential".

Kusserow's study serves to illustrate the variability of parenting practices and beliefs in such heterogeneous societies such as in the United States. As Hirschman (1997) warns, there are no "clear modal values of American society or

culture” (p.203). Patterns of child rearing in this country may vary according to geographic location, religious orientation (or lack thereof), socioeconomic position and ethnicity. But even if we know the socio-demographic characteristics of a group of parents, we still might not be able to predict what sorts of practices or ideas they might have. Social sciences have tended to equate culture with ethnic labels (Hardwood, Handwecker, Schoelmerich & Leyendecker, 2001; Rogoff, 2003), and have used an essentialist conception of culture, “treating culture as a monolithic entity” (Rogoff, 2003, p. 41; Arzubiaga, Artiles, King & Murri, 2009). Yet, culture can be seen more as a “shifting continuum of shared commonality among individuals” (Hardwood et al, 2001, 219). Additionally, in every culture people participate in multiple communities, and therefore, they might have different experiences based on these participations.

Child-rearing practices and beliefs of Mexican parents living in Mexico

Studies on Mexican parents’ child rearing practices and beliefs have been limited in number and scope (Eistenou, 2004, Solís-Cámara & Díaz, 1991). Of those existing, some have studied the parenting practices of indigenous communities (Cervera & Méndez, 2006; Romney & Romney, 1963). However, since the population of immigrants I will be studying is mostly *mestizo* (of mixed indigenous and Spanish descent) here I will only review articles with *mestizo* participants.

As part of a two-year ethnographic study, Saucedo Ramos (2003) explored the meaning of schooling for working-class parents in Mexico City. She interviewed and visited parents, adolescents and grandparents and administered a questionnaire to 320 families in order to obtain socio-demographic data. Parents reported that their children have more opportunities for academic

advancement than they personally had growing up in the 70s, when very few people attended college in Mexico. The importance given to schooling by these parents and the higher expectations for their children's education developed at a time of great expansion of formal education in Mexico. Saucedo considers that the parents she interviewed share a "family support for individual effort" cultural model. Although parents made sacrifices in order to support their children economically, allowing them the possibility of finishing their studies, they also believed it was the adolescents' responsibility to do well in school. In order to instill the importance of schooling, these parents used moralizing narratives (*consejos* or advice).

In another study with young, middle-class, urban parents, Eistenou (2004) asked the participants how their own parents raised them and how in turn they were raising their offspring. Parents reported that growing up receiving orders and *consejos* were important forms of communication. Although some of the interviewees gave orders as a way to discipline their children, two thirds of these parents mentioned that they relied less on them and that they were interested in communicating more with their children. Although the study is based only on one generation's report (the second generation), it does point to possible changing cultural practices. Eistenou believes these changes in parental practices are related to changes in the democratization of the political system in Mexico.

As it has been discussed, Mexico has been experiencing important cultural and social changes. This should not be surprising, since all cultures change, although the speed of that change may vary (Segall, Dasen, Berry & Poortinga, 1999). As Kağıtçıbaşı (2005), has pointed, urbanization and globalization have created changes in families around the world. Social and

cultural changes such as increased educational and economic opportunities for women, reduction in family size, compulsory education, migration to cities and the impact of the media may impact traditional values in child rearing. Therefore, generational changes in parenting are expected. Additionally, in the case of Mexico, the long history of Mexican migration towards the neighboring United States has influenced the sending communities through the gifts, remittances, stories, and new behaviors brought by immigrants to their native land (Reese, 2002). This makes studying changes due to immigration a complex problem because it is difficult to determine which changes are the products of immigration, and which are the products of ongoing social changes in the culture of origin.

Childrearing practices and beliefs of Mexican and Mexican-American families in the United States

The absence of the immigrants' extended family, as well as external forces such as new cultural, socio-demographic, and legal features, create constraints and opportunities to which immigrant families need to adapt, producing in consequence, a particular form of making use of both the old and the new society's cultural resources. However, most research on Mexican immigrant families in the U.S. does not focus on the changes, but on the continuation of cultural practices.

In her *Con Respeto* book, Valdés (1996) describes an ethnographic study of ten Mexican immigrant families living in an undisclosed United States-Mexico border town. With respect to the parents' perception for their children, Valdés found that while children were considered important by their parents, family life did not center on the children. Although babies were the center of attention,

especially when they showed a new *gracia* (trick), this pattern of expecting children to display knowledge or abilities did not continue later. In this sense, she considers these parents to be more “household-centered” than “child-centered”. Additionally, children were believed to learn by doing, and no explicit attempts at teaching them were observed. Furthermore, she found that for parents “*educación*” meant more than “education”, including both manners and moral values.

In another study with Mexican mothers of young children, Arcia and Johnson (1998) turned their attention to mothers’ values for their children and their understanding of how the children developed those values. The mothers were interviewed using a Q-sort activity. It was important for the participants that their children had a sense of right and wrong, and that they were good students, obedient, responsible, and respectful. Direct instruction was the most cited cause for the development of desirable characteristics (“*uno tiene que decírselos*”). Mothers reported using verbal instructions, scolding, reprimanding and rebuking, as well as using profane language, shouting, threatening, and spanking. Children were viewed as “inactive learners” and the mothers equated being able to understand instructions with obeying. Delgado-Gaitán (1994) reports the use of *consejos* (advice) by Mexican mothers’ as a way to guide their children’s behavior and to improve their academic achievement. Arcia, Reyes-Blanes and Vasquez-Montilla (2000) found that Mexican and Puerto Rican mothers of young children with disabilities held traditional values such as “having a sense of right or wrong”, “being respectful”, being responsible, “wanting to better himself” and being obedient” as more important than “being independent”, “being clear and orderly”, “cooperating with others”, “wanting to know what is happening and why

things happen” and “trying to be the best of the first one”. The effect of disability did not have a strong effect on these values.

With the intention of studying perceptions of child development Delgado and Ford (1998) interviewed low-income Mexican-American families with a child attending preschool (six of the mothers were first generation). These mothers considered of vital importance for their children to maintain family closeness, and being “*bien educado*” (well brought-up). Some developmental changes important to these parents were: learning to walk, learning to talk, not to depend on anybody, trusting themselves, *convivir* (*live with others*), being *bien educado* and to show *respeto* (respect). Parents perceived these changes to be attained “naturally”, as in Valdés’ study. Parents did not see themselves as teachers of their children.

Contrary to English-speaking parents in the US, Reese, Balzano, Gallimore and Goldenberg (1995) in their ethnographic study with 32 families also found that parents of Mexican descent did not necessarily make a distinction between schooling (academics) and upbringing (morals). This is exemplified in the concept of *educación*. In terms of strategies used by parents to teach right and wrong, they used “dramatic examples”.

As has been pointed out before, most studies on Mexican and Mexican-American childrearing have implicitly assumed there is continuity in the practices of Mexican parents in the United States. They have emphasized those aspects that seem more particular of Mexican (and Latino) families in contrast to non-Mexican families. In the previous studies, parental practices such as *consejos* and the cultural model of *buena educación* are presented as remaining unchanged even after immigration to the United States. Even if this might be the

case, it is also necessary to study what has changed. For example, Reese (2002), using an ecocultural framework, explored how changes in settings resulted in changes in parenting practices. Two sets of families were compared: immigrants from Mexico living in the US and the immigrants' siblings who remained in Mexico. For the US project, she used a subset ($n=21$) of the total families who participated in the UCLA Latino Home/School Project. She found that both groups supported the importance of family relationships. However, parents living in Los Angeles monitored their adolescent children more closely than parents in ranchos and small towns in Mexico. Maybe because of the monitoring, children in Mexico rated their parents as less strict than children in Los Angeles.

Although some research exists on parenting practices and belief systems of parents of Mexican descent, especially in the area of socialization goals, discipline practices, and academic expectations for their children, there has not been much research on parents' explanations on *how* children develop, being Arcia and Johnson (1998) the only ones interested in the latter. Furthermore, most research has not dealt with how these parents' practices play against the backdrop of immigration. However, raising children might become more difficult for parents of minority groups and who do not reside legally in the new country, as they face challenges they would not encounter in the country or origin.

Changes in parental beliefs and childrearing practices

Acculturation at the individual level "refers to changes that an individual experiences as a result of contact with one or more cultures and of the participation in the ensuing process of change that one's cultural or ethnic group is undergoing" (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2006, p.34). Recent approaches on

individual acculturation have borrowed from clinical and social psychology theory, such as the work on stress and coping, I will not refer to this model because of its medical orientation, but I will review what the literature refers to as “acculturation orientations”.

The term acculturation has become synonymous with assimilation, although this is only one of the possibilities (Segall, Dasen, Berry & Poortinga, 1999). As Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver (2006) define it, acculturation orientation “refers to how an immigrant combines (or does not combine) the culture of origin and the country or settlement” (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2006, p.38). There are two main models of studying acculturation orientation: a unidimensional model, which opposes cultural maintenance and cultural adaptation and a bidimensional model, which understand these dimensions as separate.

The traditional perspective on acculturation has been the assimilation perspective (Zhou, 1997), in which immigrants gradually and irreversibly abandon their old behaviors and cultural patterns to adopt new ones. This pattern has historically been considered in the United States as positive and adaptive. However, based on what has been called “the second generation decline”, where the longer the US residence, the worse the outcomes for immigrants in terms of school performance, aspirations and behavior (Zhou, 1997), there are reasons to question the assimilation model.

Multiculturalists have rejected the idea that immigrants have to melt with the unified “non-ethnic” core of American society, while structuralists have stressed the difficulties that immigrants face in adjusting, “because of inherent conflicts between the dominant and subordinate groups in the hierarchy” (Zhou, 1997, p.983). However the latter perspective does not account for the differential

rates of success for different groups and different individuals in each group (Zhou, 1997).

As a way to describe the different possible patterns of acculturation in different ethnic groups, bidimensional models of acculturation have been developed. One of the most popular bidimensional models in acculturation orientation is Berry's model (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2006). Berry proposes four basic strategies in acculturation: assimilation, separation, integration and marginalization (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2006; Segall, Dasen, Berry & Poortinga, 1999). The first two are either-or positions: in the *assimilation strategy* the immigrants do not want to maintain their previous cultural identity and interact without restrictions with different groups, while in the *separation strategy* the immigrants hold to their cultural identities and avoid interaction with other groups. The *integration* and *marginalization* are all-or nothing strategies. While the integrated individual keeps some level of cultural identity, she/he also participates in the larger social network, while marginalization occurs when there is no maintenance of the cultural identity and little interest in interacting with other groups.

Similarly, Buriel and De Ment (1997) have defined four acculturation styles for Mexican immigrants: bicultural orientation, Mexican orientation, marginal orientation and Euro-American orientation. However, these authors believe that biculturalism is the most common strategy followed by Mexican Americans: "biculturalism, which is the simultaneous adoption of two cultural orientations, arose originally in response to conflicting cultural demands but is now part of what constitutes the ethnic minority culture" (Buriel & De Ment, 1997, p.171).

From a more sociological perspective, Zhou and Portes (Zhou, 1997) have proposed the term “segmented assimilation”, a middle-range theory that concerns why different patterns of adaptation emerge. According to this theory there are three possible paths for the new immigrant in the United States: upward mobility (acculturation and economic integration into middle class America), downward-mobility pattern (assimilation and parallel integration into the underclass) and economic integration into middle-class America (lagged acculturation and deliberate preservation of the culture of origin values and maintenance of social networks).

From research with Mexican families in the United States, there is evidence that with time, Mexican immigrant families develop more “American” type of practices, such as individualistic-oriented socialization practices (Delgado-Gaitán, 1994). However, Foner (1997) believes that when parents immigrate, they do not simply assimilate, but rather, create a new culture that is distinct from their culture of origin and the host culture; what Foner calls a process of “creolization”. As previously discussed, other researchers have found “biculturalism” in Mexican immigrant families, or the simultaneous adoption of two different cultural models, to be a response of conflicting demands from home and the mainstream culture (Parker & Buriel, 1998).

At least partial empirical support for Foner’s cultural hybridity idea or “creolization” is found in Leyendecker, Harwood, Lamb and Schölmerich’s (2002) study with European American and Central American mothers who immigrated to the United States. They found that although Central American mothers endorsed long-term socialization goals related to proper demeanor (or *buena educación*), they also emphasized some individualistic values associated with economic

success. The authors believe that the inclusion of the latter might be considered an adaptation to the conditions and demands of the new country. Similarly, Fuligni and Yoshikama (2002) believe that because immigrant families feel less secure about their social and economic situation in their new environment, they tend to stress the development of instrumental skills that can secure the economic survival of the family. Consequently, immigrant families tend to place more emphasis on their children's academic success than American-born parents as a way to secure their children's social mobility (Fuligni & Yoshikama, 2002). Reese, Balzano, Gallimore, and Goldenberg's (1995) work with Mexican families of rural origin in Los Angeles suggests that Mexican families did not abandon values associated with what LeVine and White (1987) have called the "agrarian socialization model". To the contrary, their emphasis on *buena educación* based on respect to elders and morality, is adaptive to the new environment by supporting school achievement.

From the previous discussion, it is clear that the process of immigrants' adaptation to the U.S. is not necessarily linear and does not necessarily require the abandonment of previously held beliefs and practices. Furthermore, maintaining some traditional beliefs and practices might even be adaptive and beneficial for the families. However, and as discussed previously, it is hard to disentangle the effects of migration (acculturation) and immigrants' experiences of modernization in their countries of origin. Therefore, when studying the process of acculturation, it is necessary to inquire about immigrants' life previous to immigration

Common sense psychology and scientific psychology

Laypeople's ideas about human behavior have been called in different ways in the literature: "ethnotheories" (Harkness, & Super, 2006), "common sense psychology" (Kelly, 1992), "folk psychology" or simply "beliefs". For the purpose of this study I will use the terms "beliefs" and "theories" interchangeably. My definition of "belief" is similar to Sigel and McGillicuddy-De Lisi's (2002) definition: a belief is an organized understanding and construction of experience. Although beliefs are basically cognitions, they do have an affective component, and like cultural models, have a motivational force because they orient actions. Furthermore, I maintain with Sigel and McGillicuddy-De Lisi that beliefs can be implicitly expressed in actions or practices. Harkness and Super call parents' understandings ethnotheories, because they are organized into larger categories that are mutually dependent. As mentioned previously, for Harkness and Super, parental beliefs are part of the caretakers' psychology, one of the subsystems that form the child's developmental niche.

But how are beliefs on the behavior of others different from the psychological knowledge produced in academic institutions? Common sense psychology has been defined as "common people's ideas about their own and other person's behavior and about the antecedents and consequences of that behavior" (Kelley, 1992, p.4). From this perspective, every person constructs his or her own theories in order to explain other people's behaviors. But according to Gelman, Coley, and Gottfried (1994) a commonsense theory is not as detailed, explicit, and formal as a scientific theory. Additionally, laypeople's theories lack coherence and systematicity. Having said that, one can also find connections between scientific and non-scientific theories:

We are all members of the common culture and users of the common language long before we become scientific psychologists. Insofar as we address our scientific efforts to the behavioral phenomena encompassed by common terms and beliefs, they inevitably influence the concepts and theories we develop for our scientific purposes (Kelley, 1993, p.4).

By analyzing Japanese texts on parenting advice from the mid 17th until the 20th century Kojima (1996) found that not only the advice given to parents changed throughout history, but that there were recurrent topics. These topics were not dissimilar to topics that have been in the discussion of childrearing practices in Western culture. Kojima introduces the concept of “ethnopsychological pool of ideas” or EPI, as a way to explain the sometimes contradictory ideas that have existed in any given culture. He believes that it is “from this pool of the complex of knowledge-practices-sentiments-values, that naïve folk theories, expert opinion, and even academic theories all seem to have been constructed” (Kojima, 1996, p. 386). Therefore, he sees a connection between folk psychology and academic psychology, except for the fact that naïve theories tend to be more context-bound than academic ones.

Having said that, it is my position that at any given point in time and geographical space, some ideas hold more power than others. In this sense, the development niche model by Harkness and Super does not examine power relations in the development of parental ethnotheories (Spratt, 2002). For example, since the discovery of bacteria and viruses, doctors and laypeople in Western cultures have attributed many diseases to the presence of germs in the body, leaving other explanations such as the effect of the “evil eye” on the fringes of mainstream culture. Even though born in academia, the “germ theory” has

caught up and has become the standard explanation for many diseases. The same process could occur with theories on child development, where some theories are held as more “truthful”. Something important to is the process of mutual influences between scientific theories and ethnotheories. Although scientific psychological theories are based on layperson’s psychology, they also have an effect on the public through the media.

However, there is still not an established paradigm on how people create theories, and more specifically, parental ethnotheories (Sigel & McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 2002). Although it is difficult at this stage of the study of parental theories to explain how these theories are formulated, I will follow Valsiner and Litvinovic’s (1996) idea that parental reasoning is the product of both inductive and deductive processes:

A specific instance of conduct is being generalized by introducing a general meaning (or belief) into the discourse. A general statement about children is either directly imported (from proverbial knowledge, child-care manuals, grandmother’s sayings, what my neighbor said the other day, etc.) or constructed on the spot, but always on the basis of the playoff between a concrete event brought up at the specific moment to serve some purpose in the dialogue and a set of preexisting general beliefs (Valsiner & Litvinovic, 1996, p.71)

According to Valsiner and Litvinovic, although parents make use of cultural models, these models work as canalizing but not determining parents’ understandings of children’s behaviors. Parental ethnotheories are both shared and negotiated with other members of a community (Greenfield, Trumbull, Keller, Rohstein-Fisch, Suzuki, Quiroz, 2006). Parents also make use of their daily

experiences to create inferences, which are in turn, connected to their cultural models.

However, the speed of changes in parental ethnotheories might vary. Greenfield, Trumbull, Keller, Rohstein-Fisch, Suzuki and Quiroz (2006) believe that in subsistence-based ecologies ethnotheories change slowly because they are transmitted from generation to generation, but that in complex societies, the process is faster because there is more horizontal negotiation. Additionally, in the latter, families use external resources such as the media and experts to inform their practices.

Expert advice and changes in parental theories

From Rousseau and Locke to Dr. Spock, philosophers, psychologists and doctors in Western culture, have written on childrearing, either for other academics or for the general public. Although the self-help literature might seem like a new phenomenon, there is a long historical record of “experts” advising parents on the “best” childrearing methods (Hardyment, 2007; Kojima, 1996).

Of course, this advice has constantly shifted. In the United States, between 1900 and 1980 there was a dramatic increase in the number of articles about children’s cognitive development (Wrigley, 1989). In the first decades of the 20th century, medical advice directed to increase children’s survival was predominant. But by the 1930’s there was an increase in articles oriented to children’s emotional and social development. This was also the beginning of an interest in children’s intellectual development. This interest is related to the creation of day care centers, first for the children of the poor, and then for the middle-class children. The emphasis on cognitive stimulation that continues to this day, might be related to the contemporary American parents’ need to provide

children with cultural capital (Wrigley, 1989) as they need to compete for jobs that require specialized skills.

As shown, throughout the 20th century American parents especially parents who were able to read were exposed to psychology and popular psychology (its watered-down version). Additionally, American middle class parents have spent many years in academic institutions and therefore, have been exposed to teachers' ideas and practices on child development and learning. In this sense, American middle class parents' theories are not completely "naïve" or "folk" in its traditional sense. On the other hand, it is also possible that academic theories on child development are based on middle class American families' practices and beliefs. This would put European American middle class parents' ideas closer to more academic theories than for other ethnic groups and social classes in the United States. In a study about knowledge on infant development, European American parents showed more 'knowledge" about children's development than South American and Japanese immigrants (Bornstein & Cote, 2004) or at least, a better alignment with official pediatric knowledge. Therefore, and with the risk of overgeneralizing and stereotyping, for the rest of this study I will refer to the combination of psychology, popular psychology and White middle class families' practices and beliefs, as "mainstream" childrearing practices and beliefs, in contrast to non-dominant beliefs and practices found in non-conventional, countercultural, working-class, minority or immigrant families.

The power of mainstream ideas about families and parenting is so strong that minorities might feel deficient when compared to them. For example, in a study conducted by Pyke (2000), Korean and Vietnamese second generation

college students mentioned how they had wished they had received a more emotionally close, communicative, and less strict parenting than what they received. Interviewees described this as American parenting and learned about it from TV programs such as “The Brady Bunch” .This points to the importance of studying the effect of “mainstream” ideas on immigrant parents’ understandings of their children’s development.

But before comparing Mexican immigrant mothers’ theories in contrast to mainstream American beliefs about childrearing, it is important to remember that not all Mexican immigrants share the same or even similar experiences. Mexican immigrants come from different socioeconomic strata, have different legal status, and experience different levels of acculturation (Harwood, Leyendecker, Carlson, Asencio, & Miller, 2002). These different experiences might explain diverse notions of child rearing. For example, it has been found that mothers’ SES and particularly, their educational attainment have an important role in the kind of beliefs mothers express (De Castro, Seidl de Moura ,& Bornstein, 2003; LeVine, Miller, Richman & LeVine,1996). Therefore, it might be possible that a highly acculturated upper-middle class immigrant mother with a college education might find herself having somewhat different values compared to a recent immigrant with less schooling and from a rural area.

The role of advice in the construction of parental ethnotheories

Traditionally, advice for parenting has been in the form of transmission of beliefs and practices from the older generation to the new one. However, with modernity this continuity was broken probably due to the change in status of women, the physical distancing of grandparents from their adult children and immigration, which created a more diversified pool of ideas on childrearing (Brim,

1959). But of course, new developments on child development in the developed world contributed to the belief that there might be better ways of rearing children than the culturally prescribed (Brim, 1959).

Schools, non-for-profit organizations, and governmental agencies might have an important role in parents' construction of theories and in their childrearing practices. Some of these agencies even have as their goal to change parents' practices. For example United Way and the Ad Council, along with other agencies, have created the *Born Learning* program that has aired radio and TV public announcements in English and Spanish. Their goal is to teach parents and caregivers of young children "easy and fun ways to support young children's learning" (<http://www.bornlearning.org>). The U.S. Department of Education has developed the *Helping Young Child Series* pamphlets that encourage parents to make their children better students and citizens (Baez & Talburt, 2008). From a public policy perspective, these initiatives, although using a language of support and partnership, might constitute a form of regulating, or in the words of Foucault, of "governing" parents (Baez & Talburt, 2008). Implicit in these sorts of initiatives there seems to be an idea that parenting is not a relationship, but an occupation and that "amateur parents need specialist help" (Edwards & Gillies, 2004, p. 629).

Parents are more often in contact with teachers, than any other "specialist" or "experts" in child care, such as doctors and psychologists. Teachers, as "school experts" (Keogh, 1996) provide advice to parents and even organize "training" activities for parents, such as parenting classes. Although teachers may use a language of collaboration, the collaborative, participatory teacher or child is not an autonomous actor who exists without governing

patterns. The expertise of the professional is ordered through sciences of education that increasingly provide a calculated, systematic rationality in which to improve schools, order community participation, and guide family development (Popkewitz, 2002, p. 126).

Summarizing, although some research exists on parenting practices and belief systems of parents of Mexican descent, especially in the area of socialization goals, discipline practices, and academic expectations for their children, there has not been much research on parents' explanations of *how* children develop, being Arcia and Johnson the only ones interested in the latter. Furthermore, most research has not dealt with how these parents' practices play against the backdrop of immigration. Only Reese's work with parents from both sides of the border has examined these adaptations, although she did not explore parents' ideas on child development. The present study will contribute to the understanding of the process of cultural change in parenting practices and beliefs about moral and social development by asking mothers about how moving to the United States has affected their parenting.

Based on the review of the literature, some of the features that would need to be taken into account when studying immigrant parents' changes in their belief system: parents' place or origin (rural or urban), parents' educational attainment and experience with school system, parents' family of origin's childrearing patterns, parents' degree of experience with children, parents' occupation in Mexico and in the U.S., place of settlement in the United States, number of years living in the U.S., familiarity with the American school system, access to English-speaking media (mediated by English language proficiency and degree of literacy), exposure to expert advice (attendance to parenting

classes, meetings with teachers and school personnel), neighborhood characteristics, legal status in the U.S., availability of family and community support, and their own children's characteristics. As previously discussed, it might not be enough to use ethnic labels in order to describe parents' parenting practices (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003) and the study tries to illustrate the within-group variation of Mexican parents' beliefs and practices.

Chapter 2

METHOD

Design

The study uses a case study design, understood as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (Yin, 1994, p.13). According to Yin (1994), case studies are especially suited for research, which requires answers to how and why something happens and when the context in which it happens seems of particular importance. Therefore, a case study design is appropriate to answer the question of how immigrant mothers construct their theories of child development in the context of their immigration to the United States.

First wave of data collection

Participants. Part of the data of the five participant mothers in the present study comes from the Programa Educando Niños (PEN) project, directed by Angela Arzubiaga, Eugene García (Arizona State University) and Bruce Fuller (University of California at Berkeley) while other data were collected by the author. The PEN project goals were to study the socialization goals of mothers of Mexican descent. Participant families of the PEN project were living either in the Phoenix metropolitan area or the Bay Area in California. Ten of the families resided in Arizona, and 14 lived in the San Francisco Bay Area in California. All families had a child between 3 and 4 years old. Mothers were recruited through ads placed at centers, which provided services to immigrants, early childhood programs, schools, and universities. Other mothers were recruited through references from other participants (snowball technique). The study used a purposive sampling strategy. The sample included both children attending

preschool and children who were not attending preschool, both second generation and third generation children and the same number of girls and boys. The purpose and general procedure of the research was verbally explained either in Spanish or in English, depending on the preference of the mother. Consent forms were filled out by the mothers and assent was asked orally from the children. All mothers received \$125 at the beginning of the research and another \$125 when data collection ended.

Data collection. Data collection methods of the PEN project included participant observations and structured and semi-structured interviews of 27 families. Participant observations of families took place over the course of 9 months and included a minimum of 12 home visits. The visits lasted an average of two hours. The fieldworkers included native Spanish speakers who introduced themselves as researchers or research assistants from their universities. I personally collected data for 5 of the 10 families contacted in Arizona. Fieldworkers would often participate helping mothers with chores and taking care of the children when necessary. Field workers shadowed families as they engaged in their everyday practices at home and in their communities.

Interviews. Mothers were interviewed three times for the PEN project. The first interview inquired about family composition, daily routines and mothers' perceptions of their neighborhoods. The second interview centered on mother's families of origin's practices and the third one on mothers' communication with teachers and the school (copies are found in the appendix). The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed.

Q-sort activity. Mothers were asked to do a Q-sort activity on their socialization goals for their children. They were given a list of ten values mothers might have

for their children: being *despierto* (curious), being independent, respectful, involved in American culture, involved in Mexican culture, being modest, family obligation, being affectionate, being obedient and being *bien educado* (proper demeanor). The mothers were provided with the words written in pieces of cardboard and had to rank the values in terms of their importance from highest importance to lowest importance. They also had to provide a definition for each value. Their responses were then transcribed.

Vignettes. The purpose of the use of this technique was to obtain information that might not be obtained by direct questioning. Vignettes are useful instruments for eliciting cultural norms from respondents (Barter & Renold, 1999). Mothers were asked to discuss vignettes about hypothetical scenarios involving their children. The vignettes were designed to understand parents' expectations of their children's behaviors and socialization goals. The vignettes included descriptions of the target child making demands to watch a TV program while her grandmother was watching something else (*respeto* or respect); the target child taking sweets without permission while at the supermarket (being obedient); and the target child bragging about new shoes to friends in the playground (being modest) (copies are found in the appendix). Mother's discussions of the vignettes were also transcribed.

Second wave of data collection

Participants. One year and a half after the larger study was conducted, I attempted to contact by phone the 8 (out of 10) first generation (born in Mexico) mothers who lived in the Phoenix metropolitan area with the intention of obtaining more information on their theories of childrearing and child development. At this time, several mothers had moved and had left no new contact information.

Therefore, of the 8 mothers of the original PEN project who were Mexican-born and residents of Phoenix, five mothers were finally contacted by phone and all agreed to participate. The mothers who agreed were Luisa, Nancy, Blanca, Carolina and Carla (these are pseudonyms). I was the fieldworker who collected data of the first three mothers, while the last two were visited by Cristina Ahumada, another fieldworker.

Data collection. Mothers were informed in Spanish that the purpose of the research was to study how Mexican immigrant mothers raise their children and were asked for their informed consent. Participants signed informed consent forms in Spanish. Each mother received \$30 dollars in cash as compensation for their time before the data was collected. The “target children” stayed the same for this part of the study and they were about 6 years old.

Participants were interviewed in Spanish for around an hour at their homes using a semi-structured interview and the piñata vignettes. The Q-sort activity was not used at this time. The interview and the discussion on the piñata vignettes were audiorecorded and transcribed.

Piñata vignettes. These vignettes were based on the version first developed by Arzubiaga, Fuster & Salazar for the PEN project. For this study, the vignettes describe what should be a common event in Mexican mothers’ and children’s lives: attending a child’s piñata. Based on the previous data collection and the literature, four different incidents in which a child misbehaved were created and which represent four areas that were the focus of the second wave of data collection: *buena educación*, *respeto*, ethical behavior, *chipil* child, and advice (the vignettes can be found in the appendix). As an illustration, I present the following vignette that was used to collect participants’ beliefs on respect:

Once in the house, the birthday child throws the gift to his/her mother's lap and shouts "¡agárralo, menta!" (get it, stupid!). Why do you think he/she might behave like that?

Mothers were read the vignettes and asked why a child would behave in that particular way as a way to tap into their personal theories on child development.

Interview. A more direct strategy was through the use of a semi-structured interview. The interview focused on parents' reflection on the changes in child rearing practices due to immigration, their theories on children' development, their discipline practices, and their experience with advice on childrearing (see appendix). The interview questions included questions like the following:

-Do you think that your child behaves like other children in Mexico?

-Why are some children "*bien educados*" and others aren't?

The following table summarizes the data that was collected per family at the end of the study:

Table 1 Summary of data collected

	First Wave Fall 2006-Spring 2007	Second wave Fall 2008
Interview data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview I (family information, daily routine, perception of the neighborhood) • Interview II (places lived, family of origin's childrearing practices) • Interview III (communication with the teacher and school, SES information) • Q-sort task on socialization goals • Vignettes (socialization goals) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview IV (theories on child development, childrearing in Mexico versus the US, advice received about childrearing) • Piñata vignettes (theories about children's behaviors)
Observational data	12 participant observations	

Role as a researcher

As a Latina, Spanish-speaking woman who had (temporarily) immigrated to the United States, I shared some of the difficulties Mexican immigrant mothers find while living in the United States. I also shared with them some cultural models and a common language. However, as a speaker of a different Spanish dialect (Costa Rican Spanish), I sometimes found myself having difficulties understanding some of the nuances in mothers' use of language. More importantly, my legal immigration status, knowledge of English and social class put me in a more privileged position compared to the participants (all participant mothers, except for Carolina, were undocumented immigrants). For example, when I worked as a research assistant for the PEN project, it was with surprise

and even sadness that some mothers reacted when I told them about my annual visits to my family in Costa Rica. The mothers hadn't been able to see their families in Mexico since they had immigrated.

However, mothers were savvy enough to use my somewhat privileged status as a resource. Immigrant mothers would often ask me to help them obtain different services, to translate documents for them and to even install software in a computer! Although I provided help when needed, I felt it wasn't an unusual event in their lives. I was simply part of the mothers' social networks; I became just one more source of social capital. I personally felt that real friendships developed with some of the mothers.

Analysis of data

Based on the preliminary reading of all data collected for the five mothers and the literature, I developed a series of codes in order to guide the analysis of both the first and second wave data. These codes were created using both an *emic* and *etic* approach, based on the literature review, codes developed by the PEN program on discipline practices and by Livas-Dlott, Fuller, Stein, Bridges, Mangual Figueroa and Mireles (2010), constructs of interest (*chipil child, bien educado*) and a reading of the material. I read all the field notes and transcribed interviews and developed a preliminary list of codes. Interview transcriptions were coded directly from Spanish while fieldnotes were in English. The list was later revised, expanded and converted into a dictionary with appropriate definitions and examples (see appendix). The following is an example of a code used to categorize a discipline practice:

Praise: To verbally reinforce the child i.e. "*¡qué lindo dibujo! (what a nice picture!)*"

The dictionary included the following themes: values and characteristics of children, affection, origin of behaviors, characteristics of mothers, characteristics of target child, beliefs about learning and school, discipline practices, migration, and advice received about parenting.

All data sets including the four interviews, field notes and vignettes were coded using Atlas.ti. Around a third part of the data was coded by an assistant who was introduced to the goals of the study and trained. First, he was introduced to the dictionary and the Atlas.ti program. Secondly, he and I coded together an interview. The assistant was left to practice coding a portion of the data by himself and he did not actually code data until he reached 80% agreement with my own coding. Based on the reading of the coded data, assertions were written and these assertions were later examined through the reading of the whole data set looking for disconfirming evidence. Based on these assertions the cases results were written. After these, cases were compared according to general themes generated and considered more relevant such as the concept of being *bien educado*, the concept of a *chipil* child, beliefs about learning and the use of professional advice on childrearing.

Chapter 3

LUISA

Luisa is a light-skinned, dark-haired, slightly overweight woman in her early 30's. She wears an eye patch and shows a slight limp when she walks. She lost her right eye in a car accident when she was young. Despite all the difficulties she experienced growing up, Luisa gives the impression of a woman very comfortable in her own skin and with very few inhibitions.

Housing and neighborhood

When first contacted by the PEN project in 2005, Luisa had lived for six years in an apartment complex consisting of seven two-story buildings, very close to a very busy street in a city near Phoenix. The apartment complex had a common area for laundry, a swimming pool and a green area used for parties and other gatherings. As observed on my visits, most of the people living in the apartments were of Mexican origin and Spanish was the most commonly heard language in the complex. On weekends, it was normal to see street sellers walking around the parking lots pushing supermarket carts with traditional Mexican snacks such as corn on the husk and green mango with chili or even pirate versions of Mexican music CDs.

When asked about the neighborhood, Luisa responded she liked the apartment complex because the manager was concerned about children's safety. He usually made sure there were no children riding bikes on the parking lots and at 8 pm he would send home the children still playing outside. Luisa perceived the neighborhood as quiet, even though she recognized dangers such as fast cars on the street in front of her apartment building.

Luisa's apartment had two bedrooms and one bathroom. The apartment seemed smaller than its actual size because of the amount and size of the furniture and the number of pictures, vases and other decorative objects in it. In the living area there was a big flat screen TV that took most of the space of one of the walls. There was also a big five-piece sofa surrounding two adjacent walls. In the dining area, next to the living room, there was a dining table and six seats. On one of the walls there was an advertisement poster for a purse company that showed a blonde woman and a brown-haired man conversing. Dividing the kitchen and the hall going to the bedrooms there was a fish tank not in use and stuffed with diverse objects. By the time of my first visit, Luisa slept in one bedroom with both children, the other room was used for storage and Luis slept on the couch. Once Jason was born, Luisa slept in one bedroom with the baby and Carlos and the kids shared a bed in another room.

Work and socioeconomic status

By the time we first met, Luisa was not working because she couldn't find a job because her pregnancy was already showing, and no employer wanted to hire a pregnant woman. Carlos worked in the maintenance of the apartments where they lived and made around \$12,000 a year. The family paid around \$500 for the apartment. When Luisa was not working, and in order to contribute to the household income, she would make tamales and other Mexican foods and would sell them to the neighbors. She would also baby-sit for neighbors. Once her baby was born, Luisa started working as a cleaning lady at a department store from Monday to Sunday. When working full time, she would pay a neighbor \$4 per hour to take care of their children. The lady would usually watch movies, while the kids entertained themselves in the master bedroom.

In our last phone conversation in February of 2010, Luisa told me she lost her cleaning job because of the employment restrictions imposed to undocumented immigrants in Arizona.

Living arrangements, family, and arrival to the United States

When we first contacted Luisa she lived with Carlos, her partner and her children; Joshua of 4 (the target child) and Kenneth, who was at that time 3 years old. She was pregnant with Jason. Luisa and Carlos were not married, but had been partners for 6 years by the time of the first interview in 2005. Luisa came to the United States in 1999 from Chiapas, following Carlos. She left two children of 17 and 13 from a previous relationship back in Mexico. These two children lived with Luisa's mother and Luisa has not seen them since she left Mexico.

Luisa and Carlos have had their share of difficulties in the relationship. Carlos sometimes drank too much and had been unfaithful to Luisa. Luisa had even "*corrido*" (kicked out) Carlos of the house because of the infidelities.

Daily routine

The family started its day at 6 am. Luisa was responsible for cleaning, cooking and getting the children ready to school. Before leaving for school the children just drank milk at home; since they had breakfast at school. When Luisa was not working (in 2005) she was the one in charge of taking Joshua and Kenneth to their school, which was a few blocks away. When she started working full time in 2008, she felt guilty for not being able to do this for her children anymore. After the children arrived back from school they ate lunch and later played videogames; watched TV or Luisa would let them ride bicycles in the parking lot next to the house. Luisa also reported taking the children in the afternoons to the convenience store located in the gas station next to her

apartment complex, where they would get snacks. The family ate dinner at 6 or 7 pm and the children went to bed at around 7 or 8 pm. On the weekends, the family woke up late. They sometimes had lunch at restaurants or visited a nearby ranch where *barbacoa de chivo* (roasted goat) was sold. They also used their weekends to do the laundry. In the afternoons, the children played videogames and the parents watched boxing on TV.

Although when talking about meals Luisa used the plural (“we eat”), the family did not always eat together. I personally observed the children eating by themselves, whenever they were hungry and I even saw Joshua fixing food for himself. There were other times when Luisa and I ate by ourselves. Mealtimes were more flexible than Luisa portrayed them and there didn’t seem to be a fixed time to eat. Joshua had an extraordinary appetite and constantly ate. Even when Luisa was warned by the Head Start personnel of Jordan’s excessive weight, she thought his weight was fine.

Language and literacy

Luisa only spoke Spanish to her children, although like most of the families in this study, she sprinkled her Spanish with some heavily accented English words. She seemed interested in learning English as she once commented excitedly that a clerk at the gas station was teaching her words in that language. Luisa was not literate in Spanish as she did not spend enough time in school as a child. Books were not observed in the house.

Family of origin

Luisa was born in 1970 in a small town of Chiapas, Mexico, whose economic activity revolved around a sugar cane processing plant. Luisa lived in a small wooden house with her father, mother and four siblings. Her father would

drink a lot and would disappear for two weeks at a time. He never had a stable job. Luisa's mom, in order to make ends meet, would send Luisa and her siblings to sell fruit on the streets:

Empezaba yo a vender desde las 7 de la mañana que me levantaba yo, ya me ponía yo a pelar naranja agria. Lo pelaba yo y la luego molía así el chile y yo hacía todo y ya luego tapaba yo mi traste de naranja y ya me iba yo a vender. Regresaba yo a las 11 y ya me iba yo a la escuela a vender también.

(I started selling at 7 in the morning when I woke up and I would start peeling oranges, I peeled them and I would grind the chili and I would do everything and then I would cover my recipient with the orange and I went selling. I would go back at 11 and I would go sell to the school too)

Luisa remembered wanting to go to school as a child but not being able to go beyond second grade. When her father knew she was at school he would go to the classroom and would take her out:

A veces no queríamos ir a vender porque era aburrido. Al menos a mí, me gustaba mucho la escuela. Me gustaba ir a la escuela pero nos iba a sacar mi papá. Mi papá, borracho se metía al salón y nos sacaba de ahí de la escuela. Nos sacaba de los pelos para que no fuéramos a la escuela

(Sometimes we didn't want to sell because it was boring. Personally, I liked school. I liked school but my dad would go take us out of school. My dad, drunk, would get in the classroom and would take us out. He would grab us from the hair so we didn't go to school).

Luisa did not study further than third grade, because her father did not let her, alleging it was a worthless pursuit: “*la escuela no sirve para nada*” (“school is not good for anything”). Because of her limited schooling, she had difficulties reading and numerous times, she would ask me to read things for her. She would also let her husband, who had attended high school, handle business with the phone and cable companies and to fill out application forms.

Luisa’s mother would discipline her children by reprimanding them and if they would still not listen to her, the father would hit them. But if he was drunk, Luisa and her siblings would not listen to him and ignored him. Luisa’s older brother on occasions would hit her too and this became so unbearable for her, that at 15, she ran away from home. Soon, she got pregnant with her oldest son, who now lives in Mexico.

Although Luisa’s parents would praise her as a child for her ability to sell food, Luisa didn’t remember her parents demonstrating much affection, and explained this behavior by saying they were “*muy ocupados*” (“very busy”). Luisa believed that because of these experiences she behaved very differently towards her own children. She made an effort to behave in a more affectionate manner towards them.

Carlos’ (Luisa’s husband) early experiences in Salina Cruz, Mexico, were somewhat similar to Luisa’s. He only lived with his mom who was an alcoholic, and she would send him to sell *flanes* (custards) to the street and would punish him if he ate any of them. As a young man he started working cleaning ships and as a waiter.

Luisa did not maintain much communication with her mother and children living in Mexico because they didn’t have a phone and had to pay every time they

received a call at the local store. Because of her undocumented status, Luisa could not easily go visit her family either.

Luisa's beliefs and practices on learning and school life

When I first met Luisa, Joshua was attending Head Start and Luisa reported talking to the teachers, but only the ones who spoke Spanish (I suspect they were the teaching aides). When asked about how she was preparing Joshua to go to kindergarten, Luisa would not know what to say and commented it would be hard for her to know, since she didn't go to kindergarten back in Mexico. However, she believed teachers were in charge of teaching children things like to name the colors and how to behave themselves. She believed teachers expected children to behave properly and to not hit each other. When asked about parents' role in raising children, she said it was "*estar al cuidado de los niños, vestirlos, darles de comer*" (to be in charge of children, to give them clothes, to give them food).

Although Luisa wasn't very clear on what was taught in school, she wanted her children to graduate from college. She didn't want them to have the same type of job her husband had: "*al puro sol*" ("out in the sun"). She also mentioned she would like her children to speak many languages but to always maintain their Spanish skills.

By the time I interviewed Luisa for the last time (2009) Jordan was attending elementary school and was experiencing academic difficulties. Although the teacher had no problems with his behavior, he wasn't learning at the rate the teacher expected him to learn. Luisa told me that he was asked by the teacher to "*contestar cien preguntas de matemáticas en 20 minutos*" ("answer 100 mathematical questions in 20 minutes") which I interpreted as a

proficiency test in mathematics. Luisa was surprised to know Joshua was having problems because she considered him to be an intelligent boy.

Luisa's beliefs and practices on discipline

Luisa's discipline style could be summarized as relying on direct instructions, reprimands, threats and an occasionally, physical punishment. Although I did not observe it, she also reported punishing her children by making them face the wall, which resembled the American "time out" and that she learned "*de otras gentes*" (other people).

Luisa placed "*obediente*" as the second most important value she wanted her children to have. She would often ask Joshua (but not Kenneth) to bring things to her and perform different duties. However, Luisa complained that her children, especially Joshua, would obey his father more than her, and she often threatened her kids with telling Carlos about their misbehavior. Even when her children did not follow instructions, Luisa sometimes did not provide a consequence for the misbehavior and used threats or normative messages (preaching) instead, as shown in this vignette:

Luisa is at school picking up Joshua and has brought Kenneth with him. She is cleaning up the tables, because the teachers at school have told her she needs to volunteer at school. Once Joshua has finished eating his lunch Luisa tells Kenneth she is leaving. But Kenneth is on the floor playing with other children and doesn't even look up when his mom calls him. Luisa starts shouting "*Kenneth!, Kenneth! Ya nos vamos* (we are leaving)". After a few attempts of grabbing Kenneth's attention Luisa becomes even more impatient and grabs Kenneth by the hand, makes him stand up and drags him to the door and outside of the classroom. But

Kenneth has released himself from Luisa's hold and runs away to a fence that divides the school from a nearby park and starts to watch some children playing on the other side. Again, but louder, Luisa starts yelling "*Kenneth, Kenneth!*". We wait for around two minutes for Kenneth to join us. During all this, Joshua has remained close to Luisa. Tired of calling Kenneth, Luisa starts walking towards the street. Joshua and I follow her. When we are about to reach the street Kenneth runs towards us and join us. We keep walking towards home until we reach a farm. Two beautiful horses are grazing. The children start caressing the horses' manes and faces through the fence. After a while, Luisa grows impatient and tells them we have to go. This time, both Kenneth and Joshua pretend not to hear and Luisa starts yelling. They start to walk, but Kenneth is upset and suddenly changes his mind and goes back to where the horses are. Luisa, clearly upset, yells: "*Kenneth, desobediente, te va a pasar lo mismo que a tu tío borracho si no haces caso*". ("Kenneth, you're going to be like you're drunk uncle if you don't do what I say") Luisa turns to me and tells me that Kenneth is different from Joshua, because Joshua always follows instructions. She attributes Kenneth's behavior to the fact that he is *mimado* (spoiled) by the father, who treats him differently only because Kenneth looks a lot like Carlos' mother.

Luisa did not do much to restrict her children's movement. I did observe them using tricycles in the small living room or playing around in public places such as streets, offices and stores, which brought disapproving looks from people around us. According to Luisa, children need to move and one cannot ask

a child to stay still: “*Un niño quieto es un niño enfermo*” (“a still child is a sick child”) says Luisa.

Luisa’s beliefs on emotional and moral development

Luisa believed it is important to be affectionate with children. She made a conscious effort to use terms of endearment with her children and to often tell them “*te quiero*” (“I love you”). She also stressed the celebration of birthdays. For these occasions, she took the children to family entertainment centers such as Chuck E. Cheese or she organized parties at home to celebrate them. I personally attended Kenneth’s birthday with *piñatas*, *carne asada* and music. The family invited around 50 people for the party which took place in a common area in the apartments.

Luisa often complained that her husband Carlos was not affectionate towards the children and explained it as a consequence the neglect he experienced from his mother. According to Luisa, Carlos’ mother drank too much and was promiscuous. She believed that as a consequence of this neglect, Carlos did not learn to express affection.

Although Luisa wanted her children to be affectionate, she did not want them to be clingy or *chipil*. A *chipil* child, in her own definition, was a child too attached to the mother and who cried often. She told me this happened when she was pregnant with Jason and Kenneth became jealous of his unborn brother. Luisa believed that when children become *maleducados* (not well brought up) it was the parents’ responsibility: “*todo le damos, pues, todo lo que ellos quieren*” (“we give them everything, everything they want”). She also expressed the idea that her own behavior had consequences related to the children’s behavior, because she had treated the youngest, Jason, differently and that resulted in him

being spoiled. At the same time, Luisa often explained her children's misbehavior as the product of inborn characteristics "*Jordan es más noble, Kenneth es muy necio y Jason es atrevido*" ("Jordan is noble, Kenneth is stubborn and Jason is insolent"). But she also argued that the context or the environment had an effect on children being spoiled. She thought the relatively easier conditions in the United States might have negative consequences for children:

Interviewer: Entonces, ¿tú crees que siempre fueron así? ¿Tú crees que nacieron así? ¿O fue algo en la forma en que los criaste tal vez distinto que hicieron que fueran diferentes?

Luisa: Pos yo digo que es porque hay poquito más de posibilidades acá que en México.

Interviewer: Ajá. Cuéntame un poquito más de eso. ¿En qué sentido?

Luisa: Puedes comprar todo lo que quieras, en cambio allá no.

(Interviewer: So, you think they were always like this? Do you think they were born like this? Or was the way you raised them differently that made them different?)

Luisa: Well, I think is that there are more opportunities here than in Mexico

Interviewer: Uhum. Tell me a little more about it. In which sense?

Luisa: You can buy everything you want [here] but not there.)

When I continued asking why her children, although living in the same conditions, ended up showing different behaviors, Luisa responded about Jason being "*terco*" (stubborn):

Porque digo yo que a lo mejor es más chiquito, lo consentimos, le damos las cosas que quieren los más grandes, quiere la coca “no, pues yo lo estoy tomando”, no, “quiero esa coca”, “pues dale hijo, dale y agarra otra” y ese es el problema que te digo, es lo que nosotros los papás hacemos que como se pongan de tercicos y así están los chamacos

(I think that maybe is because he is younger, we spoil him, we give them what the oldest want, he want the coke, “no, because I’m drinking it”, no, “I want this coke”, “okay son, give it to him and take another one” and that is the problem I’m telling you about, what we do as parents makes them become stubborn and that is how the kids are)

But a few lines later in the transcription, Luisa returned to her beliefs that children are born with particular characteristics “*El niño (Jordan) desde que nació es noble*” (He [Jordan] is noble since he was born).

In the Q-sort activity Luisa, chose “*bien educado*” as the most important value she wanted her children to have, while being obedient and respectful occupied the second and third place, respectively. She thought that children who were “bien educados” were children who were “*muy correctos, no hacen travesuras, ni nada*” (“children who are correct, who are not naughty at all”). But to her, this behavior was deceiving, because they might be “*bien educados*” in one context, but “*mal educados*” in another one. She gave the example of a girl she used to baby-sit and who didn’t give her any trouble, but the child’s mother complained about her behavior at home. In this sense, Luisa believed all children are “*mal educados*” at one point.

Although Luisa believed her children had learned moral behavior by themselves or at school, she had warned her children that if they misbehaved “*e/*

Viejo te va a llevar" (the old man is going to take you away). She also remembered her parents threatening her with "*el Coco*" (*the buggy man*) when she did not obey.

Experience with childrearing advice

In terms of advice received, Luisa only reported receiving a talk on child safety by some police personnel at his children's school. She did not remember receiving advice from teachers and said the teachers had communicated more with her husband, because he understood more English.

However, I once accompanied her to a Christian faith center for pregnant women, where she was told to give the child she was pregnant with a biblical name and to attend church. After the visit, Luisa commented she liked talking to the woman who gave her advice because she liked hearing about God. However, she still used a non-biblical name for her youngest child and did not start attending church as the woman had recommended.

When asked who she would seek advice from if she needed help with raising her children, she commented she would take them to the doctor. When I gave her the example of problematic behaviors such as becoming *maleducado* or aggressive she mentioned the police: "*yo me voy con la policía porque quiero que se vayan derechitos, no torcidos*" ("I would go with the police because I want them to go on the right path, and don't go astray").

Luisa was not interested in TV shows on pop psychology (Dr. Phil) or about raising children (Todo bebé): "*puras pendejadas hablan*" ("they just talk crap"). Because she was not completely literate she did not read magazines and books of any kind.

Raising children in the United States

According to Luisa, one of the main differences between raising children in the United States and Mexico was that children in this country could not spend too much time outside of the house because they needed constant supervision from parents and were kept indoors for long periods of time: “*parecen venaditos que estuvieran encerrados*” (“they are like caged deer”). She perceived the United States as a much more dangerous place than Mexico. So much was her concern about safety that she would rather let her children ride tricycles inside the small apartment than let them play outside on their own. In Mexico, she explained, children had unsupervised play and might even spend their time visiting relatives who lived nearby on their own. Even if children were not with relatives, Luisa felt confident in letting her children play outside in Mexico because she felt neighbors would alert her if there was anything wrong with them.

On the other hand, Luisa acknowledged that things like food and clothes were more expensive in Mexico. She also liked the fact that when the American police was called, they arrived promptly and protected women from abusing husbands, something that would not happen in Mexico, based on Luisa’s own experience. She also perceived more economic help for poor families from the American government in terms of food stamps and money. When she had kids in Mexico, she told me she only received canned milk that was already expired. When asked about concerns with her children becoming Americanized, Luisa did not seem to comprehend the question or it did not seem like an important issue to her. She responded talking about food, and how Joshua would not eat some “Mexican” foods such as lentils and preferred “*gabacho*” (American) food like

pizza and hamburgers. When asked, she did not seem concerned that her children would stop using Spanish at home, because they only spoke that language at home. She wasn't particularly nationalistic either, placing "Living Mexican culture" as the least important value to teach to children in the Q-sort activity. And she was not too keen on expressing Mexican nationalism:

Yo no soy de andar aquí con mi bandera. Mi bandera no me va a dar de comer. En cambio este país me da de comer (...) Yo veo las marchas que están pasando ahorita y veo que los mexicanos andan con sus banderas y no me gusta porque yo toda la pobreza que he vivido y no me gustaría que mis hijos lo vivan. No, no me gustaría.

(I don't like waving my flag. My flag is no going to feed me. But this country has provided me with food (...) I see the protests that are happening now and I see that Mexicans are waving the flag and I don't like it because of all the poverty that I experienced and I wouldn't like my children to experience it. No, I wouldn't like it).

Although Luisa did not make any efforts to teach Mexican culture to the children or to instill pride of being Mexican, she at the same, was not particularly immersed in American culture either. She did not speak English or watch American TV or even serve American food at home. She was not very clear on what was celebrated on Thanksgiving and called it "*navidad para gabachos*" (Christmas for Americans). She was not aware of how Americans raised their children either.

The one concern Luisa expressed about raising her children in the United States was related to the main reason she came to the country: the availability of

goods. When I asked her if having better access to material goods was bad or good, she responded:

Luisa: Pos en una parte es bueno y en otra parte es malo porque...

Interviewer: Ajá. En una parte es bueno...

Luisa: Porque te acostumbras...lo malo es cuando no tengas

(Luisa: On one hand is good and on the other hand is bad because...

Interviewer: Uhum, on one hand is good...

Luisa: Because you get used to it...the bad part is when you don't have it anymore)

Summary

Although Luisa would like obedient children, her boys –especially the younger ones- constantly disobeyed her and they would sometimes not receive any consequences, Luisa tried to control her children's behavior with the occasional and inconsistent use of punishment, threats and normative messages. Luisa almost seemed to be resigned to have children who misbehaved, since she believed all children are at least in some contexts, “*maleducados*”. Luisa, who grew up deprived of basic needs, emphasized providing her children with food, clothing and other necessities as the main goals of parenting.

Therefore, for Luisa, childrearing differences in Mexico versus the US were more practical and basic: food, safety, material consumption. If any comparison was made, Mexico was associated with hardship and even injustice, not too surprising perhaps, considering Luisa's difficult experiences growing up there. On the other hand, and probably because Luisa was raised in a more rural

context, Luisa seemed to miss the sense of community she experienced in Mexico and therefore, the feeling of safety that existed in her home town.

Luisa's lack of concern for her children becoming "Americanized" might be related to her childrearing approach, which focuses on the most basic needs. It is likely that her focus is shaped by the fact that those same basic needs were not always covered in her rather unstable family life back in Mexico. Perhaps those early experiences of deprivation are the reason why Luisa would not restrict Jordan's feeding even if he was overweight.

In terms of her beliefs about children's development and childrearing, Luisa did not stick to a particular approach, blaming context, parents and children's nature for misbehavior and switching reasons constantly, even in the same conversation.

Chapter 4

BLANCA

Blanca is a short, slightly overweight, dark-skinned woman in her early thirties with long, raven hair. She looked to me very much like an indigenous woman but she did not identify herself as such. Blanca's personality could be described as rather introverted: she reported feeling nervous when I audio taped her and would not reveal much about herself even during informal conversations.

Housing and neighborhood

When I first met Blanca she was living with her husband and four children, in a small apartment complex located in a mostly working class suburban area of a university town in the Phoenix metropolitan area. Although all the people in the apartments were Mexican, the neighborhood itself was more mixed, with Black, Mexican and White residents living side by side. Besides Blanca's place, there were four more apartments, all in one floor and all next to each other. The apartment complex did not have a laundry room or green areas and the parking lot was often littered.

Blanca expressed liking the neighborhood because it was quiet and did not have much traffic. She also liked living across from a small park. However, she didn't like the fact that sometimes there were men drinking on the property. The apartment had two bedrooms and one bathroom. Blanca and her husband slept in one bedroom, while all the children shared a queen-size bed in another room. When Dalia, the baby, was born, she would sleep with her parents, but Blanca made sure she was far from the father, concerned he might hit her by accident when sleeping.

The children's bedroom was decorated with two posters, one of Scooby-Doo and of a Suns player poster. There was also a picture of Fernanda, the oldest daughter, when she was in kindergarten. Below the posters there was a table with a computer the family had recently bought and next to it, a small TV. The living room had a big sofa and in front of it, a large television screen. On the walls there were pictures of Blanca's children at different stages and a picture of Blanca's parents. There was a small dining area and only separated by a shelf, the kitchen. The home was heavily decorated and full of plants. Behind the apartment was a corridor that connected all the apartments. In that small area Blanca's husband had planted different vegetables: spearmint, chilies, potatoes, and *epazote* (a Mexican herb). He used to work in a farm in Mexico and from that time on, he developed an interest in growing things.

When asked about resources in her area, Blanca commented she had made use of some public services like the library, where she borrowed books and movies. She also made use of different services at the community center not far from her home. I actually met Blanca when she was visiting the food bank at this center.

A year after I met Blanca for the first time, she moved to a house in a nearby city. Her brother, who contrary to Blanca, had credit, used his name to ask for a loan so Blanca's husband could provide the initial payment. Blanca was very excited to have her own house and was particularly happy with the big yard that came with the house. Although this house had three bedrooms, the whole family slept in only two of them.

Work and socioeconomic situation

When I first met her, Blanca was a stay-at-home mother, with some limited experience babysitting for relatives and neighbors. But by the time of the second wave of data collection, she was working full time cleaning at the same hotel where her sister Carla worked. Although the work was strenuous and the company only gave her one free day a week, Blanca was very happy with her job. She felt that it helped her come out of her shell, meet new people and “*salir del estrés*” (“release stress”).

Blanca’s husband worked as a construction worker and earned around \$20,000 a year. Because of the tight economic situation, Blanca was constantly looking for opportunities to get free or reduced price items. She would often go to the food bank at the community center or the fields and asked field workers for free vegetables. Blanca also participated in the WIC program.

Living arrangements, family, arrival to the United States

When I first met her, Blanca had been married to Juan for 17 years. She had two children in Mexico, but one was born dead and the other one died soon after birth. She had been in the United States for 14 years after following her husband, who had arrived in the United States a year earlier. By the time of our first interview in 2005, Fernanda was 13, Pablo was 10, Vivian was 7, Moisés 4 (the target child) and Blanca was pregnant with Dalia. All children were born in the United States.

When Blanca was pregnant with Moisés she had to be taken to the hospital because she started having contractions and had to have a C-section. But the health problems did not end up there: two weeks after his birth, Moisés had to be taken to the hospital because he turned purple due to breathing

difficulties. The family rushed him to the hospital and did not even stop at the red lights in order to save his life. He was diagnosed with pneumonia, spent a long time at the hospital and among other treatments, received a blood transfusion. This event seemed to have greatly impacted Blanca, because it was often mentioned.

Daily routine

Blanca's family started the day early because the father worked in construction. They would wake up at 4:30 or 5:00 am. When Blanca was not working she would spend her morning preparing lunch, cleaning and taking care of Moisés. In the afternoons she would watch TV with Moisés and wait for her other children to come home from school. When Moisés' siblings arrived they usually watched TV, played or did homework. During most of my visits, the TV was on, usually with children's shows in English, but also with comedy programs and movies in English and Spanish. Blanca mentioned her husband didn't let the children watch TV after 8 pm.

Blanca's husband arrived around 3:30 or 4 pm. Blanca reported sending the children to bed at 8 pm, after dinner. But on weekends the children would go to bed at 10 pm and woke up around 9 am. She said that on weekends they might boil and eat *e/otes*, go out to eat, or they would spend the day doing laundry at a laundry mat or shopping or even going to the park. On weekends the children would help the mother with the cleaning.

Language and literacy

Blanca did not speak or understand English, and much of the communication at home was in Spanish. Moisés did not attend preschool and therefore, his only exposure to English was through English language cartoons

and occasionally from his siblings. However, Juan and Carmen used English among themselves, while Vivian, 7 years old, mixed both languages, as when he was talking about a cartoon character on the TV show *Dora, The Explorer*: “*El Swiper es el fox que quiere quitar cosas de la gente*” (“Swiper is the fox that wants to steal things from people”). Vivian, although able to hold a conversation in Spanish, often asked for help with her Spanish, as when she asked her mother “*¿Cómo se llama yellow?*” (“How do you say yellow?”). Vanessa was also observed introducing Moisés to some English words:

Vivian and Moisés are watching “Diego” a cartoon in English. At some point in the show the plot involves the difficulties of pigmy marmosets to find food in the rain forest. Vivian comments to Moisés “*esos animales están en trouble*” (those animals are in trouble) and turning towards him she motivates him “*necesitan ayuda, dí help, help*” (“they need help, say help, help) and Moisés obeys yelling “*help!*”

No books were observed in the home and Blanca was not observed reading to her children.

Family of origin

Blanca is from a village in Guerrero, southern Mexico. Her parents worked in agriculture, growing corn, pumpkins and beans. They also had some donkeys, which were the family’s main form of transportation. Blanca’s routine consisted of working in the corn field, taking care of the donkeys, making tortillas and doing other housework. Blanca also remembered using the donkeys to fetch water from a well which was 20 minutes away from the house. As a child, Blanca could only watch television for a maximum of two hours because her chores demanded most of her time. She joked about not wanting to spend too much

time doing housework: *“es por eso que ya no me dan ganas de hacerlo”* (that is why I don't feel like doing it anymore)

Blanca is the second of five siblings (Carla, also a participant in this study, is the oldest). Blanca said that as an older sibling, her parents were stricter with her and Carla than with the younger ones. For example, as a young woman she was not allowed to wear pants, have short hair or go out at night. Her parents were strict, and would discipline the children by hitting them with a stick, a belt, or whatever object was available. They would punish the children if they were late or if they went out without permission. However, Blanca did not remember her parents congratulating her or praising her.

Unhappy with the treatment she received from her parents, Blanca did not want the same experience for her children and had told them: *“ustedes aprendan porque yo sufrí mucho desde chiquita”* (“you learn because I suffered a lot since I was little”). She believed she behaved quite differently with her children: *“Soy diferente quizás porque sufrí mucho”* (“I am different because I suffered a lot”). For example, instead of hitting them she talked to her children.

Blanca had not visited her family since she left Mexico, but would like to visit her home: *“me inspira ver a mi papá”* (“I want to see my father”). She had four siblings living in the United States, an older sister (Carla) with whom she had a difficult relationship and who is also a participant in this study, a younger brother who lived in another city of the Phoenix metropolitan area and two younger sisters who lived next door to her Tempe apartment.

Blanca's beliefs on learning and school life

Blanca went to school until sixth grade. Her parents used to tell her and her siblings: *“vayan a la escuela por si alguien les vaya a decir cosas en un*

papel". ("go to school in case someone is going to say things on a paper"). She would like her own children to continue studying, so they don't have to do manual work: "*que no trabajen en el rayazo de sol*" ("to not work out in the sun"). She was not particularly concerned about what profession her children choose, as long as her children obtain a good job and stay close to the family.

Although Blanca said she had tried to stay informed of her children's progress in school, she seemed to have difficulties understanding the reports sent from school, as shown in this passage:

Pedro has brought the mail and has handed an envelope to Gabriela. She opens it and finds out they are test scores. She starts discussing the papers with Pedro in English. Mom comes closer and asks "*¿Qué es eso?*" ("What is that?") and Gabriela responds they are the AIMS (Arizona's standard-base tests) results. Blanca asks "*¿están malos o buenos?*" ("Are they good or bad?") to which Gabriela responds "*buenos*" ("good"). She then shows the card to her mother and tries to explain to her what the graphs mean: "*esto es el distrito y aquí estoy yo*" ("this is the district and this is me") pointing at the different bars in the graph. Blanca looks baffled.

Blanca believed that children do well in school by "*echándole ganas, estudiando*" ("making an effort, studying"). They also needed to not fight with classmates and "*no hacer travesuras*" ("don't misbehave"). However, Blanca did not send Moisés to preschool and could never quite say why she made that decision.

Pablo, Carmen and Vivian taught Moisés English vocabulary, to play computer games and school type knowledge in sophisticated way as seen in this example Moisés and his brother Pablo are in front of the computer. Moisés asks

his brother for a video game and Pablo opens a website with games. He then opens a game which main characters are a boy and a monkey and he shows to Moisés how to use arrow keys to move the boy back and forward and up and down. Moisés begins to use those keys, while Pablo presses the space bar to make the boy jump and tells his brother “*tú no me ayudes, yo sí sabo [sic]*” (“don’t help me, I know”) and Pablo lets him play by himself.

In this sense, Moisés, although not attending preschool might have been, thanks to his siblings, already introduced to academic knowledge, technologies and English language.

Mother’s beliefs and practices on health

Blanca held traditional Mexican beliefs and relied on catholic or shamanistic practices and used herbal therapies. For example, when she was pregnant and one of her old neighbors from his town in Mexico died in Phoenix, she went to give her condolences to the family but made sure the body of the neighbor was not there yet, because she believed it could cause damage to her unborn child. When Dalia was born she wrapped her wrist with a red cord and a tiny image of Christ glued to a *ojo de venado* (a type of seed) to protect her and prevent vomiting.

Blanca’s beliefs and practices on discipline

As a way to teach Moisés proper behavior, Blanca relied on ignoring Moisés, direct instructions and normative messages (“*eres bien tremendo*” or “you’re naughty”) and even humor. Blanca would use irony and humor for small infringements instead of reprimands. For example Moisés sat on his baby sister’s chair Blanca looked at him and said “*¡ay, qué bonito mi niño! ¿cuándo nació?*” (“wow, what a beautiful child! When was he born?”), as indicating that the chair is

for babies and not children of his age. The teasing and humor could be understood as a way of deflecting conflict, while at the same time denoting a problematic behavior.

Although Blanca often told Moisés to not to be “*grosero*” (“rude”) or asked him to not be “*cochino*” (“dirty”) I never observed her punishing him. But she used humor probably to soften some normative messages:

Moisés is watching TV. He then turns towards Fernanda, who is sitting next to him and bites her hand softly. Blanca, seeing this, tells him “*no seas grosero...no la muerdas*” (“don’t be rude, don’t bite her”) and smiling towards Fernanda says “*párate y dale un chile, un chile picoso*” (“stand up and give her a chili, a hot chili”). Everyone laughs.

Blanca’s beliefs on emotional and moral development

Blanca thought that parents can teach the right behavior by talking to their children about what is wrong:

Interviewer: ¿Usted cree que los niños nacen sabiendo lo que es bueno y lo que es malo o es que uno se los enseña?

Blanca: Pues son los padres los que le enseñan a uno.

Interviewer: ¿Cómo le enseñan los padres?

Blanca: Pues diciéndoles “esto no lo hagas porque es malo”, “mejor has esto”, o “piensa lo que vas a hacer”

Interviewer: Hablándoles entonces

Blanca: Sí

(Interviewer: Do you think that children are born knowing what is right and what is wrong or one teaches that?)

Blanca: Well, parents are the ones who teach.

Interviewer: How do parents teach?

Blanca: Telling them “don’t do this because it is wrong”, “better do this”, or “think what you are going to do”

Interviewer: Telling them then

Blanca: Yes.)

However, a few lines later Blanca switches to a maturation hypothesis by relating bad behavior with being young:

Interviewer: ¿Y por qué será que algunos niños se portan mal o se portan en forma inapropiada?

Blanca: Por la etapa del crecimiento, ¿no?, que van pasando, ¿no?

Interviewer: Es una cuestión de crecimiento.

Blanca: Ajá.

(Interviewer: And why do some children misbehave or behave inappropriately?

Blanca: Because it is a developing stage, isn’t it? That passes, doesn’t it?

Interviewer: It’s a matter of growth.

Blanca: Uhum.)

Blanca believed children need to be taught to behave properly from an early age. She started early by telling her children what was right and wrong behavior, but would not explain the reasons behind the norms until they were around seven years of age : “*Pues nada más le digo (talking about Dalia, the one year old daughter) ‘eso no se hace’, sí entiende, pero no le explico*” (“I just tell her ‘don’t do that’, she does understand but I don’t explain to her”).According to Blanca, older children start behaving better:

Blanca: (...) hay una etapa que se portan bien y hay una etapa que se portan mal, es la etapa de la juventud.

Interviewer: ¿Cómo a qué etapa se empiezan a portar mejor?

Blanca: Pues, yo pienso que más grandes porque ya tengo una más grande,

que lleva 16 años ya, y esas sí se porta más mejor que los otros.

(Blanca: (...)) there is a stage when they behave well and a stage when they misbehave, it is young age

Interviewer: In which stage they start behaving better?

Blanca: Well, I think that when they are older, because I have an older daughter, she is 16 now, and she behaves better than the others)

In the Q-sort activity Blanca chose being independent, being *bien educado* and being respectful as the three most important values to instill in her children. As the least important she chose living American culture, living Mexican culture and being *modesto* (humble). For her, a *bien educado* child is someone who is respectful, is not *grosero* (rude) and “*no anda en malos pasos*” (“don’t go on the wrong path”).

According to Blanca Moisés was “*terrible*” (mischievous) and “*peleonero*” (feisty) but also “*penoso*” (shy). Observations of Jesus revealed he behaved differently from his siblings, especially the two oldest, who were very polite, calm and quiet. Moisés was loud, very active and enjoyed being funny. He would often say funny things or he would mimic actors of movies we were watching. He was in sum, the clown in the family. He even said things that could have otherwise been considered disrespectful or rude. One day when a toy he was playing with did not function in the way he wanted it to he said “what the fuck!”

and “*chinga tu madre*” (“fuck you”). On another occasion he said to his mother when Dalia was born that she “*se parece a tí, es del club de los feos*” (“she looks like you, she belongs to the ugly people’s club”) Blanca responded to Jesus’ comment by laughing. Another day he asked his mother to peel some shrimp for him and when she refused he told her “*no seas guevona, estás muy chocosa*” (“don’t be lazy, you are being difficult”).

Blanca believed the reason Moisés was “*inquieto*” (restless) was due to Moisés’ difficulties when he was a newborn. Blanca thought that the fact that he received three blood transfusions when he was in the hospital as a baby had something to do with it. She even joked that Moisés “*recibió sangre de dragon*” (“he received dragon’s blood”).

The members of the family related to each other in an affectionate manner. They called each other nicknames and were frequently observed hugging, tickling and holding. As mentioned previously, Blanca shared a bed with the baby and all the children slept in the same bedroom even when there was an extra bedroom in the new house. Even when not sleeping, parents and children were often in close proximity. Blanca teased Moisés often and would call him “*Jesusín*” “*Jesuso*” and “*Peludo*” (“shaggy”). Blanca’s affection can be understood as a way to build a sense of togetherness in the family, and leading consequently, intended or not, to the prevention of misbehavior.

Blanca had been so successful at building a sense of loyalty in their children, that they felt indebted to their parents. Her children had expressed that they were going to work for them. According to her, the children had told her “*cuando vamos a estar grandes vamos a trabajar y vamos a hacer esto porque ya ustedes hicieron mucho por nosotros*” (“when we get older we are going to

work and we are going to do it because you already did a lot for us”). Even little Moisés told her one day when the van broke down that he was going to be a mechanic as an adult and that he “*voy a arreglarles la van y no les cobro*” (“I will fix the van and will not charge them for the repairs”). Not surprisingly, Blanca believed parents were the most important influence on their children’s life.

However, affectionate demonstrations did not mean Blanca did not think children needed limits. Blanca thought that if one gives too much, children got spoiled and became selfish:

Interviewer: ¿Y por qué cree que un niño sería así egoísta?

Blanca: Pues yo creo que porque a veces tenemos la culpa, porque a veces les damos todo lo que ellos quieren.

(Interviewer: And why do you think a child would be selfish?)

Blanca: Because I think that because sometimes we are to blame, because sometimes we give them all they want)

Blanca was also concerned that if her children kept picking up Dalia she would “*imponerse a los brazos*” (*get used to being in the arms*) and that would become a problem when she went to preschool and was separated from her mother.

Related to this concern of a child becoming to “needy”, Blanca had a slightly different explanation of what a *chipil* child was compared to other mothers. She believed a child becomes *chipil* when the mother is pregnant and the child becomes jealous. In regard to the definition of *chipil*, Blanca made no mention of excess of attention from the mother as was the case with other mothers.

Although not a theme of interest for this research, in this family, as well as with other families with mixed gender siblings, the topic of gender expectations surfaced. One day Vanessa was playing with her toy house I asked her if Moisés ever played with it and she told me that he only played with cars “*mi papi no lo deja jugar cosas de niñas*” (“my daddy does not let her play with girl toys”). Moisés already seemed to agree with his dad when he said “*me gusta jugar carros, no me gusta jugar muñecas*” (“I like to play with cars; I don’t like playing with dolls”).

Experience with childrearing advice

When baby Dalia was born it was clear that Moisés’ way of handling her presence was inappropriate and he had to learn how to be gentler as shown in this passage:

Blanca is changing Dalia’s diaper when Moisés approaches and saying “*yo voy a ayudar*” (“I’m going to help”) starts shaking the baby’s feet to which Dalia responds crying. Mom tells him “*¡déjala!*” (leave her!) and picking her up, starts rocking her and saying in a soothing voice “*ya, ya*” (*yeah, yeah*).

This way of Moisés of being “*cariñoso*” (“affectionate”) but “*grosero*” (“rude”) had caused Moisés some trouble in school by the time of the second wave of data collection. Moisés had been suspended from school because according to Blanca he “*tiene cariños muy feos*” (“he is rough with his affection”). Blanca even had to talk to his teacher who had sent “*papeles*” (“papers”).

Besides this incident with the school, Blanca only remembered receiving advice from her mother and did not watch TV programs, magazines or books that

provided information on how to better raise a child saying she didn't have time for that.

Raising children in the United States

Blanca perceived positive aspects of living in the United States. For example, she commented "*aquí los paramédicos vienen a la casa*" ("here paramedics go to the house"). Blanca blamed the lack of proper medical attention for the death of her first two children.

Blanca believed the main difference between raising children in the United States and Mexico was that parents were able to purchase more things for their children in the United States. Thanks to the better economic opportunities in the United States Blanca and her husband had been able to provide their children with things her parents couldn't afford: "*Pues porque no tuvimos ni juguetes ni nada, queremos que ellos lo tengan. A nosotros siempre nos daban ropa, pero a la tardada. Por lo menos ellos, siquiera más seguido ahí*" (Because we didn't have toys or nothing, we want them to have it. We always had clothes but it took time to get them. At least they get them more often").

But Blanca's main concern was that she feared that if she reprimanded her children, she could be denounced to the authorities. For example, she said that teachers might single her out. This concern could be related to the fact that her sister Carla, a participant in this study, had received the visit of Child Protective Services because her son reported the hitting to the school.

However, Blanca did not believe that her children would have turned up any differently if they had been raised back in Mexico, because she believed parents were the most important factor in raising a child. Blanca was not

particularly concerned about her children becoming Americanized as she believed they were already identified with Mexican culture. For example, her older children did not say they were from the US; but instead stated they were from Mexico, even though they had expressed they did not want to live in Mexico.

Summary

Blanca, although she often expressed the importance of good parenting on children's behavior, also had biology-based explanations for Jesus' behaviors. She tried to explain the fact that Moisés was more active and less compliant than his siblings based on the fact that he received a blood transfusion as a newborn. Maybe because of what she perceived to be a natural cause, Blanca seemed rather tolerant of Moisés not acting "*bien educado*". When Blanca attempted to modify Moisés' behaviors she relied on normative messages, direct instructions and humor. Her parenting was also characterized by great affection and physical closeness, although at the same time with concern about her children becoming too needy or *chipil*. She stressed the importance of doing well in school and staying close to the family.

Coming to the United States had allowed Blanca to offer her children resources and material things she couldn't have provided in Mexico. But she was surprised with the different standards of parenting, as shown in her concern about the prohibition of physical punishment by American authorities. She was not concerned about her children becoming Americanized, because she believed she was raising them in the same way she would as if they were in Mexico.

Chapter 5

NANCY

Nancy took care of Mariana (target child) when Larissa, the mother, went to work. Because of these circumstances, there were more observations of Nancy interacting with Mariana, than of Larissa and her mother. Being Nancy the person most observed during the PEN project I decided to consider her as the caretaker, at least for the purpose of this research. She was also a more collaborative informer than Larissa, who probably because of her long working hours, sometimes seemed less inclined to answer interview questions.

Nancy is a light-skinned, slightly overweight woman in her late thirties. She speaks in a very melodious way and smiles often. By the time I met her she was living in Larissa's house with her family.

Housing and neighborhood

When I first met Nancy she had spent two and a half months in the United States, having migrated from Mexico looking for better economic opportunities. Nancy's husband was Larissa's husband's uncle. Larissa and her family offered Nancy and family her house while Larissa's husband found a stable job. When we met, Nancy would not complain about the living arrangements, but soon after she moved out, she confessed being very relieved about having her own place at last.

The house, in which both families were living when we first met, was situated not far from a busy main street in the Phoenix metropolitan area, but the street right in front of the house had little traffic. Larissa was not very happy with her house, which she called a "*trailer*" (trailer) house. The house was built from a truck trailer and placed on a concrete slab. Larissa and her husband had bought

the house with a loan. By the time I met Nancy again during the housing crisis in 2008, she told me that Larissa, unable to pay the increasing interest rates of their mortgage, had walked out of the house and abandoned it.

When asked, both Nancy and Larissa reported having little interaction with the neighbors. They were not even sure what ethnicity all of their neighbors were.

In terms of the neighborhood resources, while Larissa reported taking her children only to a nearby park, but not to museums or libraries, Nancy did visit some places such as museums, libraries and the local YMCA, where she attended English classes.

Living arrangements, family, arrival to the United States

Nancy arrived in 2005 from Ciudad Juárez with her husband and two children, who were at that time 10 and 13 years old, Although they crossed legally to the United States, they remained in the country after their pass -usually given to people living near the border- expired.

The house, which both families shared, had a living room, a kitchen-dining area, three bedrooms and one bathroom. The living room had some old couches, an empty aquarium and an entertainment center with a TV. There were many photographs of Larissa and her family on shelves. Nancy, her husband, and her children, José and Carmen, slept in one bedroom, while Larissa and her husband slept in another one and Larissa's three children (Mariana, Alexander and Johnny) shared the third one, the two boys using the same bed. The house had a spacious garden but it was mostly covered by gravel and sand. By the second wave of data collection in 2009 Nancy lived with her husband and children in a two-bedroom apartment.

Work and socioeconomic situation

Before she even finished high school Nancy worked at a factory placing coupons into cereal boxes. Her husband's family was providing services to a bank and that is how she started working in the bank industry. Nancy eventually became a bank teller. In Arizona, Nancy only worked at home, babysitting for neighbors. Nancy's husband worked with Larissa's husband.

Larissa, on the other hand, managed an auto parts store in Ciudad Juárez before leaving Mexico. In the United States she worked all day cleaning houses, sometimes even five houses a day, and felt guilty for not spending enough time with her children. She made \$12,000 a year, while her husband worked managing a small packaging materials plant. He made around \$20,000.

Daily routine

Larissa's children started their day at 7 am. Nancy dropped the children off at school at 7:30 am, while Larissa went to work cleaning houses. Alexander finished school at 10:40 and Mariana at 11:30. Nancy also drove Larissa's van to pick up the children from school. Larissa arrived at 5:30 pm and checked their homework. She also did some washing and ironing, making sure her husband always had his clothes ready. In the afternoons the family liked watching movies on Cable Television. The children were also often observed watching animated movies and eating snacks on their own in Larissa's bedroom. They particularly liked animated movies like Shark or Shrek or scary movies like Chucky and A nightmare on Elm Street. They liked talking about scary movies and sometimes they even reenacted them in their play.

On weekends, Larissa's family went shopping, either to stores or yard sales (what she called "*yardear*") or had lunch at a fast food place. Larissa liked

buying things, especially toys, for her children. On Sundays, Larissa's family but not her husband, would go to mass at 1:30 pm and from there they might go to Wal-Mart, to Larissa's mother-in-law's house or to a park. Larissa's husband usually stayed home on weekends, working on different house projects or fixing his car.

Mealtimes at the house were rather flexible and children ate whenever they were hungry. However, during weekdays it was always Nancy who would fix them something to eat. Children were observed trying to get their own food at the kitchen, but Nancy always told them she would fix them something instead. Although Nancy preferred homemade food, Larissa liked buying already made food such as Ramen soups, frozen waffles and frozen pizza.

During the summer, the children liked spending time at her grandmother's (Larissa's mother-in-law) place because she had a more spacious house and also a swimming pool. During the summer of 2006, the children were also enrolled in Karate classes.

Language and literacy

Although basically monolingual in Spanish, Nancy was very interested in learning English and attended some English classes at the local YMCA. But soon, she had to stop taking classes because she was asked to show proper documentation (she did not have a residency card nor a visa). On the other hand, Larissa who spoke mostly, Spanish would often use English or Spanglish words such as "*yardas*" (yards) or "*coras*" (quarters) in her conversation. Since she grew up in the United States, Larissa's husband used mostly English with his children, as it is shown in this extract from a field note:

Alexander, the youngest child, comes and says very excited to his father “*en el library había un libro de un oso*” (in the library there was a book about a bear). Dad asks “a bear?” and Alexander answers “yes, a bear”.

As reported by Nancy in 2008, Mariana had started preferring books and movies in English, and even refused watching movies in Spanish.

Larissa’s husband’s family often mixed English and Spanish. Larissa’s relatives were aware of their use of *Spanglish* and even made fun of it. When in a family gathering “Granny” (Mariana’s grandmother and Larissa’s mother-in-law) mentioned she was going to “*llamar pa`trás*” (literally “call back” in English, which in Spanish would be “*llamar de vuelta*”) her adult son jokingly said “¿*llamar de espalda?*” (“call from the back” as opposed to “call back”), to which everyone laughed.

Family of origin

Nancy was originally from a small town in northern Mexico but grew up with her parents and sister in Ciudad Juárez. She described her childhood as being “*muy bonita*” (really beautiful). She remembered fondly her visits to her grandmother’s house and the river that run close to it. She recalled having fun in a “healthy” way in that place: “*todo era diversión de verdad, desde que amanecía hasta que anocheceía, y esto es lo que me gustaría que mis niños aprendiera*” (“everything was real fun, from sunrise to sunset, and that is what I would like my children to learn”).

Nancy’s father was a bricklayer, who, because of his intelligence, eventually became a contractor. Her mother was a seamstress at a factory.

Nancy described her parents as being very warm and responsive:

“*apapachadores*” (comforting). Her parents had a strong relationship and that is

one the most important things Nancy wanted to provide her children a strong relationship with her husband. Nancy's parents also taught her to respect other people's things ("*no tomar las cosas ajenas*" or "don't take other people's things"), to treat other people with respect and to be happy, family-oriented persons. However, Nancy regretted inheriting her fathers' explosive character.

The behavior that was more concerning for Nancy's parents was her lack of interest in school. According to Nancy's words, her mother wanted to see her daughter "*todo el día con el lápiz y el cuaderno*" ("all day with the pencil and notebook"). When Nancy did not do well in school she was punished with not being able to watch TV or left without the roller-skates she loved. If Nancy answered back to her parents or misbehaved, she was spanked by her father. When she had good grades her parents would take her on a trip or would buy her an ice cream.

While Nancy's father was a very intense man who would yell when angry, her mother never raised her voice and if she was upset with her children, she would prefer to reprimand her children only when she was calmer. But at the same time, her father was more affectionate than her mother: "*él es muy emotivo*" ("he was very emotional").

On one occasion when all the family living in Phoenix (Larissa's family, Nancy's family, Mariana's grandmother and her husband and younger children) met to eat *pozole* for breakfast, the adults reflected on how parents in Mexico have changed their practices. According to Mariana's "granny", children are not as respectful as they used to be, because in the past, when adults would come to visit a home, children would go somewhere else and were not present in adults' conversations. In the old times parents used to hit their children with *leños*

(sticks), but according to her, Mexican parents have now “*evolucionado*” (evolved) because people have received more (formal) education.

Nancy’s beliefs about learning and school life

Nancy’s parents did not attend college and only finished elementary school. Her parents had the expectation that Nancy and her sister would attend college. However, she was not interested in school and was failing high school; because she felt education was not her priority: “*no estaba interesada*”(I was not interested). Her parents even sent her to a private school they could barely afford, so she could finish her education. Nancy regretted not continuing her studies. However, she did attend college when working for a bank; she received some English classes at the local university. Larissa also attended high school but not college.

Nancy’s beliefs and practices on discipline

Nancy used a combination of reasoning, non-physical punishment, and modeling to discipline Mariana and her own children. But with her own children, Nancy had occasionally used physical punishment.

Nancy thought communication was of particular importance when raising children: “*me gusta mucho hablar con ellos, siempre platico con ellos y cuando ya se han pasado un poco de la raya*”. By the time of the second wave of data collection in 2009, Nancy reported using more direct language with Mariana than she used to. She then said things like “*no, eso no se hace, estás lastimando a tu hermano*” (no, don’t do that, you are hurting your brother) or “*no m’hijita, no*” (no, sweetie, no) because she believed Mariana was at an age she could better understand what Nancy said. Still, Nancy admitted she didn’t treat her own children the way she treated Larissa’s children, because her role was more

limited. For example, she could not discipline Larissa`s children the way she had done it with her own children: *“aunque me haga pararme de los dedos, tengo que tener calma y decirle ‘no’ o separarla del grupo, `vaya al cuarto, se va a estar sola encerrada, en un cuarto, y ya`* (even if it makes me upset, I have to be calm, and say ‘no’ or separating her from the group, ‘go to your room, you are going to be alone in your room’) She could not use physical punishment with Mariana the way she would use with her own children, because that might produce friction with Larissa.

Nancy learned through reading and watching TV programs that it was a good idea to separate oneself from the situation when one was angry with children’s misbehavior but not for long *“separate cinco minutos, tampoco todo el día, porque no les va a servir nada de castigo”* (“remove yourself for five minutes, not all day, because it is not going to work as punishment”).

Nancy believed that parents’ examples were a powerful way of teaching children what is expected from them: *“muchas veces sin darnos cuenta hacemos cosas, y los niños están aprendiendo de nuestra forma de actuar, a lo mejor no de lo que hablamos, pero con muestras actitudes demostramos y los niños eso lo van a agarrar, es lo que van a copiar más fácil”* (“many times without realizing we do things and the children are learning from the way we are acting, maybe not from what we say, but with our attitude we demonstrate, and children are going to get it, that is what they are going to copy easily”).

Nancy also believed that children learned through consequences. For example, she taught the children to pick up after themselves by first telling them to do it. If they didn’t comply the first time, she would pick up the toys herself and hide them. When the children asked for the toys, she would say *“no puedes jugar*

con ellos porque no los recogiste" ("you cannot play with them because you did not pick them up").

She also used attention diversion tactics to manage children's behavior as shown in this example:

Johnny and Alexander (Mariana's brothers) come running to the living room and begin to wrestle. Nancy coming from the kitchen tells Johnny "*así no, Johnny, te vas a lastimar*" (not like that, Johnny, you are going to get hurt) . She then grabs Johnny by the hand and pulling him softly says "*vamos, te baño de una vez*"(come on, I'm going to give you a bath now). He releases his arms and crossing his arms, looks down, breathes heavily and pouts, looking very upset. Nancy puts her hands on his shoulder and asks "*¿qué pasa, por qué te enojaste conmigo?*" ("what's the matter, why are you mad at me?"). But Johnny doesn't respond. Nancy then turns to Alexander who is watching this scene and says to him "*Al Johnny no le vamos a comprar nada porque está chillón*" ("we are not going to give anything to Johnny because he is crying"). She then embraces Johnny and begins to tickle him until he laughs. She says "*ya se te quitó*" (it's gone").

Nancy's beliefs and practices on learning and school life

Nancy believed children are ready to learn since the time when they are born and even before birth: "*yo pienso que antes de nacer uno se debe involucrar con ellos, platicar la información*" ("I think that before children are born one has to be involved, talk to them"). She became convinced of this because of a dramatic example of early learning she experienced some time ago. She was teaching her oldest son numbers and would raise her hand to teach the vowels

using her fingers. But she did not notice that her daughter, who was only six months by then, was observing too. Soon, when she started saying the vowels, her daughter would raise her hand too. That experience taught Nancy that children learn from a very early age.

Nancy also scaffolded the children's learning. Scaffolding is understood as adjusting the support provided in her teaching. This is shown in the next example:

Alexander comes back from the bedroom and Nancy looking at his untied shoe, points at it and asks him to tie his shoe laces. Alexander attempts to do it, but does not seem to know how. Nancy starts giving him oral instructions. When he cannot go any further, she finishes for him. She then looks at the baby girl she is babysitting, places her on her lap and uses her as a model by tying her shoes while she describes to Alexander what she's doing: "*una orejita...otra orejita*" ("one ear, another ear"). Alexander tries to follow the steps with his other shoe, but has difficulties finishing the bow. Nancy, after letting the girl go, finishes Alexander's shoe lacing.

Nancy's beliefs and practices on emotional and moral development

According to Nancy, a *niño bien educado* was a child who had both good manners and who showed proper demeanor:

"trata con respeto a sus papás, se dirige a la gente con respeto, no te patalea las cosas, no te avienta las cosas, no agrede a los demás niños, trata de estar lo mejor, se comporta bien en la mesa, se comporta bien con la familia, con los vecinos, un niño que no te dice groserías, que no te dice malas palabras, que saluda" ("he's respectful towards his parents,

talks to people respectfully, does not throw tantrums, does not throw things, behaves correctly at the table, behaves properly with family, with neighbors, he's a child who does not say rude things, who does not swear, who greets").

Nancy believed children are naturally selfish because they always want more. She also believed children are not born knowing how to differentiate right from wrong and it is rather the parents' role to teach them. However, she thought some children are born with certain dispositions: "*Muchos niños a lo mejor y son rebeldes por naturaleza, son rebeldes ya en sus genes, en su genética*" ("many children are probably born rebellious, they are genetically rebellious"). Soon, in the same interview, Nancy went back to her belief that parenting is the most important predictor of children's behavior: "*pienso que todo se origina en la familia, todo, todo*" ("I think that everything originates in the family, everything, everything"). But she also found biological factors affected children's outcomes. For example, she blamed Carlitos' hyperactivity on some pills she took before getting pregnant.

To Nancy, a *chipil* child was a child who had always been given what s/he wanted. Nancy explained the ways a child could become spoiled:

Por ejemplo, si el niño quiere un pedazo de pan entonces tú le dices "te lo vas a comer o te doy una mitad" y enseñarlo a que es mejor de poquito en poquito para que él se termine todo, pero si la mamá desde un principio sabe que el niño tiene un año, que no se va a comer todo el pan, tú misma le estás enseñando que el niño quiera más de lo que pueda tener, entonces cuando están más grandes pues es muy difícil

(...) *el niño va a creer, va a seguir creyendo que él siempre merece más de lo que él tiene.*

(For example, if a child wants a piece of bread then you say “you are going to eat it or I’m going to give you half” and teach him/her that is better little by little so he can finish everything, but if the mother from the beginning know that the child is one year old, that he is not going to finish the bread you’re teaching him to want more than he can have, so when they are older it is difficult (...) the child is going to believe, he’s going to continue believing that he deserves more than he already has.)

Related to this concept of limiting what is given to a child, Nancy believed Mariana had been “*consentida*” (spoiled) by her parents. When interviewed in 2009, Nancy reported that Mariana had started demanding her parents buy her expensive objects like iPods. Nancy considered this gift was excessive for a 7 year old.

Larissa, on the other hand believed that Mariana was no longer as *chipil*, as she used to be. She defined a *chipil* girl as “*chineada, mimada* (spoiled)”. When she was younger she used to cry often, but that was fixed by “*hablándole duro y con unas nalagadas*” (“using tough language and spanking her”).

Being Mariana the only girl in Larissa’s family, when she was compared to her brothers, gender was often the explanation for her behavior. For example, she was considered to be messier but less rebellious than Alexander. And she was also compared to her mother, who kept her van cluttered. According to Nancy and even acknowledged by Larissa, in this family women were messy while the men were tidy. There were also concerns about Mariana not behaving like a girl and becoming “*chirota*” (tomboy), due to her brothers’ influence.

Therefore, Mariana often played fights with her brothers and sometimes ended up crying. Mariana was reminded constantly to be more ladylike. On one occasion, when she was looking at a book, she pointed at a picture, laughed and said “*pedos*” (“farts”). Her grandmother, who was nearby, told her: “*sé bonita niña*” (“be a nice girl”).

Experience with childrearing advice

When asked who Nancy relied for advice from, she said she would ask people who had experienced the same problems she had had and if that wouldn't work, she would look for professional help. She even used “professional” help when she was having difficulties with José, her oldest child. She called a center that provided counseling in Spanish to Spanish-speaking families. She called because she was concerned about José's “*rebelde*” (“rebellious”) behavior. On that occasion the lady told her that maybe Nancy was being apprehensive, because he was exploring a new country and that he had to experience changes. Nancy agreed with this assessment: “*en un año José quiso experimentar todo lo que no había visto en México*” (“in one year he wanted to experiment everything he had never seen in Mexico”)

She had also consulted with her parents and female friends who had older children whenever she had difficulties with her children. In Mexico she remembered consulting magazines for women like *Buenhogar y Todobebé* when her children were babies. She also went to bookstores looking for books about childrearing. She also liked to watch TV programs that invite psychologists to talk about childrearing.

On another occasion, it was another mother who gave Nancy memorable advice. José always gave Nancy trouble because he was “*hiperactivo*

("hyperactive"). When she was shopping in El Paso José was running around inside the store. Upset, she grabbed him by the arm and told him to stop running. But a Spanish-speaking woman who witnessed the scene told her *"déjalo que corra, es un niño sano, déjalo que corra, no está afectando a nadie, yo quisiera ver a mi nieto correr, mi nieto desde que nació, nació con un problema en la espina dorsal y no camina"* ("let him run, he is a healthy child, let him run, he's not bothering anyone, I wish I could see my grandson run, since my grandson was born, he was born with a problem in his spinal cord and cannot walk"). This incident left a great impression on Nancy because she realized she had to be grateful to God that she had healthy children.

Raising children in the United States

When I first met Nancy, she was concerned about her own children's adjustment in school. They didn't speak English and no one would speak to them in Spanish, even though there were other Spanish speakers at the school. José, her oldest child, experienced difficulties adjusting to the new environment:

"(tuvo) mal comportamiento incluso con los papás, porque aquí todo el mundo le contesta a la mamá como si fuera un niño peleando con otro niño, no con el respeto que le deben de hablar a los papás y lógico que yo no se lo iba a permitir" ("he showed bad behavior even with his parents, because here everyone talks back to the mother, like a child fighting with a child, not with the respect you need to talk to parents and of course, I was not going to allow it").

He also got punished for two weeks without breaks for leaving the school premises to pick up a ball while playing soccer. He was very confused about the incident, because in Ciudad Juárez, children could leave the school premises

without problems. Nancy interpreted this incident as her child being discriminated against. When her children started school in the United States other students would not talk to them and would call them *beaners*. Nancy recommended José and Carmen to be tolerant to these attitudes, acknowledging they were not in their own country.

Nancy also thought that children in the United States watched more television than children in Juarez. However, at the same time, this habit made things easier for her, because Larissa's children could entertain themselves.

Nancy considered of great importance teaching children to feel identified with Mexican culture "*aunque algún día arreglemos papeles o no, ellos van a seguir siendo mejicanos porque descenden de familia mejicana, toda su familia es mejicana y yo quiero y todos los días trato de que ellos se sientan orgullosos de México*" ("even if one day we get papers or not, they are going to be Mexicans because they descend from Mexican family, all their family is Mexican and I want them, every day I try to make them feel proud of being Mexican"). When asked what she did to preserve Mexican culture she mentioned eating Mexican food such as tacos and enchiladas, and reserving pizzas and hamburgers only for the weekends. When Nancy's family had just moved to the United States they started eating fast and already prepared food because they could afford having them every day, something they couldn't have done in Mexico. But by the time of the second wave of data collection in 2008, Nancy reported "*estoy volviendo a mis raíces*" ("I'm going back to my roots") cooking from scratch and making her own flour tortillas. Nancy was not as concerned about her children becoming Americanized because her children grew up in Mexico and were more familiarized with Spanish, both in its oral and written form. But in the case of

Larissa, Nancy was more concerned about cultural identity. Nancy had noticed that Mariana was having problems understanding words and expressions in Spanish and that she did not want to read books or movies in Spanish.

Although her adolescent children did not want to go back to Mexico, Nancy hoped one day to return. When Nancy considered the possibility of moving back to Mexico, she was concerned it would be difficult for her children to assimilate to the idea that their spending habits would have to change and that children in the US are used to demanding more consumption from their parents: “*en México sabemos que la situación está difícil y que un niño no te puede pedir cosas caras*” (“we know that things are hard in Mexico and that a child cannot ask you for expensive things”).

When asked to compare her parenting practices with American parents’ practices, Nancy answered she did not know much about how Americans raised their children because she did not have much contact with Americans. However, she had noticed that where they lived Americans raised their children “*muy libres*” (“very free”). Mexican parents on the other hand were always supervising, “*con el pendiente de que “¡ay! ten cuidado con éste, hay gente desconocida”*” (“with the concern that ‘be careful with that one, there are strangers’”) while back in Mexico children could spend more time playing without supervision. Nancy remembered a time when her children could play freely in the parks of Ciudad Juárez, although she recognized this had changed with the recent episodes of drug-related violence in the city.

Summary

In summary, Nancy placed communication as an important tool for raising children and she believed children should be informed of what is expected from

early on , particularly to be *bien educado* and respectful. In this sense, parents have an important role in modeling the behaviors they expect from their children. However, she often switched between more environment oriented and biological oriented theories of child development.

Nancy had made some use of advice on how to raise her children, even though she had not used continuous use of services such as counselors, parenting classes or psychologists.

When she was asked about differences between child rearing in the US and Mexico she stated there were no differences, but she later expressed feeling that children in the US are not as respectful with parents as they were in Mexico. Another contradiction might be that even though she expressed not being concerned about her children becoming acculturated, she placed great importance on maintaining Mexican cultural heritage (particularly traditional Mexican food) and maintaining the Spanish language. Although both Nancy and Larissa came to the United States looking to improve their economic situation, Larissa made enormous sacrifices to provide children with material objects; it was Nancy who seemed to stress immaterial things such as a strong sense of identity and traditional values. Nancy actually saw American consumerism as something that might make it difficult for her children to adjust to life in Mexico.

Chapter 6

CAROLINA

Carolina is a petite, light-skinned woman in her early thirties. She is a very mild-mannered but expressive woman. Her background and lifestyle contrast sharply with the other mothers in the study.

Housing and neighborhood

Carolina lived with her husband and twins in an exclusive gated community in the outskirts of the Phoenix Metropolitan area. Carolina, her husband, the two children and a housekeeper, who helped with general house work, all lived in the house. Her mother, her sister-in-law and two siblings lived in Phoenix too. Occasionally, Carolina's mother spent nights at the house and helped baby-sitting.

The gated community is surrounded by orange tree plantations. Carolina lived in a very spacious (6,000 feet) house with a big garden. The garden had a swimming pool, a playground, a sandbox and a soccer arch for the children to play. The house had four bedrooms, two studios and four bathrooms and it was decorated in a "stylish" way. One of the rooms used as a play room was sometimes called "*la escuelita*" (*the little school*). It was stuffed with toys, mostly construction games, puzzles and coloring books and a big doll house. It was in this room used where Carolina taught her children to read and write in Spanish. Carolina liked that in her neighborhood there were plenty of trees and that she could go with her children to pick up fruit when in season. She also mentioned how in her neighborhood there were many resources for mothers, such as schools and sport and art academies.

Work and socioeconomic status

Carolina worked for nine years in education but by 2005 she was working with her husband. They owned a real estate business, selling, buying and renting properties. Carolina liked the fact that while she helped the family economically, she could stay at home and spend time with her children. Her husband had also tried to teach Roberto the family business by asking him to work with him every Saturday. On those occasions the father asked Roberto to organize papers and dispose of them using the paper shredder.

Although she did not provide the exact number, she admitted that the family income was over \$100,000 per year.

Living arrangements, family and arrival to the United States

Carolina had been married for 16 years. After she got married, Carolina's parents moved to Tucson, because her father received a good job offer. After Carolina's parents' moved to the United States, Carolina's husband decided to come to the United States to study. As a civil engineer, he pursued a master's degree in construction in Phoenix with the help of a scholarship. In order to survive economically, he worked as a busboy while Carolina attended free English classes and worked as a baby-sitter. She was eventually admitted to the university and obtained a master's degree in Education. When the couple finished their studies they decided there were better job opportunities in the United States and decided to stay in the United States. They also planned to have children, but Carolina could not get pregnant despite artificial insemination attempts. Disheartened, Carolina went to the Basilica of the Virgin of Guadalupe in Mexico City and prayed. Two weeks later, she became pregnant with her twins, Michelle and Roberto. The children were born premature.

Daily routine

For this family the day started between 7 and 7:30. When the children were attending preschool the children went to school from 8:45 to 11:30 am. In the afternoon they would either play at home or go to a park nearby. Carolina's husband left for work at 11 or 12 and would come back at 6 or 7 pm.

On weekends the family liked to go out to eat, either for breakfast or lunch. They sometimes went to the IMAX Theater because it showed more educational movies (Carolina didn't like watching "regular" movies) or they might go to the park or go shopping. They also liked doing projects together, like using blocks. When her children were in preschool, the twins joined children from four other Latino families and Carolina was in charge of teaching reading and writing in Spanish. A total of five children would meet in the play room and Carolina would lead the class:

After 15 minutes of free play Carolina tells the children to clean up their messes because the class is about to start. The children start singing enthusiastically a cleanup song in Spanish. After cleaning up, the five children seat at two little couches at one corner of the room and Carolina greets them: "Buenos Días" ("Good morning"). She asks them to say to great each other in the same way. Once they are finished Carolina reads the story of "La gallinita roja" (The red hen). Throughout the reading Carolina asks the children questions and praise them for their answers with "muy bien" ("very well"). Soon is time to sit at the little tables 'and Carolina asks them to color and decorate the drawings of hens she has hand them out. But Melissa complaints with an angry gesture: "¡quiero ese crayón!" (I want that crayon) pointing at the crayon another girl is

holding. Carolina says impatiently: “lo que te toca es lo que te toca”(“you get what you get”). Melissa starts crying and tells the other girl she wants the crayon. Carolina, upset, tells her: “te mereces un timeout” (“you deserve a timeout”) but Melissa with a whiny voice tells her she doesn’t want a time out. “¿Te vas a portar bien?” (“Are you going to behave properly?”) her mother asks more calmed, to which Melissa sheepishly answers “sí”. After finishing the activity and singing more songs in Spanish, Carolina serves them what she describes as “comida saludable” (“healthy food”): chicken tostadas.

Language and literacy

In terms of language use at home, Carolina stressed the use of Spanish, but English was also used at home since both Carolina and her husband were fluent in English. For some time, she arranged classes in Spanish for children of friends and her own children, so they could become literate in Spanish too. There were many children’s books in the home and Carolina often read books with her children.

Family of origin

Carolina is from a small city in Northern Mexico. She grew up with her parents and 5 siblings in a house with a big garden. The garden was full of trees and farm animals. Carolina described her childhood as being full of adventure and exploration in the big garden. She still visits her hometown twice a year because she misses life in Mexico and the relatives she still has there. However, when we met in 2009, Carolina opted to not visit them due to the increasing violence in northern Mexico.

Carolina's mother obtained an Associate degree in Commerce and worked as a secretary for over 10 years. When Carolina and siblings misbehaved, the mother would just threaten them with telling the father but she would never yell or say nasty things. Carolina's father, who passed away, did not finish college but because of his great experience with machines, worked as a mechanical engineer. He was a man of "*pocas palabras*" ("few words"), who would hit the children with a belt as punishment.

Carolina was not allowed to disagree with her parents: "*estábamos educados a que ellos tenían la última palabra y que ellos siempre tenían la razón*" ("we were taught that they had the last word and that they were always right"). When Carolina succeeded at something, for example getting obtaining good grades, her mother would hug her and tell her how proud she was of her. Her dad, on the other hand, would not say much to her, but would take her to the beach or dinner as a prize.

Carolina commented she was not raising her children exactly as her mother did. In her view, her mother was more concerned about the housework and would spend less time playing with her children or teaching them. Carolina reasoned this might have been due to the fact that her mother had more children. Not only did Carolina spend more time with her children, she also taught her children in a different way: "*trato más de hablar con ellos y trato más de hacerlos razonar cuando hacen algo malo, cómo lo pueden cambiar en lugar de amenazarlos*" ("I try talking more to them and I try to make them reason when they do something bad, how they can change it, instead of threatening them"). She also did not physically punish her children like her parents did.

For Carolina's parents one of the most important things was that their children became good Catholics "*que creyéramos en Dios, lo respetáramos y fuéramos personas de bien*" ("to believe in God, to respect Him and to be good people"). Education was another important concern for Carolina's parents:

Mi papá siempre tenía un dicho que decía: 'Es la educación lo que les voy a dar a ustedes. Dinero no lo tengo. No les voy a dar dinero pero sí una educación. Así me tenga que ir a trabajar día y noche, van a ir a buenas escuelas y van a estudiar. Y aquí en esta casa, no quiero ni un nueve, puros dieces'

(My dad had a saying that said: 'Education is what I am going to give to you. Money I don't have. I don't have money but I have education. Even if I have to work day and night, you are going to go to good school and you are going to study. And in this house, I don't want a B, just A's').

As her father expected, all of Carolina's siblings went to college. Carolina studied two semesters of business administration in Mexico. When she moved to Arizona with her husband she changed her focus to education.

As her father did with her, Carolina expected her children go to college: "*yo veo en Roberto un gran ingeniero. Y yo veo en Michelle una gran abogada, una gran contadora o una gran administradora (...) o una gran maestra*" ("I see in Roberto a great engineer. And I see in Michelle a great lawyer, a great accountant or a great administrator (...) or a great teacher")

Carolina's beliefs and practices on discipline

Carolina was observed using time out, praising, reasoning and occasionally, non-physical punishment as a way to direct her children's behavior. When her children misbehaved (they did not clean up or acted "*irresponsables*"

or irresponsibly). She used these consequences because she believed they hurt their children more than a “*nalgada*” (“spanking”).

But Carolina also liked to reason with her children. She thought it was important to prevent misbehavior by telling her children what was expected from them: “*Los padres necesitamos hablar con ellos y explicarles (...) ‘esto es lo que va a pasar’*” (“Parents need to talk to them and explain (...) ‘this is what is going to happen’”). She also used situations from school to teach about the right behavior:

a veces ellos me dicen que se portó mal un niño ‘¿y qué hizo ese niño para portarse mal y que lo castigaran?’ ‘no pues que le jaló a una niña el cabello y la hizo llorar’, ‘¿entonces qué pasó?’ ‘ah, no, pues la castigaron’ vamos hablando de eso y entonces ponemos esa situación y ‘¿eso estuvo bien?, ‘¿cómo se sintió la niña cuando le jalaban el cabello y la hicieron llorar?’ ‘¿te hubiera gustado que a ti te hicieran eso?’

(Sometimes they tell me a child misbehaved “and what did the child do to misbehave and be punished?”, “oh, no, they punished her”, we start talking to them and we use that situation “was that okay?”, how did that girl feel when they were pulling her hair and made her cry?”, would you have like that?)

She also believed in modeling behavior, sometimes intentionally using interactions with others as examples:

Si Roberto mi esposo, por decir algo, pide algo y se le olvida decir por favor, algo sencillo, ¿no?, trato yo de ponerlo como la lección enfrente de ellos ‘bueno, sí lo quieres, pero acuérdate que si no dices la palabra que esperamos que digas, pues no te lo vamos a dar’ y Roberto y Michelle

están ahí atentos a ver qué hace papá (...) '¿ven? , hay que aprender a pedir las cosas para que te den'

(If Robert, my husband, for example, forgets to say thank you, for example, something simple, no? I try to make it a lesson for them, “well, you want it, but remember that if you say the word that we want you to say, we´re going to give it to you” and Roberto and Michelle are attentive to see what his dad does (...) 'see? , we have to learn to ask things to get them)

Carolina’s beliefs on learning and school

As mentioned before, Carolina had experience as a teacher. Although no longer practicing, she was still very involved with their children’s schooling. She volunteered at the children’s school every week and attended parent meetings frequently. She took choosing school seriously: Carolina spent two weeks looking for the right preschool for her children. She was looking for a place that didn’t have many children, with a short school day. She also wanted the preschool to have art and music programs “*que no fuera tan académico y que fuera para disfrutar no para tanto aprender sino para disfrutar*” (“that is not so academic and that is to enjoy, not so much to learn, but to enjoy”).

Moreover, Carolina was observed teaching her children academic content in a school-like fashion the mother created a time during the day to teach her children in Spanish. She organized a physical space in the house the children called “*la escuelita*”. Even outside school time the twins were read books and asked about the seasons and the weather in Spanish during activities Carolina organized for her and her friends’ children,. Beans were used for counting, and brownie making was used to learn fractions. Carolina would often propose

educational projects to the children like planting seeds in the garden, making cards, and baking. Carolina frequently asked her children questions about the meaning of words or factual information. Michelle and Roberto, in return, would ask their mother questions (“¿qué quiere decir “elaborada”?, “¿qué quiere decir fértil? or what does elaborated mean? What does fertile mean?”)

Once the twins started elementary school and due to the heavy academic load, Carolina reported doing less academic activities at home and spending more time doing “fun” things such as riding bikes, picking up oranges and simply, chatting. But she still inserted academic learning into their daily life such as performing arithmetic calculations with the oranges they picked up. For Carolina, learning had to be fun.

Carolina stressed the importance of preparing their children for school. She believed parents were the most important models for children: “*los padres deberían de pensar que hay que meterse en la vida de los hijos, no nada más porque van a la escuela,dejarlos ahí solos todos los días, hacer un pequeño sacrificio, de una hora, no necesita más*” (parents should think that they have to be involved in their children’s lives, just because they go to school and leave them there every day, make a little sacrifice. just one hour, no more). But not only parents learn from their parents, it works the other way around too: because of her experience raising Michelle and Roberto, Carolina believed she had become a more patient person. As a teacher, she had certain expectations on what a child of a certain age had to do and based on the curriculum, some skills and knowledge the children had to master. But with her own children, Carolina had learned that each child had her/his own path.

Carolina's beliefs and practices on emotional and moral development

Carolina stressed good manners, reminding her children to say “*gracias*” and “*de nada*”, when appropriate. She placed “*bien educado*” as her number one choice in the Q-sort activity (being *responsable con la familia*, and being respectful came in second and third place). For Carolina the concept of “*bien educado*” encompassed different aspects, not just manners:

Un niño que sepa esperar para interrumpir la conversación de unos adultos (...) un niño está educado cuando sabe pedir algo y sabe decir por favor, sabe decir gracias (...) un niño bien educado para mí es un niño que toma responsabilidad de sus propios actos y sabe la diferencia entre portarse bien y portarse mal y que sabe, sabe las consecuencias de su comportamiento, entonces ser educado para mí es el respeto a los adultos, a los padres, a los abuelos, a los maestros (...) esperar su turno, arreglar problemas entre ti mismo y con otros niños sin necesidad de avisarle al adulto

(A child who knows to wait before interrupting an adult conversation, a child is *bien educado* when he knows how to ask for something and knows how to say sorry and thank you (...) a *bien educado* child for me is a child who assumes responsibility of his own actions and knows the difference between behaving correctly and behaving incorrectly and who knows the consequences of his/her behavior, therefore, being *bien educado* for me is the respect towards the adult, the parents, the grandparents, the teachers (...) wait his/her turn, fix problems between you and other children without having to ask for help)

Another value Carolina wanted her children to learn was to be grateful and appreciate what they received. In order to teach the value of food she had taught them how to grow vegetables, as Roberto the father did, growing up in a ranch in Mexico.

Additionally to teaching them to be thankful for things, Carolina believed that children's desires should be somehow restricted. She believed that children are naturally egocentric and consequently, adults need to teach them to be considerate of other people's needs. Giving too much to child, for example, might have negative consequences, producing a *chipil* or *chipilón* child:

Porque están acostumbrados a que todo lo que quieren se les da y otra vez, yo siento que viven con los padres los primeros años, son los padres los responsables, somos nosotros los que accedemos a ese comportamiento, y estamos alimentando ese comportamiento, dándole al niño lo que quiere y haciéndole caso cada vez que quiere algo y por eso es que se ve, se vuelven chipilones como dices o chiqueados y que por todo lloran aunque estén grandes, todo quieren, no pueden aceptar que un día no les compres algo, ese tipo de comportamiento

(Because they are used to receive everything they want, and again, I think they live with the parents the first years, the parents are responsible, we are the ones producing this behavior, giving the child what he/she wants and granting his/her every wish, and that is why you see, they become *chipilones* as you say or *chiqueados* and they cry for even when they are older, they all want, they cannot accept that one day you don't buy them something, that kind of behavior)

Therefore, Carolina believed children's egocentrism had to be somehow restricted by parents, alerting them about other people's needs and restricting the gifts and attention they receive.

Having twins, Carolina was particularly aware of personality differences. She had noticed for example, that Melissa had a stronger character and could become angry, while Roberto had a more placid character. Carolina and her husband believed they had raised their children in the same way, but nonetheless, they had observed slightly different outcomes.

However, Carolina did seem to behave differently with her children based on their gender. While Roberto was taken to his father's office to learn the "business" Michelle was not involved in those visits. Additionally, toys were bought based on gender. In one observation Michelle complained bitterly that she did not have LEGO toys like her brother had. Carolina explained to Cristina, the research assistant, that she couldn't buy LEGO toys Michelle, because she could not find them "*para niñas*" ("for girls").

Raising children in the United States

During the Q-sort activity Carolina placed "Living American culture" and "Living Mexican culture" as the values she valued the least:

Porque lo considero algo que ya está en nuestras vidas y es parte de nuestra vida que vivimos acá, estamos en Estados Unidos y vivimos la cultura mejicana con literatura, con cosas que hacemos en español, con la comida, con comportamiento

(Because I consider it something that is in our lives and part of the life we live here, we are in the United States and we live Mexican culture with literature, with things we do in Spanish, with the food, with behavior)

Nonetheless, Carolina felt her children had missed important experiences she lived as a child. For example, Carolina missed the closer contact with nature she had when growing up in Mexico:

Mi mamá nos dejaba comprar pollitos por docenas allá en México, teníamos gatitos, teníamos gallinas, todos esos animalitos que podías comprar de granja. Y teníamos un jardín lleno de árboles donde nos la pasábamos brincando y armando casas. Y yo creo que aquí se ha perdido mucho eso

(My mom would let us buy chicks by the dozen in Mexico, we had kittens, we had hens, all those animals that we could buy at a farm. And we had a garden full of trees where we spent time jumping and making houses. And I believe that in here that has been lost)

However, her image of Mexico is not idyllic as Carolina recognized some things had changed in Mexico. During her visits to relatives' homes, she observed children spending too much time watching TV and playing videogames but reading very little. Carolina, on the contrary, had emphasized reading with her own children and had restricted their children's TV watching. But she did appreciate how families related back in Mexico:

Me encanta la unión con los padres, la familia que aquí no ven, aquí los niños son más groseros y no te expresan ese respeto al adulto como es allá en México, allá los niños son más educados, mis hijos se dan cuenta que sus primos aunque tengan 15, 16 años, todavía le hablan de usted a sus padres, todavía piden permiso para hacer ciertas cosas

(I love the idea of the union with parents and the family that they don't see here, here children are rude and don't express the respect towards the

adult as in Mexico, their children are more *educados*, my children realize that their cousins, even if they are 15, 16, use the formal form of address with their parents, still ask for permission to do certain things)

Carolina reported being concerned for her children growing up in a country where behaviors like sexual activity, alcohol drinking, unsupervised parties and smoking (what she calls “*liberación*” or “*liberation*”) started at an early age. Compared to some American families, she believed she behaved more conservatively and traditionally towards Michelle and Roberto and did not let her children sleep in other people’s houses. For example, she herself did not go to parties until she was 15. However, she recognized that Mexican culture was changing and that the norms she experienced as a young woman might be already different.

Additionally, Carolina also saw the ease in purchasing and acquiring material things in the United States as having a negative side:

Aquí todo es más materialista. Aquí no existe el trompo o un juego que tú inventas o palitos de madera para hacer una casita. Aquí todo te lo compran. Todo es tan accesible que la gente ya no tiene la creatividad de pensar en juegos que puedan hacer con sus hijos sin necesidad de ir a la tienda

(Here everything is more materialistic. There is no spinning top or a game you invent or wood sticks to make a house. Here everything is bought for you. Everything is so accessible that people do not have creativity to think of games they can do with their kids without having to go to the store)

Experience with childrearing advice

Carolina liked to read books and magazines about childrearing, especially when she was experiencing specific difficulties raising her children. Carolina liked books because they were written by experts on the topic as these books were the product of her research.

Carolina also received advice from her mother who lived nearby “*es una bendición contar con mi mamá*” (“it’s a blessing to have my mother”). But her mother’s advice centered around health issues because according to the grandmother her grandchildren were “*niños buenos*” (“good kids”) so she did not consider they required any more discipline measures. But Carolina did discuss with her husband her children’s behavior: “*Nos sentamos en la noche cuando ellos ya se acuestan a platicar: ‘oye, ¿estás notando que Melissa ahora te pregunta o te presiona cuando le pides algo? Antes no hacía eso*” (“We sit down to chat at night at night when they go to bed: ‘hey, are you noticing that Melissa now is asking or demands you when you ask her something?’ She didn’t do that before”). She also had a group of friends with children the same age as the twins with whom they discussed different issues: “*les pregunto ‘oye, ¿a tí te está pasando esto? Fíjate que a mí me está pasando esto’ y ‘ah, no yo pasé por ahí, es horrible, esto y esto pasó con los míos’, empiezas a compartir historias similares*” (I ask them ‘hey, is this happening to you? I am going through this’ and ‘oh, no, I went through that, it’s horrible, this and that happened with mine’ you start telling similar stories”). But above all sources of advice, Carolina preferred reading, because contrary to other people’s opinions, books were based on research and therefore, had more valid data.

Even though Carolina interacted often with teachers due to her school involvement, Carolina did not remember receiving any advice from teachers on childrearing. And she never consulted with a counselor, psychologist or psychiatrist, seeking information on child development only from printed media.

Summary

Carolina made explicit attempts at teaching academic learning to her children, infusing her daily activities with academic content knowledge. It does seem that for this mother the task of raising successful students was facilitated by her own experience as a teacher. She also had the advantage of having a comfortable economic situation, relatives living nearby and legal status in the country. Interestingly, although she seemed to be more involved with American culture than the other participants, because she spoke the language, interacted often with teachers and dealt with American clients, she was very concerned about the effect of American “liberal” values and consumerism on her children’s development. As a result of her concern, she had developed contention walls for this influence: limiting exposure to TV, limiting visits of her children to other families and exposing her children to Mexican culture. The gated community in which she lived might also be considered a metaphor for the walls she had built around her children.

In terms of her beliefs on childrearing and learning, it seemed like Carolina had spent time thinking about how children should be raised and how they learn. She answered with ease and detail questions about such topics. As a former teacher it is possible that for her these issues were very relevant and had often thought about them. Although she did seem to believe that children were born with a specific temperament she emphasized the role of the environment

and more specifically, the parents' role in raising good children. She was particularly concerned with teaching manners; respect through modeling. As she believed all children are somewhat egocentric, she believed a parent should not give a child whatever s/he wants.

Chapter 7

CARLA

Carla is a short, dark skinned woman with long dark hair and slightly slimmer than her sister Blanca. Although she was receptive to the home visits, she was often tired from work and that affected her participation in the project.

Housing and neighborhood

Cristina, a member of the PEN project, first met Carla. At that time, Carla lived on the second floor of an eight-unit apartment complex. The apartment had two bedrooms and one bathroom. When I met her for the second wave of data collection, she lived not too far away from her previous apartment. She was in a small apartment complex in a predominantly Latino neighborhood in the Phoenix Metropolitan Area. The complex did not have a laundry area, green areas or swimming pool. The apartments were not well maintained. Carla's own apartment was missing a window and the lock on the door did not work, even though Carla had warned the manager about it. The interior was sparsely furnished and the sofa in her living room had obvious signs of wear and tear. When first interviewed, Carla was asked about her neighborhood and she commented that she liked the fact that her neighborhood was quiet. But she would like the Mexican-market oriented supermarket in the neighborhood to be closer to her place, because at the time of the first interview she didn't own a car and it was hard for her to do grocery shopping. A few months later after this first interview, Carla was able to buy a car.

Living arrangements, family, arrival to the United States

By the time the project first contacted Carla, she was not living with her husband, the father of her first four children (Santiago, Jessica, Jean Carlo and

Marcela) and who was back in Mexico. At that time, she had a relationship with the father of her younger children Carlos, Milena and the twin girls but did not live with him. By the time of the first interview in 2005 Santiago was 17, Jessica 14, Jean Carlo 10, Marcela 7, Carlitos 5, Milena was 3 years old and Carla was pregnant with the twin girls. The two eldest children were born in Mexico and the rest in the United States.

By the first time she was contacted in 2005, Carla had been living in the United States for 14 years. She moved to the United States following her husband who came to work. He first worked in a restaurant and did some landscaping, while Carla stayed home. At some point the couple separated, the husband moved back to Mexico and Carla kept the couple's children. Carla did not receive any financial support from her husband. Her boyfriend and father of Carlitos, Melina and the twins, helped buy his children's clothes and school supplies.

Carla slept with her daughters in one bedroom, while the boys slept in the other room. The room where Carla and her daughters slept only had a full size bed and three wardrobes. Carla's room was decorated with plastic flowers while the boys' bedroom had a TV set. By the time of the second wave of data collection in 2009, Carla's oldest daughter Jessica of 17, had moved to Mexico, following her Mexican boyfriend who had been deported.

Work and socioeconomic status

Carla worked as a housekeeper at a hotel. She worked six days a week, including weekends. She often complained of being too tired from work, especially when her pregnancy was more advanced. One day she excused herself with Cristina saying she could no longer continue with the visit, as she

needed to rest. On top of the physical demands of her job, Carla also had to do chores at home for her six children.

Carla made around \$1000 a month cleaning at the hotel. As it was already mentioned, she did not receive economic help from her children's fathers. She received food stamps from the government but had no health insurance, and was very concerned about this.

As she did not receive support from her boyfriend, when she discovered she was pregnant with her last child, she asked her oldest son Santiago to get a summer job in order to support the family. She believed that he was old enough and since he was not currently studying, Santiago could be able to help her. Although at the beginning Santiago refused, he eventually took a temporary job at a restaurant.

Family of origin

Carla is Blanca's older sister. She coincided with Blanca describing her parents as being very strict. For example, as a child Carla could not talk back to her mother: "*a ella ni contestarle mal ni remedarle*" ("we could not answer back or imitate her"). If she disobeyed, her parents would hit her or punish her by not letting her go out of the house. Among other rules, her mother would not let her run around, and that was a frequent reason Carla was punished. However, she remembered her parents congratulating her when she did something good and showing pride in her accomplishments, something that Blanca did not report.

Carla noticed important differences in her experience growing up in Mexico and the way her children were being raised. Although she jokingly said her children think she's "*criada a la antigua*" (old-fashioned). For example, she didn't understand why her children spent so much time on the street and as in

the case of her oldest daughter Jessica, why she would come back home in the early hours of the morning. She remembered that when she was growing up in Mexico, her parents greatly limited the amount of time she could spend outside: *“yo sí me salía, pero cuando llegaban, me pegaban porque decían que tenía que pedir permiso...que era yo hija de familia, no era yo burro de andar en la calle”* (“I used to go out, but when I went back, they would hit me because they said I had to ask for permission...that I was a family girl, that I was not a donkey to be on the street”).

Carla had not visited Mexico since she left because she did not have documents to travel and would not be able to come back if she left the United States. However, she had four siblings, including Blanca, living nearby, although she did not meet with them often.

Language and literacy

Carla only used Spanish with her children as she did not speak any English, but her oldest children used English among themselves. Interestingly, his siblings used only Spanish with Carlos. Although Carla reported that Carlitos liked “reading” books, he was not observed looking at books and there were no books in the home.

Daily routine

Carla would wake up at 6 am and her children a little later. As soon as she was ready, she helped her youngest children get ready for school and would serve them breakfast. However, based on observations, there didn’t seem to be a time when the family ate together. It was observed that the children would eat at different times and would even serve their own food. Carla left for work at 8:30 and came back between 3:30 or 5 pm. The children arrived between 3 and 3:30

pm. When the children came back from school they watched TV or played in the park. The family had dinner at 7:30 pm. On weekends, Carla's boyfriend took Carlos to play soccer or to a nearby park. If that wasn't the case, the whole family would clean the house or go shopping, go to the Kiwanis Park or the movies. According to observations, the family spent a lot of time watching soap operas and movies on TV, and it did not seem like Carla restricted her children's TV watching. On a day when Cristina visited, the children were still sleeping at 11 am because they had watched movies until late the night before. On another occasion, Carlitos was observed watching a movie with female nudity.

Mother's beliefs and practices about health

Similarly to her sister Blanca, Carla preferred traditional medicine over Western medicine. For example, at some time Jessica was sick with "*empacho*" (blockage to the digestive system) and Carla bought some herbal teas to cure her. The reliance on traditional medicine might also have been due to her lack of access to traditional medicine as she was not insured.

Carla's beliefs and practices on discipline

Carla used a mix of threats, direct instructions and spanking as discipline measures with her children:

Carlitos is in the boys' room. He goes to the kitchen, opens the fridge, grabs a juice and moves back to the bedroom, leaving the fridge door open. Carla seeing this asks him to close the door but Carlitos yells "*¡no!*". Carla, seeing this, visibly upset says "*ahorita vas a ver*" (wait and you'll see). Carlitos yells "*¡no!*" again. He runs toward the boys' bedroom and shuts the door, leaving the fridge door open. Carla stands up and goes to

the bedroom, spansks Carlitos, who starts to cry. Carla then angrily asks him to go a close the door fridge, which he reluctantly does.

Although Carla reported using non-physical punishments such as not letting her children watch TV or play Nintendo as a way of disciplining her children she was also observed spanking her children and threatening them with spanking. Nonetheless, sometimes threats and instructions were not carried through as in this scene:

Carla, Milena and Carlitos are at supermarket that caters to Mexican consumers. Once they arrive at the supermarket Carla tells her children she doesn't have enough money to buy candies. Carla puts Milena in the shopping cart while Carlitos walks along with Carla. Carla goes through the vegetable aisles and gets some fruits and vegetables. She then moves to the meat section and asks the sales clerk for marinated pork. In the meantime, Carlitos goes to the bakery and gets a pineapple pie and puts it in the shopping cart. Carla asks him to put it back, but Carlitos says "no" to which Carla upset replies "*ahorita vas a ver*" ("wait and you'll see"). Carla comments she doesn't know why her children won't listen to her. The family finally reaches the register and Carla starts to unload the shopping cart, including the pineapple pie. While waiting in line, Carlitos grabs some chewing gums from a shelf next to the cashier. He opens one package and starts to chew it. The cashier asks Carla if she's going to pay for that and Carla nods. Carlitos grabs another gum and Carla asks him to put it back saying she doesn't have enough money. Carlitos says "no" and puts another piece of gum in his mouth. Carla pays for the groceries and leaves with her children.

It is interesting that Carla does not follow up on her first instruction of not buying candies. This could be seen as a lack of consistency in her parenting or possibly, as a way of avoiding making a scene in front of others. In this sense, it would have been interesting to know if she did anything after the family arrived home as a way to prevent future similar events. Unfortunately, the observation ended before the family left the store.

Although Carla often blamed Carlitos' bad behavior on him being tired or angry, she also believed the parents' role was important. She believed that in order to teach a child to be *bien educado* a parent had to talk to the child and punish her when she misbehaved. Carla also seemed self-conscious about her role as a parent, as she often apologized to Cristina for Carlos' "bad behavior". She often felt frustrated for not being able to command more authority with her children, as she expressed in the previous passage.

Carla's beliefs on learning and school

Carla only studied until 5th grade. Carla said her parents wanted her to reach a higher degree of education but she couldn't fulfill that expectation, because she got married too young. Based on this experience, Carla had told her children they needed to go to school because she wanted them to get a better job than hers, as she thought her job was too exhausting.

When the family was first contacted, Carlitos was not attending preschool, but the reason for this decision was not explored in this research. When Carla was asked how she was preparing Carlitos to go to school Blanca said she was teaching them not to answer back to the teacher or hit the other children. She believed the most important factor in children's success in school was proper behavior:

Pues le digo que va a ir al kinder y que no le va a decir cosas a la maestra ni le va a pegar a los niños, porque si les pega, a él lo van a castigar. Pero él dice 'pues que no me peguen' dice, 'porque si me pegan, sí les voy a dar para atrás'.

(I tell you he is going to kindergarten and that he not going to say things to the teacher and that he is not going to beat the children, because if he does, he is going to be punished. But he says 'they shouldn't hit me then', he says, 'because if they hit me, I'm going to hit them back').

It is interesting that Carla stressed punishment as the main reason to prevent misbehavior. Carla worried about how Carlitos will fare in school because he is “*grosero*” (“rude”). As well as stressing behavioral aspects of the preparation to school, Carla thought reading was an important requirement for school:

Carla says that Carlitos likes books very much and that he has some books he loves to watch and Carla comments “*¡qué bueno que lea porque ya va a entrar a la escuela!*” (“it is good that he reads because he is going to the school”).

When asked how she thought children learned, she said it was mostly by talking to them “*hablándoles con palabras, diciéndoles, mira, eso no está bien no puedes ir porque eso no es bueno*” (“talking to them with words, telling them, look, this is not right, you cannot go because it is not good”).

Carla's beliefs about emotional and moral development

Carla sometimes blamed Carlitos' behavior on Carlitos' characteristics, calling him “*grosero*” (rude) and “*enojón*” (*angry*). However, at other times she explained Carlitos' behavior based on his mood or fatigue. Some other times,

she thought the reason for Carlitos' disobedience was her own behavior : *“tengo dos más grandes que él [Carlitos] y a los otros yo les decía “no abran la puerta no te vayas a salir” y no se salían, y estos no, a estos uno les dice “no abras la puerta” y parece que les dice “ábrela”* (“I have two older than him [Carlitos] and the other two I told them 'don't open the door, don't go out' and he wouldn't go out and these no, you tell them 'don't open the door' and it seems you are saying 'open it'”). She thinks this was due to the fact she was stricter with the older ones.

Carla believed children learn early on to get what they want *“se imponen a los brazos, saben la hora que los tiene que cargar uno si no ellos lloran, o sea que se acostumbran a los brazos y ellos quieren a la misma hora que los cargó ayer que los carguen”* (“they get used to being held, they know the time they are going to be held, if not, they cry, meaning they get used to being held and they want the same hour they were held yesterday”). A few times when Melina cried, she did not pick her up and even complained of her crying.

For Carla, a *chipil* child was a child who was *“consentido”* (spoiled) and this was expressed by crying and wanting to be in the mothers' arms. Carla often complained that her daughter Milena cried often and demanded attention. But she also used it to refer to Santiago's behavior, who still liked to lean on her. In this case, however, Carla perceived this as a positive behavior.

Carla placed being respectful, being *despierto*, and being responsible with the family as the most important values to teach to a child, while being modest, living American culture and being curious were placed at the bottom. Carla defined being *“bien educado”* as a child *“que no hace las cosas malas”* (“who doesn't do bad things”) and more specifically, a child that is not rude and who does not yell and who is not disobedient.

As mentioned before, Carla not only behaved differently with her older and her younger children. In this family, as in other families with mixed gender children, distinctions were made based on gender. In this example Carla made it clear to her children that some activities were gender specific:

Carlitos and his oldest brother Santos are playing soccer at the apartment complex parking lot while Carla observes. Santos asks Carlitos to kick the ball hard. Carlitos hits the ball, but his brother, not impressed with the kick calls him “*marica*” (sissy). Carlitos yells back “*no soy marica*” (“I’m not sissy”) and goes to his mother and accuses his brother. Carla replies “*no le hagas caso a tu hermano, está jugando*” (“don’t play attention to your brother, he’s playing”).

Carlos, still upset, goes back to playing soccer. Jessica, the youngest one, yells from the balcony saying she wants to kick the ball too, but her mother tells her “*ese juego es solo para hombres*” (“this game is just for men”). Jessica insists and Santos tells her is okay for her to join. Santos shoots the ball towards Jessica but Carlitos comes from the side and kicks it first. Melissa, visibly upset, cries saying “*yo quería pegarle*” (“I wanted to hit it”). Carla comments “*ella es muy llorona, siempre llora por todo*” (“she is a cry baby, she cries for everything”).

Raising children in the United States

Carla was concerned about her older children’s behavior. However, when she had tried to intervene they had replied that the problem was that she as “*chapada a la antigua*” (“old fashioned”). She seemed unsure about what the cultural norms were in the United States, wondering if it was normal that teenagers came back home at 5 am, as her daughter did. This cultural gap seemed to be complicated by the fact that she came from a different environment

“yo soy de un pueblo, de un rancho y allá no es como aquí, en una ciudad” (I am from a town, from a ranch, and there, it’s not like here, in a city”. She would like to be as strict as her mother but children in the US did not respond in the same way as children back in Mexico *“nosotros allá nada de que fuéramos a contestarle feo o pelarle los ojos tantito, porque si la voltéabamos a ver tantito decía “ahorita me vas a mirar mejor, a mí no me pela los ojos porque soy tu madre, no soy otra persona”* (“there we could not answer back or open the eyes, because if we looked back even a little bit, she would say 'now you are going to look at me better, you don’t look at me that way, because I’m your mother, not another person”) . Carla believed there was too much *“libertad”* (freedom) in the US. As mentioned before, her oldest daughter liked going to clubs with friends. In Mexico *“allá si va a ir a un baile la lleva la mamá o el papá, nada de esto que vaya sola, allá una muchacha que ande sola es porque ya anda haciendo cosas malas”* (there, if you go to a dance, the mother or father takes you, you can’t go alone, there a girl who is by herself is doing bad things”).

Carla also felt that children in the United States intruded in adults’ spaces: *Allá es muy diferente porque ellos aquí, o sea que están muy acostumbrados a que si está uno platicando con otras personas ellos no, o sea se ve que allá cuando uno está platicando con otras personas ellos (...) se quitan y se van a jugar. Aquí se quedan.* (There is very different because they here, are very used to that if one is talking to someone with other people, when someone is talking to another people they leave and go play. Here, they stay”)

Experience with childrearing advice

Carla had received advice from *Chicanos por la Causa*, an organization that provides different services to Mexican and Mexican Americans in the United

States. She attended some parenting classes, where presenters recommended parents not punish their children physically but rather use consequences such as not letting them watch a TV program, for example. It was not clear if she attended by her own will or if she was referred.

Carla watched a few episodes of *Todo Bebé*, a TV show in Spanish with advice on childrearing. She remembered learning about the importance of self-esteem and of being affectionate towards children. They also recommended parents to be firm about rules, but as she recognized, she had not been successful about this recommendation “*ya al ratito los dejo que salgan porque ya se me olvidó*” (“after a while I let them go out because I forgot”).

When asked about the main differences between raising children in the United States and in Mexico, Carla replied that if children were hit in this country, they might threaten parents with accusing them to the police, something that would not happen in Mexico: “*apenas les quiere uno pegar y ya están que te voy a echar la policía*” (“if you try to hit them they are saying 'I'm going to report you to the police'”). This comment might be related to a situation she experienced when trying to punish Jean Carlo, her third child. Jean Carlo had been stopped by the police three times. On one occasion he was stopped because he had been stealing knives at a mall, on another occasion because he killed a neighbor's chicken and a third time he was stopped at Wal-Mart. Because of this last behavior, Carla hit him with a broom. Jean Carlo, still hurting, cried on his way to the school and when his teachers asked him the reason, he told them. The teachers reported her to Child Protective Services. This agency had visited her a few times and the persons in charge of her case were also concerned about some greenish spots Carlitos had on his back, which they

thought were bruises, but according to Carla they were birthmarks. The personnel in charge of her case referred her to a therapist, but at the moment of the fourth interview, this had not happened yet. Carla believed that in Mexico, she would had not been contacted by the authorities.

Although Carla had met with teachers before, she only communicated with her children's teachers through interpreters. However, she did not recall receiving advice on how to raise children from them.

Summary

Carla was experiencing difficulties adapting her parenting to the United States context. In contrast to Blanca, her sister, she wanted to be as strict as her own mother. However, she had not been able to be as strict as her mother and was concerned and frustrated with her children's behaviors. Being a single mother with no economical support from the children's fathers and having to work full time made being a parent even more difficult.

Although Carla "learned" that it was a recommended practice to talk to children and to use non-physical punishment, she did seem to rely only on verbal instructions, threats and physical punishment as a way to discipline her children. She did not seem to have followed the advice she had received in her parenting classes.

Carla did not place being *bien educado* as the most important value to be taught, although she did include being *respectful*, being *despierto* and being responsible with the family as her first three choices. For her, being *bien educado* was not related to having good manners, but rather related to not behaving aggressively. She seemed concerned that her children not become too *chipil* or demanding, as she often complained about her daughter Jessica being whiny.

Carla's biggest concern about raising children in the United States was that the rules she learned at home (being obedient, not being out at night, not intruding in adults' spaces) were often violated by her children and that when she tried to stop such behaviors by physically punishing her child, the authorities intervened.

Chapter 8

GENERAL RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

At the risk of going beyond the purpose of a multiple case study which is to highlight the uniqueness of each case (Stake, 2006) this section will attempt to make connections between cases and link these results with previous research in the area. More specifically, I will be analyzing the ways in which the participant mothers were constructing their parenting practices and beliefs about moral and social development in the context of their migration to the United States.

The present study results have to be understood in the specific context in which the participant mothers were raising their children. As discussed in the introduction the developmental niche has three major components: the physical and social settings in which the child lives, culturally regulated customs of child care and child rearing and the psychology of the caretakers. Starting the analysis with the first subsystem, the physical and social setting, we could mention that raising children in the Phoenix metropolitan area has particular constraints, such as difficult weather conditions in the summer time, a hostile political climate to Mexican immigrants, relatively constrained spaces for movement (living in small apartments, difficulties with public transportation, concerns about children's safety) and lack of perceived support from the community. For example, the participant mothers perceived their children's access to public spaces restricted, because they perceived the environment as dangerous and consequently, children needed constant supervision.

Although at least two participant mothers (Luisa and Blanca) highlighted the higher governmental support they received in the United States compared to Mexico in terms of health care system, the police, and federal programs for poor

families (such as food stamps), this was not the case in terms of community support. The participants felt a lack of sense of community where they lived, as they did not feel they could rely on others for childrearing purposes. Furthermore, some of them felt isolated as they did not have relatives living nearby and felt disconnected from the larger community. This contrasted with the experiences they had in Mexico. All the mothers grew up in the same community in which they were born and probably because of this, they were able to develop closer ties with neighbors and relatives. To make things even more contrasting, some of the mothers such as Blanca, Luisa and Carla came from small rural communities in Mexico but now lived in urban-suburban environments of the Phoenix metropolitan area. It is in this sense, that the participants' concern for children's safety and their nostalgia for the environments in which they grew up, can be understood. Carolina for example, wanted her children to experience the kind of experiences one would experience when living in rural areas, such as raising animals and climbing on trees.

Cultural beliefs on social and moral development

The present study centers around the third component of the developmental niche, the psychology of caretakers, more specifically, the theories mothers have on social and moral development. Although mothers' explanations about children's behaviors seemed at times a smorgasbord of beliefs, the results show cultural continuity in the importance given to traditional beliefs such as being "*bien educado*", being obedient, and showing "*respeto*" and "*responsabilidad con la familia*". All mothers included at least one of these values (out of 10) in the top three values they considered most important for children to have:

Table 2 Ranking of most important values to teach

Ranking of value	Luisa	Blanca	Carolina	Carla*
1	being <i>bien educado</i>	being independent	being <i>bien educado</i>	being respectful
2	being obedient	being <i>bien educado</i>	being responsible with the family	being <i>despierto</i>
3	being respectful	being respectful	being respectful	being responsible with the family

* There is not data available for Nancy

Nonetheless, participants understood these terms in slightly different terms. The concept of being *bien educado* was particularly diverse and wide. When asked to define the term, some mothers emphasized behaviors related to following moral and social standards and not being aggressive, while others perceived it as more related to good manners, as shown in the following table:

Table 3 Definitions of being *Bien educado*.

	Manners and respect (greeting, saying thank you and please, being <i>respetuoso</i> , not interrupting adult conversations)	Moral and social norms (don't go on the wrong path, behaving correctly, not getting in trouble)	Aggressiveness (not fighting, not hitting)
Carolina	✓	✓	
Blanca	✓	✓	
Nancy	✓		✓
Luisa	✓	✓	
Carla	✓		

Although mothers considered important to communicate with children, which implies a more equal relationship between parents and children, mothers in this study also emphasized the importance of being obedient and *respetuoso*, which has the implicit idea that children need to respect the authority of adults (Arcia, Reyes-Blanes & Vazquez-Montilla, 2000). This exemplifies how a more “modern” ideal (better communication with children) can co-exist with more a more “traditional” one (respecting adult’s authority).

However, and although Luisa, Blanca and Nancy expressed that raising children in the United States was not different from raising them in Mexico, Carolina and Carla perceived these traditional values (such as being respectful and obedient) to be under threat. The adult’s authority was being challenged by Carla’s children, who disobeyed her and were getting in trouble with authorities.

In Carolina's case, the threat was perceived as coming from the media and American families. They both coincided that there was too much "*libertinaje*" (liberty) in the United States. In this sense, and contrary to the optimism of the other participant mothers about their ability to raise their children in the same way they would have raised them in Mexico, there was some evidence that living in the United States might not be conducive to the maintenance of respect, obedience, *buena educación* and responsibility with the family.

On the other hand, maintaining traditional cultural beliefs did not imply that mothers were not adapting more "American" or mainstream beliefs as well. Although Carolina believed in the importance of traditional values, she added some more "mainstream" concerns like the emphasis on cognitive stimulation and her role as teacher of her children. Carla on the other hand, was trying to adopt –without much success- new practices she had learned at parenting workshops. Nancy was continuing with her concern on respect and *buena educación*, while applying childrearing tips she had learned through the mass media. Luisa's parenting approach, probably because of her childhood history, seemed to be mostly concerned with providing her children with basic needs (food, shelter, and clothes) and did not seem to be too focused on teaching traditional cultural beliefs. But she was not getting closer to an "American" style of parenting either.

More perplexing was Blanca's rather mild responses towards Moisés' apparent lack of respect (Moisés on occasions called her "ugly", "lazy" and used swear words). Probably, because of the humorous, non-confrontational attitude of her child, Blanca did not seem to be taking these behaviors seriously. It could also be that because Moisés was a child whose survival in infancy seemed

almost a miracle, Blanca treated him differently and was more tolerant towards him.

Discipline practices

Discipline practices varied greatly among the participants. The most common strategy was giving direct instructions or commands (telling children what to do) which is consistent with previous research (Arcia & Johnson, 1998). Some strategies were used less frequently (modeling behavior) and some were used by only one mother (using humor), as shown in the following table

Table 3 Use of discipline practices

	Physical punishment (as reported by the mother)	Non-physical punishment or consequences	Direct instructions (commands)	Normative messaging (preaching, calling the child names)	Modeling
Blanca			✓	✓	
Carla	✓			✓	
Carolina		✓	✓		✓
Luisa	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Nancy	✓	✓			✓

In the results section, when discussing Blanca’s case, I introduced the idea that there are other general strategies in which mothers might *prevent* misbehavior. I reasoned that being sensitive to children’s needs, being affectionate towards them and creating a sense of togetherness, might create an environment where children feel less inclined to rebel, and consequently reducing the need to provide consequences. Another strategy with similar goals was what Carolina reported, which was informing children of what she expected from them in different situations as a way to prevent misbehavior.

Learning and school

Mothers seemed to emphasize obedience and correct behavior when asked about how they were preparing their children for school. These results coincide with Onagaki and Sternberg’s (1993) research who found that immigrant parents emphasized the importance of conforming to external standards rather

than developing autonomous behavior in school, especially when compared to non-immigrant parents in the United States. Participants in this study did not mention teaching their children cognitive skills or academic contents (for example, teaching numbers or the alphabet) except for Carolina, who clearly taught her children informally, or in a more structured way as when she taught reading and writing skills in Spanish in "*la escuela*". In a similar fashion with Onagaki and Sternberg's study, participant mothers in this study did not mention as pre-requisites for school any cognitive skills (problem-solving skills, verbal ability) or academic abilities as American schools might understand them (counting, knowing the alphabet). Let us remember that the emphasis on cognitive stimulation has become a common concern in advice written for American parents (Wrigley, 1989).

It could be that for the participant mothers, except for Carolina, perceive their role as being in charge of producing a "*bien educado*" child, that is, a child who is well behaved, has good manners and is respectful towards adults, while delegating to the school the role of teaching academic skills and developing cognitive skills. It was not surprising then, that Carolina, the mother more familiar with academic life, was the only one who taught more academic-like skills at the home. Carolina was also the mother who showed more school involvement that is consistent with American schools expectations, by volunteering at her children's school. Although all mothers in this research wanted their children to achieve academically and in that way, avoiding manual labor (*trabajar al puro sol*) their involvement in their children's schooling might have been invisible to the school, as they were not able to communicate with teachers. Additionally, because of their limited experience with school, certain academic procedures

such as testing were difficult to understand. This is consistent with Crosnoe & Kalil's (2010) research that found that mothers who enrolled in academic programs in the United States increased their school engagement. Experience with academic life provides parents with the insider knowledge of what is expected from academic institutions and more specifically with American educational institutions. This is the case of Carolina, since she studied a master's degree in education and taught for some time at elementary schools in the United States. Carolina might not only be aware of what types of knowledge and skills the school might expect from children, but also functioned as what schools define as an involved parent. Carolina's parenting corresponds to the *concerted cultivation* approach, as described by Lareau (2001). In her *Unequal Childhoods* book, Lareau finds that middle class parents in the US, irrespective of their race, are focused on preparing children to succeed in the educational and professional realms. They accomplish this by providing them with a more structured routine full of classes and activities as a way to develop skills (i.e. responsibility, competitiveness) considered important for success. Additionally, by developing less hierarchical relationships with their children, middle class parents help them develop a sense of entitlement and ability to deal with adults in institutional settings.

On the other hand, Blanca, Carla and Luisa followed the *accomplishment of natural growth pattern* (Lareau, 2011) more common among working class and poor parents, while Nancy's parenting was mixed. In this parenting style children are left to entertain themselves; parents do not make their children participate in structured activities as a way to develop their "talents". Working class and poor parents experience difficulties dealing with institutions and therefore, their

children do not learn how to successfully obtain resources and opportunities from such institutions.

Lareau also observed that working class and poor parents tend to use directives and do not attempt to reason, with their children, about the establishment of rules. In terms of their views about learning, Blanca, Carla and Nancy tended to believe that direct instruction was a good method of teaching children and consequently, often used direct instructions (commands) with the children. As Livas-Dlott et al conclude, the use of direct commands reinforces the position of the mother as authority (Livas-Dlott et al, 2010). Modeling behavior was also mentioned by Carolina and Nancy, while reasoning was not often observed and if mentioned by the Nancy and Blanca, was used only when children were considered older enough to understand. This preference for direct instruction in families of Mexican descent was also found by Arcia and Johnson (1998).

In the case of Moisés, it was clear that although his mother Blanca was not able to teach her children school-like knowledge, his older siblings, already experienced in the American educational system, were supporting this learning. Moisés' older brother taught him how to use a computer. Moisés' older siblings were also introducing English at the home. Pérez-Granados and Callanan (1997) who studied families of Mexican descent found that according to parents, older siblings taught their younger siblings academic skills while younger siblings helped their eldest develop social skills.

***Chipil* child**

The concept of a *chipil* child was also conceptualized in slightly different terms. For Blanca, Carla, and Luisa, a *chipil* child was a child who cried a lot,

demanding attention from the mother. For both Luisa and Blanca, this demand for affection was related to the jealousy a child would have over the unborn child of a pregnant mother. Nancy and Carolina on the other hand, believed children become *chipil* when they are given everything they want. Therefore, for Carolina and Nancy, a *chipil* was *chiqueado* (spoiled).

However, a belief common to all mothers was that giving children everything they want will produce a spoiled, *maeducado* child. This concern seems to have its root in the belief that children naturally crave attention, affection and even material goods. Expressed in the words of Carolina: “children are naturally egocentric”.

I argue that this general preoccupation with a demanding child is related to the traditional Mexican construct of the *chipil* child: a needy and whiny child that imposes too many demands on the mother. For Blanca and Carla, it was expressed in the concern of their children getting too used to be in their mothers’ arms. Therefore, it is the mothers’ role to somehow restrict these excessive demands. A mother needs to limit how much affection, attention, and goods to give to a child: a child needs to learn that he or she cannot receive everything. For example, Carla and Blanca said a mother should not let babies “*imponerse a los brazos*” or get used to being held and therefore, they limited the time they carried their babies in their arms.

This concern over “spoiling” a child might be of particular importance in contexts where the mother does not have the economic means to provide children with everything they desire and in large families, where mothers do not have the time to devote themselves to each child. A mother who has many children to attend cannot raise a child who requires too much of her attention.

Within this frame of mind, the United States context presents particular threats, compared to Mexico, as it is easier to have access to material goods.

Participants recalled how hard it was for them to get new clothes or toys when growing up. They also were always mindful of the difficult economic conditions found in Mexico. This was also true of Carolina, who had grown up in a middle class home, not having many toys and having to use her imagination when playing. Because it was relatively easier for the mothers to provide their children with material goods in the context of the United States, they were concerned their children would get used to that. They were aware this situation was something they could not maintain if they lived in Mexico. Let us remember that most of these mothers were not legal residents in the United States and the possibility of being deported back to Mexico was always looming. But even for Carla, who could possibly be able to maintain this lifestyle in Mexico, there seemed to be a concern of the “corrupting” power of consumerism.

But there is an ironic twist to this concern. The parents of these children have migrated to the United States as a way to improve their access to resources and services, but at the same time, they have become concerned about how these same resources affect their children’s *buena educación*. It would be interesting to contrast these fears of spoiling children with European American samples.

Parenting and cultural change

Although visiting the families at two different times (in 20 and 20) I am not able to analyze the change in parenting practices since during the second wave of data collection I did not observe and only collected information through

interview. Nonetheless, I am able to discuss the mothers perceptions on their own changing practices.

The participant mothers, the exception being Carla, did not believe their migration to the United States was changing their children's outcomes. They maintained they were raising their children in the same way they would have raised them back in Mexico. And they did not seem to be consciously trying to change the way they were raising their children based on what they had observed about American culture. It is debatable however whether or not changes were actually occurring, as some of the participants were incorporating practices such as timeout (Luisa) or were not satisfied with their children's behavior (Carla). The participant mothers might not be aware of the acculturation forces they experienced in the same manner we are not aware of the social and cultural forces that shape one's life.

Although the participants were not consciously trying to imitate American parenting, they were more clearly changing the way they were raising their children based on their own experiences with their parents. Although some aspired to be just like their mothers (Carla and Nancy), some were actually trying to go against their mother's parenting, especially in Blanca's and Luisa's cases. Blanca for example, wanted her children to have a completely different experience from the one she had when growing up. She wanted to be more understanding and less harsh than her mother. Carla, her sister, on the other hand, wanted to be like her mother but was unsuccessful at it. Luisa wanted to provide her children with the things she lacked growing up: food, clothing and education. In other words, mothers were either trying to compensate perceived

errors their own mothers committed or following their successes. Living in a new land possibly allowed participant mothers to attempt a fresh new start.

In terms of acculturation concerns, a surprising result was that the participants, except for Carolina and Carla, did not seem concerned about their children adopting American norms and behaviors. Mothers seemed confident that their influence would be enough to counteract any impact from the mainstream culture. Nonetheless, all mothers wanted their children to speak Spanish and stay close to their cultural traditions, even though Luisa was more ambivalent towards it. But mothers took for granted that their children were going to maintain their cultural heritage.

When mothers were asked how American parents raised their children, most did not know how to answer. As it was observed, Blanca, Nancy, Carla and Luisa did have very little contact with Americans as their lack of English fluency limited their ability to carry conversations in that language. Furthermore, Carla, Luisa, Blanca and in a lesser degree Nancy, lived in communities that were predominantly Mexican, which afforded less possibilities of developing relationships with English-speaking, American-born people.

Many times the discussion about acculturation concerns was circumscribed to food and language. Nancy for example, reported proudly that after an initial period of eating fast and frozen food, she had gone back to eating mostly Mexican, homemade foods. Luisa mentioned that Joshua only wanted to eat "*gabacho*" (American) foods. In terms of language, the mothers believed that since their children already spoke Spanish as their mother tongue, losing it was not a concern. The only time this concern was brought up was when Nancy referred to Mariana's preference for English books and movies. Not being her

own child, it might be easier for Nancy to spot a concerning trend of acculturation. But why is the discussion on acculturation focused on food and language? Probably because talking about food and language is a more concrete, evident way of assessing whether or not a child is leaning more towards one culture than the other.

Interestingly, it was Carolina who was the most concerned about mainstream culture filtering in. But this might not come as surprise if one considers that Carolina was the mother most connected to mainstream American culture. She was completely bilingual, lived in a mostly White, English-speaking neighborhood and was very involved in her children's school. It might be the case that she has more information about American parenting (or what she perceives to be American parenting), and based on this information, she disagreed with American norms or that because her children were also more exposed to these influences, the threat seemed more real. In any case, the result was that Carolina had built barriers to repel some of these influences: she did not let her children sleep in other people's houses, she limited the exposure to television and movies and she often took trips to Mexico with her children. It is in this sense that the gated community in which Carolina lived (in contrast with the apartment complexes in which the other mothers lived) stood as a physical representation of the imaginary walls she had built around her children.

Additionally to an apparent lack of concern about acculturation, the mothers believed that there were no significant differences in the way their children were raised in the United States, compared to the way they would have been raised if they had never left Mexico. There are many possible reasons for this. It might be that mothers have not spent enough time in the United States to

experience all aspects of American culture. Another reason could be that as mentioned before, participants (except for Carolina) might have not been exposed to mainstream culture, to perceive those differences. It could also be that since the mothers, except for Luisa, did not have experience raising children in Mexico, they might have had difficulties thinking in hypothetical terms of how their parenting could have been if they had never left Mexico. Or it could be that these mothers are overestimating the influence parents have on children. All of the mothers without exception, shared the belief that parents were the most important factor on whether a child will end up "*bien educado*" or not, and none of them mentioned the influence of peers or even of other adults such as teachers.

Advice

It was expected that immigrant mothers would receive advice from doctors, counselors and more frequently, teachers, and that this advice would present mothers with a conflict, as the advice received might go against their cultural beliefs. However, participants reported talking infrequently with teachers; many times because of language barriers. But even Carolina, who spoke English and visited her children's school often, did not report receiving advice from teachers and only from her mother, and from printed media. It could be argued that mothers, who reported not looking for expert advice, did not read books or talk to teachers because they did not read in general or because they could not understand English. However, mothers like Blanca, Luisa and Carla did not watch television shows on parenting even if there was at least one of such shows in Spanish (Todobebé). And Nancy did like reading popular psychology advice on magazines, but not as frequently as Carolina. It could be that schooling is related to looking for expert advice. Experiencing formal kinds of knowledge

might create a desire to look for more expert, informed, scientific kind of information, as academic institutions teach the value of scientific knowledge over traditional knowledge.

The role of authorities and experts was even feared and rejected. Blanca and Carla were concerned that teachers and authorities might intervene in home discipline practices. These mothers were shocked that as parents they could not use physical punishment with their children, and that if they did, they could be accused and punished. Mexican mothers in Reese's study (2002) were concerned about this as well.

How mothers constructed their beliefs

Mothers' beliefs about moral and social development could be better understood as both general ideas of development that can be summarized in sayings and commonly heard expressions such as "children learn by example" or "children are naturally egocentric" and as on the spot assessments of children's behavior, as Valsiner and Litvinoc (1996) suggested. One clear pattern in the individual case results was that there was considerable variation of beliefs not only between mothers, but also each mother had a range of beliefs. In the same interview, mothers moved from context-dependent explanations ("he is tired") to nature-based ones ("he was born that way") to nurture-based reasons ("parents are the most important influence on a children's life"). The fact that parental expressions of beliefs arise according to a particular event (a child behaves badly, the mother is asked a question) could explain at least partially the diversity and sometimes contradiction in mothers' beliefs. Because sometimes these sayings are not the product of reflective thinking, but are simply taken for granted truths (expressions passed from generation to generation) or are the result of

needing to produce a quick response to the questioning (when produced in the context of an interview) they might not really represent accurately the mothers' views on children.

An alternative explanation would be that the ideas they expressed are in fact, representative of these mothers' beliefs and the apparent contradiction is the result of their more complex understanding of children's development, recognizing the many factors that influence children's outcomes. That is, the participants understood that only one factor (parent's role, temperament or contextual aspects) cannot entirely explain children's behaviors. These different explanations would only represent a multifaceted perspective. As Goodnow (2002) has noted, many of us live espousing paradoxical ideas as "compartmentalization and a tolerance for inconsistency may just as easily become the norm within us" (p.448), and only a critical and methodic mind would be able to recognize the contradictions. Parents might be trying to reconcile discrepant ideas that are part of what Kojima (1996) called the "ethnopsychological pool of ideas".

In a more general sense, and expanding on Super and Harkness (1986, 2002) concept of the developmental niche, one could attempt to propose some aspects that have an influence over the construction of theories: caretakers own experiences growing up and with the parenting they received, previous experiences with children, experience with academic institutions (education), parenting beliefs shared by most members of a community (cultural models), the child's own behaviors and characteristics, the ecological characteristics of the context in which children are being raised and caretakers' personalities.

Raising children in dark times

It is important to understand how the physical and social and political context of Arizona plays a part in the developmental niche in which the participant children are being raised. But since the data collected in California for the PEN project was not part of the present study, it is hard to draw any differences in how participant mothers were raising in Arizona compared to other mothers of similar backgrounds are raising children in other parts of the United States. However, it is not too daring to argue that the controversial measures against undocumented migration taken by Arizona authorities in recent times have impact on the parenting of undocumented Mexican parents living in the state.

Although originally part of the Mexican territory, Arizona has been dominated by White, English-speaking elites since the end of the Mexican-American war in 1848. Although the original Mexican Spanish-speaking population never left the land and in spite of the constant flux of migrants from Mexico, especially in the last years, Latinos are now a minority in the state. The role of Arizona as a gateway for many immigrants crossing the border and the conservative (Republican) political orientation of the state might have created the conditions for the passing of multiple laws that have affected the lives of Mexican immigrants, from restricting the teaching of bilingual classes (Proposition 203) to making it a crime to not carry immigration documents (SB 1070). These measures made it harder for the participant families to receive health services, enroll in English classes and obtain jobs, as expressed in informal conversations. Furthermore, it added a sense of uncertainty among mothers, who were considering at some point to return back to Mexico (Nancy) or move to a different state (Isabel). As it was mentioned before, some mothers expressed concern

about being reported to authorities for practicing discipline practices not shared by the mainstream culture (physical punishment). The possibility of deportation added one more reason to fear authorities and institutions.

Parenting and gender

When this study was designed, it was not one of the goals to examine the role of the child's gender on parenting. Nonetheless, it was impossible not to notice the differential treatment and expectations placed on children based on their gender as mothers with mixed-gender offspring stated them clearly. Boys and girls received different toys: Carolina's daughter was not bought LEGO toys like her brother, because there were not "girl" ones at the store and Moisés was told not to play with dolls. Boys and girls were expected to have different responsibilities in the home and to behave in a differentiated way. Larissa's daughter was expected to be less "*chirota*" (tomboy) and to not get in fights with her two brothers.

Not surprisingly, these preoccupations did not arise in the only same gender sibling household: Luisa's. For future research, it would be important to consider how the child's gender shapes mother's expectations and practices for her children and if they are contrasted to more egalitarian discourses in the United States.

Limitations

Although the present study contributed to highlighting the diversity of immigrant Mexican mothers, it also has some limitations. First of all, the study did not explore how children's individual differences would play a role in the way mothers raise them. Although Moisés serves as an example of how a "difficult" child might test a mother's expectations of obedience and respect, not enough

emphasis was put on the effect of children's own characteristics. More importantly, the research design did not incorporate input from fathers, as it only interviewed mothers and included only causal observations of fathers' behaviors. And finally, because not all mothers were directly observed by me, there was not the same depth of information for all mothers.

In terms of the theoretical background, the ecocultural approach and more specifically the developmental niche concept are useful to understand the multifaceted nature of childrearing as used in this study. Nonetheless, the developmental niche framework, as used in this study, did not allow for the discussion of social, economic disadvantages as experienced by mothers and their children. It was not possible to provide much support for the analysis of power issues, that is, how do minority families deal with the pressure of the majority culture.

Although qualitative research and more specifically, case study research, provides the reader with enough data to come to his or her own conclusions and the possibility to connect them with other contexts, this line of research could be also enriched by using research approaches, including quantitative ones.

In summary, this study shows that even if participants are all immigrant of Mexican origin and share some cultural values (*respeto*, being *bien educado*, being *obediente*) it would be simplistic to circumscribe their parental beliefs to these core values. As shown, one mother had added other practices and beliefs (cognitive stimulation and teaching academic skills at the home) while another one was skeptical about some of these cultural values and some were experiencing a pull towards more child-centered, mainstream beliefs and practices. In terms of the acculturation process, mothers' own career and

academic training, their English skills, their contact with native-born people and their orientation towards professional advice (coming from teachers, health professionals, researchers) could mediate their incorporation of more American practices and beliefs related to social and moral development. But as Carolina clearly exemplifies, being situated higher in the social hierarchy and being a participant of an upper middle class lifestyle in the United States, does not automatically make a mother abandon her traditional beliefs. In this sense, the study focused on a more detailed picture of the lives as mothers of these Mexican women in the context of migration and avoided broad generalizations typical of larger scale studies.

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APPENDIX A
PARENT INTERVIEW I

Instructions: We are going to begin the first interview. I am going to ask you questions about yourself, your family, your family's routine, and your neighborhood. Please remember that you may choose to skip questions or refuse to answer any question. Also, you may choose to end the interview at any point by letting the researcher know you would like to end it.

[Note: Second generation definition: a child who was born in the U.S. and has at least one parent who was born in Mexico]

I. General Demographics

Interviewee: _____

Gender: M F

Relationship with Child: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Race/ethnicity: _____

Marital Status: Single Married Separated Domestic Partner
Divorced
Widow

1. How long have you been married?
2. Does your husband/wife live here?
3. Who else lives here?
4. How many children do you have?
5. How old are they?
6. Where do they go to school?
7. What grades are they in?

II. Questions about Immigration and Education

[Ask each parent to answer the questions]

1. Were you born here or in Mexico?
2. When did you move to the United States?

[If husband/wife is not present]

3. When did your husband/wife move to the United States?

III. Work

1. Do you work?
2. Where do you work (if outside the home) or What sort of work do you do (if inside the home)?
3. What days?

IV. Home Languages

1. What language(s) is spoken in your household?

V. Routines

1. Walk me through a typical day. Tell me what you do from the time you wake up to when you go to sleep. [Ask follow-up questions to learn more about the family's routine if not specified by interviewee.]

[Example follow-up questions]

2. What time does your family start its day?
3. What time do you/your husband go to work? What time do you/your husband get home?
4. (If preschool or school-aged kids) What time do the children go to school? [If older than 12] What time do they get home?
5. How does your family spend the afternoon?
6. What time do you have dinner?
7. What do you do on the weekends?
8. Are there particular places you like to go with your children? Where? When do you go there?
9. What sorts of activities do you do as a family?
10. What days of the week are good to visit? What times?

VI. Community

1. What do you like about your neighborhood?
2. What kinds of resources are available (e.g. parks, libraries, community centers)?
3. What would you like to change about your neighborhood?

APPENDIX B

II PARENT INTERVIEW

Instructions: We are going to begin the third interview. I am going to ask you questions about how you would like your child to grow up. Please remember that you may choose to skip questions or refuse to answer any question. Also, you may choose to end the interview at any point by letting the researcher know you would like to end it..

I. Expectations for Child

1. How would you describe your childhood?
2. Describe how your parents disciplined you. (If more context is needed, follow up with Questions 3 and 4; otherwise, skip to Question 5.)
3. How did you mother react when you did not listen to her? How about your father?
4. How did your mother react when you would talk back to her? How about your father?
5. Thinking back to your own childhood, when your mother needed you to do something (get dressed, pick up toys, or help her around the house), how would she get you to do it? How about your father?
6. As a child, were you allowed to disagree with your parents? If not, did you? What were the consequences? Was it different with your mother and father?
7. If you did something good, describe how your parents praised you. Or, how did you know you had done something good?
8. What did you learn growing up that you would like your child to learn?
9. What do you think about as a parent that your parents might not have thought about?
10. Do you think you act similarly or different towards your children? How so? What about your husband/wife/partner?
11. What do you think your parents' goals were for you when you were growing up?
12. Were your parents' goals and hopes for you similar or different to those that you have for your child?

[Phrase the following question appropriately, depending on their generation.]

13a. Do you think you are raising your child differently because you have immigrated to the US? (Probe: If yes, ask:) Could you give me examples of that?)

13 b. How is it/would it have been different to raise your child(ren) in Mexico versus here? How is it the same?

14a. Sometimes people advise parents on how to raise their children. Do you remember a time when someone gave you advice on how to raise your child/children? (Probe: If “yes”, then ask:) Could you give me an example of a time when someone gave you advice on how to raise your child/children? Have you followed that advice?

14b. Could you tell me about places, resources or people where a mother can get information about raising children. Have you received advice on how to raise children from those places, resources or people that you mentioned? (Probe: if “yes”, then ask:) Have you followed the advice?

15a. Have you ever been treated differently for being Mexican/of Mexican descent?

15b. Do you think Mexicans /those of Mexican descent are treated differently in the United States?

15c. (If yes, then ask) How does this affect the way you are raising your child?

16. How important is it that your child identifies with Mexican culture?

17. (If yes, then ask) How will you make sure your child identifies with Mexican culture?

18. How would you describe a child who is well brought up (bien educado)?

19. Are these goals that you have for your child? (If “yes”, then ask) How will you make sure your child is well brought up (bien educado)?

20. What do you think children should know before entering kindergarten?

21. How are you helping your child get ready for kindergarten?

APPENDIX C

III PARENT INTERVIEW

I. Pre-Immigration History

[If person immigrated to U.S., ask the following. If not, skip to note above #5]

1. Where did you live in Mexico before moving to the U.S.?
2. How would you describe _____(name of city)? Rural? Urban?
3. Did you always live there? Where else did you live in Mexico?
4. How would you describe the places? (Or name the cities mentioned)

[If person's husband/wife/partner immigrated to the U.S., ask the following. If not, skip to section II. Immigration]

5. Where did your husband/wife/partner live in Mexico before moving to the U.S.?
6. How would you or your husband/wife/partner describe _____ (name of city)? Rural? Urban?
7. Did he/she always live there? Where else did he/she live in Mexico?
8. How would you describe the places? (Or name the cities mentioned)

II. Immigration

[If person immigrated to U.S., ask the following. If not, skip to note above #6]

1. How would you describe your move here?
2. What motivated you to move here?
3. What level of education had you completed before coming here?
4. What did you do when you arrived here? Work? School?
5. What did your parents do when they arrived here?

[If person's husband/wife/partner immigrated to the U.S., ask the following. If not, skip to #11]

6. How would you describe your husband/wife/partner's family's move to the U.S.?
7. What motivated your husband/wife/partner to move to the U.S.?
8. What level of education had your husband/wife/partner completed before coming here?
9. What did your husband/wife/partner do when he/she arrived here? Work? School?

10. What did your husband/wife/partner's parents do when they arrived here?
11. Do you or your husband/wife/partner keep in touch with anyone in Mexico? How? How often?
12. Do you or your husband/wife/partner visit Mexico? How often?

III. Work

[If person works, ask the following. If not, skip to the note above #5].

1. How would you describe your job?
2. How happy are you at work?
3. How many years have you been at this job?
4. What other jobs have you had in the past?

[If the person's husband/wife/partner works, ask the following. If not skip to the note above #9.]

5. How would you describe your husband/wife/partner's job?
6. How happy is he/she at work?
7. How many years has he/she been at this job?
8. What other jobs has he/she had in the past?

[If the family has children older than 12, ask the following. If not, skip to section IV]

9. Do your children work?
10. Where do they work?
11. How long have they been working?

IV. School Readiness / Preschool Expectations

[If the target child is in preschool, ask the following. If not, skip to #4]

1. Why did you enroll your child in preschool?
2. How did you choose your child's preschool?
3. What would you like your child to learn in preschool?
4. What do you think children should know before entering kindergarten?
5. Are you doing anything in particular to help your child get ready for school?
6. Have you had any contact with the school where your child will go next year?

[If the target child is in preschool, ask the following. If not, skip to note above section VI.]

V. Parent and School Relationships

1. Please tell me about your child's preschool.

[Follow-up questions if needed to prompt:]

2. Tell me about his/her teachers.

3. Tell me about the other children.

4. How about the parents? Do you talk with them? About what?

5. During this school year, have you or your husband/wife/partner (or another caretaker) contacted the child's teacher or school for any reason?

[Follow-up questions if need to prompt:]

6. Have you contacted the preschool to report an absence or tardiness? Please explain.

7. Have you contacted the preschool to discuss problems the child is having at school? Please explain.

8. Have you contacted the school to request special placement or services for your child?

9. Have you contacted the school to request an evaluation by a specialist for your child?

10. Were there any other reasons you have contacted the child's teacher or school?

11. How would you describe your relationship with your child's teacher(s)?

12. How would you describe the degree of trust between you and your child's teacher(s)?

13. How frequently do you communicate face-to-face or by phone with your child's teacher(s)?

14. How would you describe the clarity of communication between you and your child's teacher(s)?

15. How would you describe your satisfaction with the interactions between you and the teacher(s) (or other staff) in your child's preschool program?

[If the target child has siblings in school, ask the following:]

VI. Parent and School Relationships for Siblings

1. During this school year, have you or your husband/wife/partner contacted the teacher or school for any reason having to do with your child/children? Please explain.

[Follow-up questions if need to prompt]

2. Do you contact the school to report an absence or tardiness? Please explain.

3. Have you contacted the school to discuss problems your children are having at school? Please explain.

4. Have you contacted the school to request special placement or services for your child?

5. Have you contacted the school to request an evaluation by a specialist for your child?

6. Were there any other reasons you contacted your child's teacher or school?

7. How would you describe your relationship with your child's teacher(s)?

8. How would you describe the degree of trust between you and your child's teacher(s)?

9. How frequently do you communicate face-to-face or by phone with your child's teacher(s)?

10. How would you describe the clarity of communication between you and your children's teacher(s)?

11. How would you describe your satisfaction with the interactions between you and the teacher(s) or other staff in your child's school?

For last calendar year (January 2004 until December 2004)--2004--what was your total household income before taxes? Please include salary, wages, tips, and cash assistance.

\$_____ Don't Know Refused

[If person didn't know or wouldn't answer, please ask the following, starting with the lowest amount and pausing between each so they can say which one pertains to them, without letting you get too much higher than their household income:]

Can you give me a rough estimate or guess? Would you say your total household income was:

- ___ Up to \$10,000
- ___ \$10,001 to \$20,000
- ___ \$20,001 to \$30,000
- ___ \$30,001 to \$40,000

- \$40,001 to \$50,000
- \$50,001 to \$60,000
- \$60,001 to \$70,000
- \$70,001 to \$80,000
- \$80,001 to \$90,000
- \$90,001 to \$100,000
- Over \$100,000
- Don't Know
- Refused

For 2004, whose income did you include in your total household income? (Read responses, multiple response)

- Spouse/partner
- Parents
- Extended family
- Children <or>
- Other (please specify) _____

How many people (adults and kids) were supported by this income?

- Don't Know
- Refused

APPENDIX D
Q-SORT ACTIVITY

Q-Sort Cards/Español

Agregue cualquier característica que usted cree falta en esta lista. Ponga estas frases en orden de importancia. Defina cada frase.

1. Responsabilidad con la familia
2. Vivir la cultura Mexicana
3. Vivir la cultura Americana
4. Respeto
5. Bien Educado
6. Ser independiente
7. Ser modesto (a)
8. Ser obediente
9. Ser cariñoso (a)
10. Ser despierto (a)
11. Ser curioso

Q-Sort Cards/English

Add any characteristics that you think are missing from the list. Rank each of these in order of importance. Define each one.

12. Family Obligation
13. Involved in Mexican culture
14. Involved in American culture
15. Respectful
16. Bien educado/Well-brought up
17. Independent
18. Modest
19. Obedient
20. Affectionate
21. Be clever
22. Be curious

APPENDIX E

VIGNETTE- PIÑATA PARTY

Instructions: *I will now read a series of events that could occurred to you and your child. I want you to imagine what would you think if you experienced these situations.*

Buena educación. You and your child are invited to a child's birthday party. When you arrive at the party, the birthday child does not greet you and immediately requests to see his/her present. Why do you think he/she might behave like that?

Respeto. Once in the house, the birthday child throws the gift to his/her mother's lap and shouts "agárralo, mensa!" (get it, stupid!). Why do you think he/she might behave like that?

Ethical behavior. Imagine that at the party, when the piñata is broken, an older child starts pushing the younger ones and steals candies from them. Why do you think he/she might behave like that?

Chipil child. Imagine that later in the party, a child starts crying and whining because he did not get enough candies from the piñata. Why do you think he/she might behave like that?

Advice. Now imagine that you are having problems with your child's behavior. Would you ask for help? [*If mother answers "yes"*] Who would you ask for help?

APPENDIX F
INTERVIEW IV

Introduction:

Tell me what has happened to your child since the last time we met.

What has she/he learned? Have you seen differences in his/her behavior?

Have you changed the way you raise your child since the last time we talked?

Child influences:

What are some of your favorite things about your child?

Do you have any particular concerns about your child?

How is to raise (target child)? Is it different than raising (siblings, if any)? What have you learned from raising (target child) that you didn't know before?

Do you think that your child behaves like other children in Mexico? Are you concerned about your child becoming Americanized?

Socialization goals:

What qualities will it take for your child to be "bien educado" (well brought-up)?

What characteristics are children expected to show in school?

Why do some children do well in school?

Do children have to behave in school differently than the way they behave with their family?

Beliefs about the causes of child's behavior:

Are children born knowing what is good and what is wrong?

Why do you think children behave inappropriately?

Why do children obey? Why are some children "bien educados" and others aren't?

How do children learn best? What helps them learn?

What is the most important influence on a child's behavior?

What is the parents' role in teaching/raising a child?

Why do some children become "chipil" (chiple, chipili, chipilón) or spoiled?

Discipline and teaching practices:

How do children learn what is right and what is wrong?

[If mother believes in her role in teaching right and wrong] At what age do you start teaching your children what is right and what is wrong?

How do you teach your child to be “bien educado” (well brought up)?

How do you teach your child to show “respeto” (proper demeanor)?

How do you discipline your child?

Changes due to immigration:

What is it like to raise a child in the US?

What are the good things about raising your child in the US? What are the challenging /difficult things about raising your child in the US?

Are there things about the way people raise children in this country that you like or agree with? Are there things about the way people raise children that you don't like or disagree with?

How would it have been if you had never left Mexico? How would you raise your children in Mexico?

Advice/Media

Sometimes people advice parents on how to raise their children. Do you remember a time when someone gave you advice on how to raise your child/children? *[Probe: If “yes”, then ask: Could you give me an example of a time when someone gave you advice on how to raise your child/children? Have you followed that advice?]*

Tell me about places/resources/people where a new mother can get information about how to raise a child?

Do you and your husband discuss how to discipline your child/children? What type of things do you usually discuss?

Do you ask advice from other relatives? Do you ask advice from friends and neighbors?

Do you watch programs about childrearing or psychology-related (Supernanny, Dr. Phil, Todobebé)? What do you think of these programs? Have you learned anything from them?

Do you read magazines, books or websites about childrearing?

What does (target child) teacher says about your child? Have you asked her about what to do with your child? Has she given you advice?

Have you attended any parenting classes? What do you think of that experience? Have your learned anything from that experience?

Have you listened to/read about/talked to a psychologist, psychiatrist or counselor? Who was it? What did he/she say? (*if mother talked to psychologist*) What do you think about the experience of talking to a psychologist? Have your learned anything from that experience?

*[If mother has contacted a psychologist, psychiatrist or counselor]*What do you know about what psychologists or experts on child development say about children and children's development?

APPENDIX G
CONSENT FORM

Consent form- Dissertation Tamara Fuster

The purposes of this form are to provide you (as a prospective research study participant) information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to participate in this research and to record the consent of those who agree to be involved in the study.

Delia Tamara Fuster and Angela Arzubiaga from the College of Education of Arizona State University would like to invite you to take part in our project. It concerns how children are raised and the beliefs and behaviors of parents.

If you agree to take part in this research, I will visit your family twice. The visit would last between one hour and two hours and we would do it in a time that is convenient to you and your family. I would like to ask you some questions about your beliefs on how children learn, how to raise children and about advice about childrearing you might have received. If you authorize it, the conversations will be recorded.

There are no foreseeable risks to you from participating in this research. There is no direct benefit to you, however, we hope that the research will benefit children like yours when they start school. We will help children by providing information on how teachers can help them feel more comfortable at school and learn more easily. There will be no costs to you, other than your time involved.

To compensate you for participating in this project, we will give you \$25 in cash.

All of the information that we obtain from you during the research will be kept confidential. We will store all of the information we get from you on secure, restricted desktop computer files. Only those researchers involved in the project will have access to the files. They will be stored in a locked office. Only the researchers will have the key to this office. You will not be identified in the notes. We will not use your name or other identifying information in any reports of the research.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You are free to refuse to take part. You may refuse to answer any questions, ask us to leave for the day, and may stop taking part in the project at any time. In addition, if at any time you need to take a break from participating but want to continue it at a later time, we can do so. Whether or not you participate in this research will not affect your child's enrollment in preschool or school now or in the future.

If you have any questions about this project, you may contact Delia Tamara Fuster, at (480) 282-7924 or at delia.fuster@asu.edu or Angela Arzubiaga at (480) 459-0496 or at angela.arzubiaga@asu.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk; you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at 480-965 6788.

This form explains the nature, demands, benefits and any risk of the project. By signing this form you agree knowingly to assume any risks involved. Remember, your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefit. In signing this consent form, you are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies. A copy of this consent form will be given to you.

Your signature below indicates that you consent to participate in the above study.

I understand the consent form and consent to participate in the study.

Name (please print) _____ Date _____

Signature _____

I grant consent for my statements—without any identifiable connection to my name—to be used in reports for the project.

Name _____ Date _____

Signature _____

I grant consent for two interviews with me to be audiotaped for research purposes only. These audiotapes will be destroyed once they have been coded for the research analyses.

Name _____ Date _____

Signature _____

INVESTIGATOR'S STATEMENT

"I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits and possible risks associated with participation in this research study, have answered any questions that have been raised, and have witnessed the above signature. These elements of Informed Consent conform to the Assurance given by Arizona State University to the Office for Human Research Protections to protect the rights of human subjects. I have provided (offered) the subject/participant a copy of this signed consent document."

Signature of Investigator _____

Date _____