

Fathering in a Diverse, Cultural Divide: Understanding Latino Immigrant Fathers' Culture,  
Experiences, and Parenting Roles

Cindy Ola

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Reading Committee:

Janine Jones, Chair

Holly Schindler

Liliana J. Lengua

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Cindy Ola

University of Washington

**Abstract**

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Cindy Ola

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:

Janine Jones

School Psychology

Historically, Latino fathers have been characterized as *machistas*, harsh disciplinarians, and afraid of showing warmth and love to their children, yet they have been described as an integral member of the family and as valuing their role as teachers for their children. Still, few studies have focused on Latino immigrant fathers' self-reports, despite their contribution to the transmission of cultural values that influence the development of their child's ethnic identity development. Therefore, this study will focus on Latino immigrant fathers' cultural values, beliefs, and their understanding of their role as fathers to understand how these factors shape their fathering. Specifically, this study focuses on the following questions: How do Latino immigrant fathers' cultural values, beliefs, and their understanding of their role as fathers influence their fathering practices? This study employs Knight et al.'s model on Ethnic Identity Development among Latinos as a guide to identify key variables that influence parent socialization on a child's ethnic identity development, that is, it identifies key factors that may

influence culture and ethnic values to be passed on from parent to child. Given the relatively new uncharted research territory on immigrant fathers, this study employs a basic interpretivist qualitative study design and uses qualitative principles of a grounded theory approach to analyze the data. Six fathers, who self-identified as Latino, and as a first generation immigrant, completed in-depth qualitative interviews. All six fathers were single, married, or cohabiting biological fathers, residing with at least one child under the age of five at the time of the interviews. Four fathers' primary language was Spanish and therefore were interviewed in Spanish. The ages of the fathers ranged from 25 to 43 years ( $M = 37$ ). Findings will shed light on the paternal strengths, cultural complexities, and social contexts experienced by Latino fathers in the U.S., as well as how Latino fathers socialize their children across two cultural divides.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Over the past 20 years, the fathering literature has well established the important role of fathers with respect to a child's developmental outcomes, including cognitive development (Amato, 1998), social-emotional (Pleck, 1997), and psychological well being (Phares, 1997). Furthermore, studies have also found that fathers uniquely contribute to their child's development beyond a mother's contribution with respect to behavior problems (Amato & Rivera, 1999), childhood depression (Videon, 2005), as well as positive adjustment later in life (Amato, 1994). In spite of the advances in our understanding of the critical role of fathers, the majority of the research has focused largely on data from middle-class, white, European-American families (Parke et al., 2004), and research on racial and ethnically diverse fathers, particularly Latino fathers, has fallen behind (Cabrera & Garcia Coll, 2004; Cruz et al., 2011).

This is a considerable limitation in the existing fatherhood research for two reasons. First, Latino populations are the largest ethnic and racial minority in the U.S. (US Census Bureau, 2015), with about 62 percent of Latino children in the United States identifying as either an immigrant or are the child of an immigrant parent (Perreira, Chapman, & Stein, 2006). The Latino population is still growing and expected to constitute about 30% of the U.S. population by 2060— a large percentage that warrants the inclusion of Latino families in empirical literature (US Census Bureau, 2015). Secondly, cross-cultural research studies have shown that Latino fathers are engaged in child-care tasks at a similar rate to that of European-American fathers (Parke et al., 2004; Toth & Xu, 1999) and while these cross-cultural studies provide informative comparisons, they seldom examine how cultural values, attitudes, and beliefs influence Latino fathers in the context of immigration and its impact on fathering roles and practices (Strier &

Roer-Strier, 2010). Instead, comparative studies assume that there is “homogeneity” among racial and ethnic minority groups, and neglects the in-group strengths and differences of diverse cultural groups (Campos, 2008). Therefore, until sampling, data collection, and research studies are reflective of Latino fathers, empirical findings about this group of fathers and families more generally, may continue to be limited.

Given the large percentage of children and families that recognize themselves as an immigrant or the child of an immigrant parent, this study will focus specifically on Latino immigrant fathers. Immigration, in particular, is a vulnerable transition point for families, given the changes in their cultural, social, and physical environments. The literature on immigrant fathers, for example, has been divided into two opposing theoretical perspectives: the generative/resilience perspective and the deficit perspective (Strier & Roer-Strier, 2010). Scholars who draw on a resiliency framework focus primarily on outcomes related to family cohesion as a product of immigration. Scholars who pull from a deficit frame, however, tend to focus primarily on the negative outcomes of immigration on Latino fathers— suggesting that immigration brings about a sense of instability and shame in a fathers’ role, identity, and well-being (Strier & Roer-Strier, 2010). Drawing on the generative/resilience perspective, research has shown that immigrant fathers may actually have better social and economic stability in the residing country that may increase their ability to execute their roles (Strier & Roer-Strier, 2010). To my knowledge, however, only one study on Latino immigrant families in the United States explored the ways in “which Latinos describe their migration and acculturation experiences in relation to their role as parents” (Perreira et al., 2006, p. 1384). Still, no studies have actually focused on Latino immigrant fathers’ self-reports, despite their contribution to the transmission of cultural values and beliefs that influence the development of their child’s ethnic identity.

Therefore, this study will focus on Latino immigrant fathers' cultural values, beliefs, and their understanding of their role as fathers to understanding how these factors shape their fathering practices. To make sense of Latino fathers' experiences, their role, parenting approaches, and cultural socialization, the following is an overview of three bodies of literature that help frame this study: (1) Latino family literature, including demographic information and family composition in the U.S., (2) father involvement literature, and (3) the literature on fathers and racial ethnic identity development.

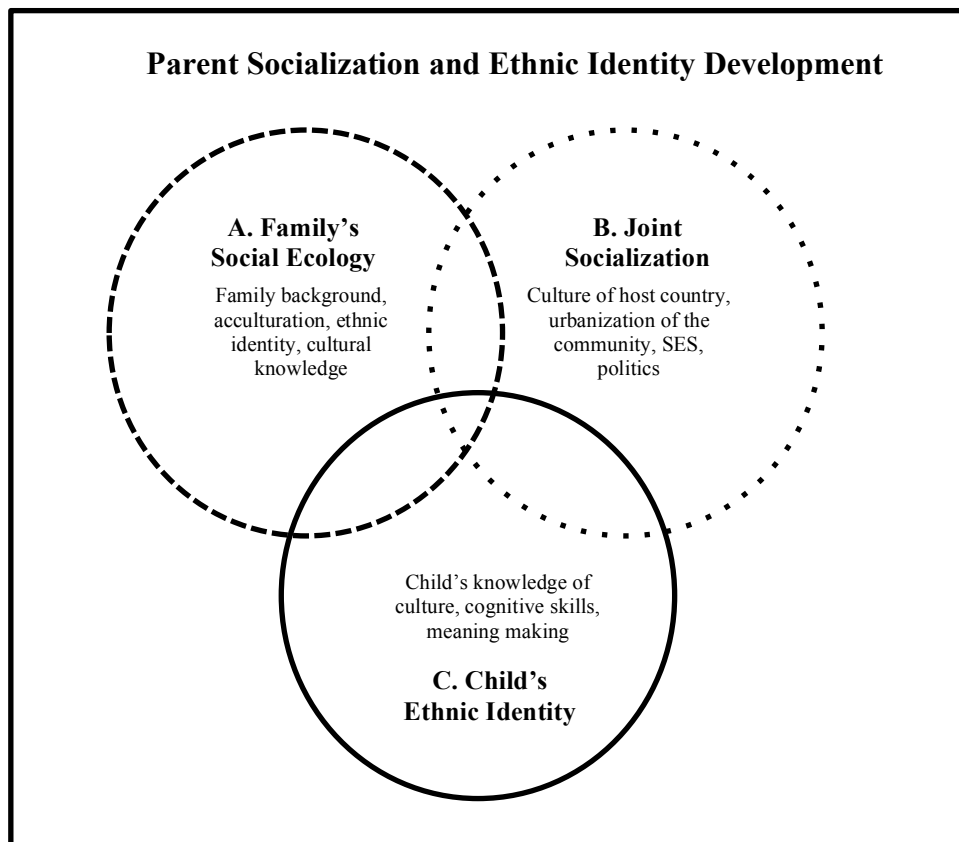
### **Literature Review**

#### **Theoretical Framework– Model on Family Socialization and Latino Identity**

Parenting values and beliefs are said to be influenced by sociodemographic factors – age, race, ethnicity, language, and SES– as well as ethnic and cultural origin (Roosa, Morgan-Lopez, Cree, & Specter, 2002). Therefore, parenting practices and beliefs sometimes vary from what would be considered “culturally prescribed practices” depending on parents' experiences, how they respond to pressures in a country that may be foreign to them (e.g. discrimination), and any unusual circumstances in the parents' immediate environment (Ogbu, 1981). To explain this phenomena, Knight, Bernal, Cota, Garza, and Ocampo, (1993) established a multidimensional model that identifies key variables that influence parent socialization on a child's ethnic identity development, that is, it identifies key factors that may influence culture and ethnic values to be passed on from parent to child. These variables include: (A) a family's social ecology, (B) joint socialization of family and nonfamily members, and (C) the child's ethnic identity and cognitive abilities (see Figure 1.) (1993). Among the three sets of variables, described in Knight et al.'s model (1993), that influence the enculturative process (socialization to their culture) and the process of adapting to the dominant culture among ethnic minority children, two are the focus of

this study– Family’s social ecology and Joint Socialization. This study uses the latter two, a subset of this model on parent socialization, to understand the specific role of Latino immigrant fathers in their children’s enculturation to the U.S.

*Figure 1. Model on Family Socialization and Latino Identity*  
by Knight et al. (1993)



The social ecology of a father (circle A), for example, refers to the fathers’ generational status, acculturation, and Latino cultural knowledge. Combined, these factors are said to influence which values and traditions from a parent’s ethnic identity are inculcated in their children (i.e. enculturation), as well as which are adopted from the host country (i.e. acculturation). Joint socialization (circle B), the second focus of this study, encompasses the familial or non-familial people, who may be either part of the ethnic group or dominant group,

that communicate information about Latino ethnic group membership. Joint socialization, in other words, is the culture and norms of the dominant culture or the views of the host country on the minority cultural groups (i.e. stereotypes). The latter is an important variable to consider, given that there may be inconsistencies between home, school, and community views that may influence a fathers' socialization approach and the development of a child's ethnic identity development. Garcia Coll et al., (1996) reports that when parents support racial socialization within the family, children are better apt to develop a positive sense of self– a protective factor as children develop and face challenges in life. Early findings on racial socialization have also found that it is associated with a positive racial attitude, academic achievement, positive self-esteem, and protected against psychological distress related to discrimination and stress related to acculturation (Umaña-Taylor & Updegraff, 2007). Therefore, Latino fathers' social ecology and the joint socialization between fathers and the dominant culture, combined may play an important role in how fathers support the development of their child's racial identity.

A family's social ecology, more specifically, is inclusive of the cultural values ascribed to that particular cultural group. Among Latino immigrant families, cultural values that have been found to diminish the impact of social, emotional, and economic stressors include, *familismo* (family cohesion), *personalismo y simpatía* (value in the interpersonal relationships), *consejos* (advice), *dichos/consejos* (folktales shared among family), and *ser bien educado* (showing kindness and respect) (Cordoso & Thompson, 2010; Parra-Cardona et al., 2006; Perreira et al., 2006). First, the Latino culture is known for holding high values with respect to family cohesion, family rituals, and cooperation, also referred to as *familismo*, that influence family interactions (Reyes & Elias, 2011). Qualitative studies have found that Latino families encourage their children by providing support, guidance, and encouragement through *consejos* –

a form of self-disclosure on information about past and present hardships that they hope their children will learn from (Villanueva, 1996). Latino families also provide advice, or *consejos*, in the form of folktales or cultural sayings that often contains a learned moral. *Personalismo y simpatía*, on the other hand, is characterized by the importance Latinos place on getting along well with others and having a non-confrontational personality style, values that are found to be more important than other individualistic values (Cauce & Domenech Rodríguez, 2002). For example, someone who is *simpatico* would be willing to give in to an argument to maintain a relationship with a significant other or with a family member. Latino fathers, in particular, tend to reinforce the familial belief of *ser bien educado*, which refers to the idea that their children are to be considerate of others, show kindness, respect for authority and be cooperative. The value of *ser bien educado* may also be reinforced through fathers' lived experiences, which they use as examples to support their child's social-emotional learning (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992). Contrary to Latino cultural values that foster interdependence, the United States is a country known for fostering individualism— a cultural pattern that fosters and values independence and autonomy (Vandello & Cohen, 1999). Given the contrasting cultural divides experienced by immigrant families, it is important to understand a father's perspective on the socialization of their children to the Latino culture in the context of U.S. values and norms. Given that ethnic identity development is strongly influenced by a parent's enculturation and acculturation (i.e. use of Spanish language, length of U.S. residency) (Bernal, Knight, Garza, Ocampo, & Cota, 1990), this study draws particularly from two pieces of the model— Family Social Ecological factors— to study Latino fathers' enculturation process and on Joint Socialization to understand the held stereotypes or perceptions Latino immigrant fathers' believe the host country holds about them and their families.

**Latino Families in the United States: Family Structure, Process, and Change**

While there is limited information on the attitudinal and behavioral features of the Latino family system, there is descriptive data in the literature that provides some information about the family household, in terms of marriage, cohabitation, child-bearing, etc., that provides context to the cross-generational differences among Latino families. Latinos, for example, have high levels of familismo, which coincide with traditional family patterns. Familismo is regarded as a multidimensional construct that comprises values and behaviors that focus on the needs of the family, as opposed to individual needs (B. Campos et al., 2008). Scholars have suggested that family-centered behaviors are not necessarily only shaped by values, but are also strongly influenced by a family's socioeconomic status and whether or not the family needs to rely on extended family for physical or emotional support (Landale, Oropesa, & Bradatan, 2006). Several demographic patterns are consistent with the idea that Latinos are family-orientated. For example, Latinos and Hispanics more generally, begin child-bearing earlier, they are more likely to live in family and extend-family households, and commonly have a two-parent family household; although the latter demographic is changing with more "female family headship" and single parent-family households (Landale et al., 2006, p. 168).

**Latino immigration and demographic transformation in the U.S.** While Latino immigrants across the United States share some commonalities, such as the Spanish language, they also share other demographic factors. For example, Latinos are disproportionately overrepresented in the unskilled workforce, have lower education levels on average, and often reside in the United States under an undocumented status (Landale et al., 2006). Despite these overlapping similarities, these factors are likely to change over time across generations. Native and foreign-born Latinos in the U.S., for example, show differences in the cultural assimilation

and the socioeconomic progress among later generations of Latinos (Roer-Strier, Strier, Este, Shimoni, & Clark, 2005). With respect to language, about 93 percent of first generation Latinos speak some Spanish in the home, compared to 63 percent of second generation Latinos (i.e. native born to the U.S.). Researchers have estimated that while first and second generation Latinos currently speak Spanish, the preference and proficiency in Spanish is likely to decline over time and across future generations (Landale et al., 2006).

While language and economic similarities exist, Latinos are still a large heterogeneous group— many from a variety of countries, and each with unique cultural beliefs and traditions. Even when a subgroup of Latinos immigrate from the same country, acculturation patterns, and demographics vary depending on their life circumstances, their reason for immigration, and are dependent on where in the country they have settled. In the United states, Latinos currently comprise over 17% of the population (US Census Bureau, 2015), with the largest groups being Mexican Americans or Chicanos (65%), followed by Puerto Ricans (9%) and Cubans (4%) (US Census Bureau, 2015). Latino subgroups have been grouped in the past, given shared characteristics that have created unity among these Latino subgroups such as, the Spanish history of colonization, the Spanish language, and participation in the Catholic Church— all strong contributors to the values held across Latino subgroups (Cauce & Domenech Rodríguez, 2002). Among other factors that unite these groups is the recent immigration to the U.S. of this growing population. Controversies about immigration and legal documentation in the United States are issues that make this population vulnerable to discrimination and racism; also uniting them on these experiences.

Given the lack of homogeneity in the term Latino, for the purpose of this study this term will be used to refer to varying Latino subgroups as indicated by Nationality— Mexican

American, Puerto Rican, and Salvadorian. The following will provide a clarification for research on specific Latino subgroups. Generally, however, the values, beliefs, contextual changes, and challenges described will pertain to Mexican American population— currently the largest Latino subgroup in the U.S.

**Latino family composition.** Latino families are unique in that they place a strong focus on extended family, thus families may be larger. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there are about 162 million Latino households in the United States (2015). Among Latino households, about 48% were married-couple households and 8% cohabiting— the largest percentage of all other racial groups (Bureau, 2016). Latino families also have the second largest percentage of single-mother headed households (14%), and only about 2% single-father headed households (Bureau, 2016). With respect to living alone, Latinos have the smallest percentage at only 17%, yet also have the second highest percentage for living with other family or nonfamily members (10%) (Bureau, 2016). Generally, these statistics show that Latinos have the largest percentages of married-couple households, cohabiting couples, and living with extended and nonfamily members; combined, this information is consistent with the overarching value of familismo among Latinos.

**Education, employment, and income among Latinos.** About 21.4% of Latinos are living at or below poverty, and an additional 16.2% are living without any health insurance (Bureau, 2016). Educational disparities also exist among Latinos. About 66% percent of Latinos age 25 and older completed at least high school in 2015; yet, the percentage of Latinos ages 25 and older with a Bachelor's degree was only 14.8%, with a college enrollment rate of 17% (Bureau, 2016). This indicates there is a larger group of Latino students enrolled in college; however, the graduate or completion rate is lower. In terms of their employment in the United

States, in 2014 they reportedly accounted for 16.1% of over 140 million people employed. Among the industries with a higher percentage of Latinos employed included the following: construction (27.3%), agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting (23.1%), and leisure and hospitality (22.3%). Latinos have had the largest occupational rates in farming, fishing, and forestry employment (43.4%), followed by building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations (36.7%), construction and extraction (32.3%). Latinos have been less represented, on the other hand, in life, physical, and social science occupations (7.5%), as well as in computer and mathematical occupations (6.6%) (Bureau, 2016).

Whether examining percentages across educational attainment, employment or by occupation or income levels, the information appears to indicate that Latinos, overall, have fewer physical and financial resources to support them in their child rearing efforts. While these statistics pose a sense of vulnerability among Latino subgroups living in the United States, social scientists have noted that Latino parents' socialization approach is different than those of their White counterparts, and are rooted in some of the cultural norms and values that serve as a resiliency factor among this population (C. Garcia Coll, Meyer, & Brillón, 1995). For example, values that have been considered to be unique for Latinos are familismo, personalismo, ser bien educado and machismo (Cauce & Domenech Rodríguez, 2002). Given the literature in support of these Latino family values, below is a discussion of each and provides an organizational framework of their cultural norms and values. Of note, however, is that the evidence in support of these values across individual Latino subgroups is minimal; therefore, cultural values and beliefs will be described more generally based on the literature that is available.

### **Cultural Values of Latino Families**

Cultural values found among Latino families include *familismo* (family cohesion), *personalismo y simpatía* (value in the interpersonal relationships), *consejos* (advice), *dichos* (folktales shared among family), *machismo/caballerismo*, and *ser bien educado* (showing kindness and respect) (Cordoso & Thompson, 2010). Researchers have found that Latino fathers work to uphold these values within their family, which are threatened by the process of cultural adaptation among their children, negative peers, or social norms (Behnke, Taylor, & Parra-Cardona, 2008). Therefore, the following is a review of Latino cultural constructs, which emphasize values commonly associated with Latino families, and when the research supports specific values among Latino fathers those will also be cited. Historically, the representation of Latino fathers has been under a negative frame, and while this body of literature is presented, it is important to note the striking difference between Latino family values and the historical representations of Latino fathers that unfortunately provides an incomplete picture of their involvement.

**Familismo.** The Latino culture is most known for holding high values with respect to family cohesion, loyalty, unity, interdependence, and cooperation— also referred to as familismo, that influence family interactions (Reyes & Elias, 2011). Familismo has the potential to influence family well-being and relationships. When Latino families endorse feelings of familismo, for example, they were more likely to promote positive family relationships, which are likely to guide parenting behaviors that would continue to promote this family value. In turn, Latino parents, in general, who adhere to a value of familismo encourage their youth to value and work toward familismo in their interactions with siblings and among members in the family (Germán, Gonzales, & Dumka, 2009). Researchers have noted that when Latino parents endorse family

cohesion, they tend to engage in less conflict with one another, are more involved as parents, and encourage their child's commitment to school and prosocial behavior across settings (Cordoso & Thompson, 2010). Because familismo promotes a sense of belonging and encourages social support among family members, this is likely to be a reason for the positive family interactions noted throughout the literature. During times of adversity, familismo may also serve as a protective factor as family members may have an increased desire to remain connected and supportive of one another (Z. E. Taylor, Larsen-Rife, Conger, & Widaman, 2012).

Studies have found a moderate support for familismo as a predictor of positive parental involvement for both mothers and fathers (i.e. warm and nurturing parenting) (Z. E. Taylor et al., 2012). Prenatally, Latino fathers (Dominican and Mexican-American) have been found to talk with their partners about their pregnancy, as well as viewing a sonogram (Cabrera, Shannon, Mitchell, & West, 2009), both early signs of caring for and investing in the birth of their child and their family. As part of familismo, Latino parents also try to empathize with their children's experiences with acculturation stress, discrimination, and bicultural experiences. When parents feel ill equipped to support their children through these experiences, ethnographic studies have found that parents seek out social support from faith-based communities and extended family to support the bicultural development of their children (Perreira et al., 2006). Because many of the values in the traditional Latino culture are around maintaining family relationships, including family cohesion, rituals, and cooperation, it is likely this cultural foundation will inform how Latino immigrant men identify with their fatherhood roles.

Fathers' endorsement of familismo, as a value, was also found to have a strong protective effect in reducing adolescents' deviant peer relationships and teacher-reported externalizing behaviors (Gonzales et al., 2008). When 5<sup>th</sup> grade Latino children, for example, reported a close

relationship with their father, they were more likely to report positive relationships with peers (Cabrera, Cook, Mcfadden, & Bradley, 2011). Latino fathers may also influence their adolescent's peer relationships by giving their children advice about friends and peer relationships, and granting their children time to spend with friends; consequently, they may also limit access to negative peer relationships (McDowell & Parke, 2009). Given the value of familismo and the strong focus on family interdependence, it is likely that Latino fathers may sanction spending time with family as opposed to spending time with friends and same-age peers. In the resiliency literature, familismo, is also described as one of the strongest environmental protective factors for Latino youth in immigrant families (Cordoso & Thompson, 2010). Academically, familismo supports the continued academic goals and achievement of youth. Although Latino parents are confronted with barriers related to language, employment, and cultural norms, promoting their child's educational success is of great importance to these parents, and therefore support their children by monitoring the completion of their schoolwork (Plunkett & Bámaca-Gómez, 2003), and cultivating open communication between home and school (Ceballo, 2004).

Research on familismo and acculturation have found that perceived support from the family (perceived support and emotional closeness) is the most central value of familismo and does not seem to change with acculturation to the U.S. mainstream culture (Sabogal et al., 1988). Familismo, therefore, has been proposed as a possible explanation for Latino immigrant's, rather, "trouble free" adaptation to the U.S.— and also to the relatively positive mental health outcomes of Latinos in general (Keefe, Padilla, & Carlos, 1979). In the past, geographical proximity of Latino families living and settling close to one another supported the behavioral components of familismo. For example, in a study of Mexican immigrants in the Los Angeles area, they were

found to be more likely to have extended family living in the same area, know more people in their neighborhood, and visit with more neighbors throughout the week (Keefe, 1984)– behaviors consistent with extended family kinship and *compadrazgo* (godfather/close friendship). As Latino families acculturate, their values around family cohesion, cooperation, and interdependence may continue to a lesser degree, yet they do not necessarily go on to resemble the values of non-Latino families (Keefe, 1980). For Latinos, *familismo* is a way of living together as a family, and provides the context for understanding the remaining cultural values often associated with different Latino subgroups– *personalismo*, *simpatía*, *encouragement* and *ser bien educado*.

**Personalismo and simpatía.** *Personalismo* is characterized by the importance Latinos place on getting along well with others– values that are found to be more important among Latinos than other individualistic values (Cauce & Domenech Rodríguez, 2002). In the literature, *personalismo* is a value relating closely to *familismo*, given its importance on maintaining relationships over material or individual success– meaning that Latinos are concerned with getting along with one another for the benefit of the family as a whole. Combined, these values have characterized Latinos as identifying with collectivism, with a focus on family unity, parental authority, and an obligation to the family (Cauce & Domenech Rodríguez, 2002).

*Simpatía* can be summarized as having a non confrontational personality style (Mogro-Wilson, 2013). For example, someone who is *simpatico* would be willing to give in to an argument to maintain a relationship with a significant other or with a family member. Latino families that value *simpatía*, describe their relationships with one another as warm and close. Latino fathers, in particular, have been found to exhibit warmth at a similar rate to that of White fathers (Cabrera, Hofferth, & Soo, 2011). Further, researchers have found that Latino children

benefit and have generally positive outcomes when parents are warm and embody *simpatía* (Mogro-Wilson, 2013). *Personalismo*, on the other hand, focuses on having interpersonal relationships that are trusting, warm, and respectful (Altarriba & Santiago-Rivera, 1994; Gallardo, 2012). Among Puerto Rican families, *personalismo* transcends across the parent-child relationship, such that they built trust and used rules and expectations that their children could negotiate—demonstrating Latino parents' inclination to build trust/close relationships with their children and teach them to have respectful interactions (i.e., negotiation) (Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2007). A limitation of this study was its focus on mothers; therefore, these results may not be generalizable toward fathers or other Latino subgroups.

**Machismo and caballerismo.** The literature on Latino fathers has a history of describing them as embodying *machismo*, a term with a long history of negative connotations which include, “exaggerated masculinity, physical prowess, and male chauvinism” (Zinn, 1994, p. 75). Despite its negative roots, in more recent decades a more positive frame on the term, known as *caballerismo*, is characterizing fathers in terms of, “true bravery or valor, courage, generosity, stoicism, heroism, and ferocity” (Arciniega, Anderson, Tovar-Blank, & Tracey, 2008; Mirandé, 1997, p. 78). The term *machismo* has historically framed the role of fathers as the head of the household, instead of a caregiver or husband; however, this term is also progressively moving towards describing a *caballerismo* role that encompasses, “loving husband, the consumed father, and the family man” (Mirandé, 1997). To date, the majority of qualitative studies have focused on the stereotyped role of *machismo* and reinforce a more nuanced definition than has been traditionally relied upon. However, researchers report that such behaviors—violent discipline and unilateral leaders of the home—have overshadowed, and frankly misrepresented positive behaviors among Latino fathers (Mirandé, 1997).

Machismo is primarily a male value that may change given the family context and is dependent on the observer, the historical period, and the context of the family. From a feminist perspective, machismo has been described in its more traditional form as “exaggerated masculinity, physical prowess, and male chauvinism” (Zinn, 1994, p. 74). Yet, other scholars have described the term as “an appropriate mechanism to insure the continuation of Mexican family pride and respect” (Sánchez, 1999, p. 129). Therefore, under the latter perspective, machismo was a necessary characteristic for men to maintain the stability, strength, and respect among family members.

Traditional Latino fatherhood roles were first studied in rural parts of Mexico by early ethnographic work, which found that males is the household established traditional gender relations (Mummert, 1993). In these rural parts of Mexico, men and their eldest sons financially supported the family; women, however, primarily completed domestic tasks (e.g. cleaning, cooking, and taking care of the younger children). Unfortunately, the majority of the literature on machismo comes from a feminist interpretation, thus portraying fathers under a machista lens; however, more recent critics of this work are identifying the important role of fathers as part of the Latino family unit and the positive characteristics of machismo—caballerismo, which encompasses the role of provider and protector (Panitz, McConchie, Richard Sauber, & Fonseca, 1983). Positive characteristics of machismo are known as caballerismo— the social responsibility to provide for and have an emotional connection with the family— and has often gone unnoticed (Mayo, 1997). Research on machismo and caballerismo has found that caballerismo, specifically, among Mexican men was associated with a stronger Latino ethnic identity, more egalitarian roles (e.g., problem solving, demonstrating warmth) (Arciniega et al., 2008), and greater satisfaction with their social supports (i.e., neighbors, friends)(Estrada & Arciniega, 2015). This may be

because *caballerismo* is a prosocial form of masculinity, and therefore contributes to the social relationships Latino men form and/or maintain over time. While *machismo* has been negatively related to paternal involvement, *caballerismo*, on the other hand, has not been found to have a correlation to increased father involvement (Glass & Owen, 2010); however, it has been positively related to Mexican men's self esteem (Ojeda & Piña-Watson, 2014) and positive attitudes toward academics and higher education (Piña-Watson, Lorenzo-Blanco, Dornhecker, Martinez, & Nagoshi, 2016). Thus, viewing Latino men from a traditional *machismo* frame, alone, does not describe their involvement within the family, therefore *caballerismo*, as well as other cultural values, should be considered when studying Latino fathers. Overall, traditional Latino fatherhood roles are continuing to change with the increase in urbanization, migration and industrialization, and is reported to be primarily the case in Mexico (Cauce & Domenech Rodríguez, 2002); however, less research has studied *machismo*, its meaning, and how it manifests among Latino immigrant men in the U.S.

While other Latino cultural values— *familismo*, *personalismo*, and *simpatía*— have been studied with respect to its influence on positive father involvement, warmth, educational monitoring and involvement, there continues to be limited research examining whether *machismo* and/or *caballerismo* is related to other forms of engagement across settings (e.g. home, family services), and whether acculturation changes particular values, attitudes, beliefs, and which values are more amenable to change with acculturation and developmental change (Cabrera, Shannon, Mitchell, et al., 2009). Characteristics of *machismo* have been briefly studied among Latino fathers in the U.S. and Mexico, where the traditional role of head of household and *machismo* were twice as likely to be reported among fathers in Mexico than in the U.S. (B. Taylor & Behnke, 2005). Such findings, in part, shed light on the possible cultural complexities,

social context, and a father's level of acculturation to the U.S. that have an influence on the fatherhood construct (Taylor & Behnke, 2005).

**Encouragement and ser bien educado.** Research on Latino immigrant fathers show they place particular importance on achievement and hard work as a means of progressing and making a better life for themselves in the U.S., and use forms of encouragement to help motivate them (López, 2001). Qualitative studies have found that Latino families, in general, encourage their children by providing support, guidance, and encouragement through the disclosure of information about past and present hardships (consejos) (Villanueva, 1996), cultural narratives (dichos), and teachings (Ceballo, Maurizi, Suarez, & Aretakis, 2014). Ethnographic studies describe Latino fathers, in particular, as caring and encouraging (Mirandé, 1991), and as valuing their role as teachers for their children; thus, concluding that although fathers' views are traditional, their behaviors present as more egalitarian in nature. Latino immigrant families also seek encouragement and support from church, neighbors, peers, and schools (Cordoso & Thompson, 2010). For Latino immigrant parents, the church is a source of support and provides a sense of community among Latino subgroups. Many times, parents and children, turn to spirituality, faith, and religiosity to serve as a source of strength and guidance for the family (Cordoso & Thompson, 2010). These faith-based supports have been instrumental to help prevent substance abuse, psychological distress, and premarital sex among Latino youth (Thompson & Gurney, 2003).

Latino fathers also reinforce the familial belief of ser bien educado, which refers to the idea that their children are to be considerate of others, show kindness, respect for authority, and be cooperative. Respeto (respect), relatedly, has been defined as having an appropriate and proper attitude toward elders or people in authority, and has often been considered as part of ser

bien educado (Mogro-Wilson, 2013). The value of ser bien educado may also be reinforced through fathers' lived experiences, which they use as examples to support their child's social-emotional learning (consejos) (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992). Ser bien educado is typically learned while children are in the home and it includes providing discipline, teaching good manners, proper behavior, and respecting their elders (Durand & Perez, 2013). Latino parents often utilize ser bien educado to help their children learn to behave at home and school, and to perform well academically (Goldsmith & Kurpius, 2017).

In the remaining sections of this literature review, the following research is evaluated: Outlined first is research on the Father Involvement construct to provide an understanding of the different forms of involvement among fathers and across families, as well as the factors that contribute to positive father involvement. Secondly, literature on fathers and identity development are described to understanding how fathering is influential in the development of a child's positive racial identity. The goal in presenting this literature base is to underscore the value of including and understanding fathers' perspectives, values, beliefs, and general expectations of what it means to be a good father in the context of two competing cultures.

### **Conceptualizing Father Involvement**

Researchers believed the most important aspects of fathering included: "direct care, shared activities, monitoring, housework, and other sustained efforts on behalf of children"(Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997, pp. 20–21). However, others have argued that it is also important to focus on the meaning fathers attribute to activities they associate with fathering, because these meanings can have an impact on a fathers' level of involvement with their children and family (Parke et al., 2004). Relatedly, family systems theory also suggests the importance of understanding a family's perspective of father involvement, as that is likely to dictate a father's

participation, interaction, and responsibility within the family unit. For Latino families, it is critical to focus on family norms, roles, expectations, and beliefs that guide father involvement and that influence the father-child interactions that may be more culturally appropriate. Simply making statements of how different racial, ethnic, and cultural groups may be different (or similar), unfortunately, causes faulty conclusions and errors to ensue. Therefore, the following section of this review focuses on providing a brief outline of research to date defining “father involvement,” followed by the current, albeit scarce, literature outlining factors to positive father involvement among Latino fathers.

Prior to the conceptualization of the term father involvement, a father’s physical presence in the home was the only factor considered; however, in 1985 Lamb, Pleck, Charnov, and Levine defined paternal involvement, a construct encompassing three areas of a fathers’ involvement. They include, (1) engagement (degree to which fathers interact with their children across leisure, play, or caretaking tasks), (2) accessibility (physical availability of the father), and (3) responsibility (a father’s role in assuring that there are resources available to the child— clothes, well-child visits, babysitter, daycare) (Lamb, Pleck, Charnov, & Levine, 1985). Twenty-five years after the first conceptualization of father involvement, Pleck suggested a revised conceptualization to include the following components: (a) positive engagement, (b) warmth and responsiveness, and (c) control (2010, p. 58). In addition, Pleck sought to clarify the responsibility component, so that it referenced indirect care, as well as process responsibility (2010, p. 58). The re-conceptualization was in response to the changing fatherhood research focusing on engagement as a more specific and narrow form of fathering interactions, as opposed to the original definition of involvement, which encompassed only the total time a father was involved. Researchers were also measuring father involvement in the context of warmth-

responsiveness and control and therefore were included in the revision of the model. Although responsibility has received less attention in the fathering literature, this term served to define two forms of responsibility— indirect care (activities a father does for their child that may include, social, health, or caretaking concerns) and process responsibility (refers to a fathers' initiative to complete child/house related tasks, monitoring the child's physical needs and monitoring to assure the above forms of involvement are also being met) (Joseph H. Pleck, 2010). Therefore, combined, Pleck proposed a revision to the father-involvement construct to include the three primary components— positive engagement, warmth-responsiveness, and control— along with two supporting domains representing responsibility— indirect care and process responsibility (Pleck, 2010).

So what do we know about father involvement in Latino families? Several researchers have studied this issue, and while Lamb and colleagues have outlined the father involvement construct, the literature is still variable in its definition and use across diverse racial and ethnic fathers. Research on Latino fathers shows they are engaged, egalitarian, and more responsive than the traditional views held on this group of fathers (i.e. machismo) (B. Taylor & Behnke, 2005). Characteristics that are associated with Latino father involvement are strong family values (familismo), sharing in the parental responsibilities with their spouse (egalitarian views), and resources to help support them in their role as parents (e.g. knowledge, skills, experience, social relationships etc.) (Cabrera, Ryan, Mitchell, Shannon, & Tamis-LeMonda, 2008). Cross-cultural research on Latino fathers has found they monitor their children (Toth & Xu, 1999), are warm, engaged, and less controlling with their children (Hofferth, 2003). Contrary to traditional forms of machismo, Latino fathers have also been found to participate in housework, particularly when mothers worked longer hours and/or had higher financial earnings (Coltrane, Parke, & Adams,

2004). Therefore, while some research has suggested that Mexican fathers identify more strongly with their provider roles, research over the last ten years suggests they are taking on new roles including childcare and household tasks.

Research on immigrant fathers, specifically, has found they face unique challenges that force their adaptation from traditional views of father involvement to more egalitarian roles (i.e., helping their children counteract negative influences in the U.S.) (Behnke et al., 2008). This research also demonstrated that Mexican-origin fathers continued to make efforts to be involved in their children's lives, despite contextual barriers they experienced (e.g. work strains, documentation status etc.) (Behnke et al., 2008). Further research still needs to determine specific behaviors that denote positive father involvement among Latino immigrant fathers and determine whether traditional western models, such as that developed by Pleck's Father Involvement Framework, captures these fathers' true forms of involvement (2010).

**Contributing factors to positive father involvement.** This study's intention is to emphasize the cultural values of fathers and address Latino fathers' enculturation process. However, it is important to note that culture is not the sole factor explaining differences in parenting beliefs and practices, rather there are a combination of contextual factors—socioeconomic status, employment, work stability, social isolation, discrimination, resources, stressors—that may also account for difference in parenting beliefs and practices. These contextual factors can serve as either constraints or resources for fathers in their effort to parent and socialize their children to Latino cultural values. Therefore, the following outlines a series of factors that may contribute to a father's positive involvement. These contributing factors are provided to avoid conveniently using only race or ethnicity as an explanation of differences in parenting beliefs and practices, rather, to provide information that may also shed light on the

contextual and environmental influences directly experienced by Latino immigrant fathers in the U.S.— focusing on Latino immigration and acculturation, cultural influences, and employment/work influences.

***Immigration and acculturation.*** Fathering in the context of immigration has gone largely unexplored, though it is an important point of transition for families. Fathers move from their home country to a foreign country and face sociocultural barriers, where the roles and expectations for fathers may be different, leading to parenting stress and/or differences in parenting beliefs and practices (Shimoni, Este, & Clark, 2003). Despite these barriers, immigrant fathers are more likely to co-reside with their children (Chuang & Moreno, 2008), which in turn may lead to more involvement, given fathers' physical accessibility. Immigrant families typically have more traditional roles for mothers and fathers; therefore, the involvement of fathers may be viewed as particularly important in the context of immigration, especially if fathers are fulfilling the provider role (Capps, Bronte-Tinkew, & Horowitz, 2010). A fathers' involvement, therefore, may make the transition to a new culture and country more successful. In contrast, a new environment and culture may also pose different expectations and norms that may deter a father's involvement. Immigrant fathers, in particular, face a number of barriers including underemployment, language barriers, barriers to services, challenges in understanding U.S. systems that can affect their parenting abilities, and prompt fear of stigmatization or deportation (Capps et al., 2010). In an article about increasing paternal involvement in mental health treatments, Taylor (2006) found that a father's immigration status impacted their sense of self-worth and competence, created an emotional burden associated to their experiences with racism, and they described how these experiences affected their family relationships (2006). Yet, some research has also shown that immigrant fathers may actually have better social and economic

stability in the residing country that may increase their ability to execute their parenting roles (Strier & Roer-Strier, 2010). Given variability in family's reactions to stress (acculturation stress, family conflict, financial stress), fathers' experiences in the context of immigration require further understanding.

Immigrating to a new country can bring with it confusion and stress about rules, expectations, and norms in the new majority culture. Researchers refer to this process of adapting and/or changing from one culture to another as acculturation (Berry, 1980). Acculturation is not linear, in fact, it is comprised of four forms of adapting/changing to a new culture: (1) assimilation (relinquishing their native culture in the process of adapting to another), (2) integration (maintaining their native culture and new culture), (3) rejection (separating self from majority culture), and (4) deculturation (no cultural affiliation to native or new culture). Acculturation is different for every individual and depends on many factors including, length of time one has been exposed to the new culture, may vary by country of origin, and the rate at which individuals acquire information from the new culture (Berry, 1980). To measure acculturation, researchers have often used length of time residing in the U.S., citizenship status, or language proficiency/use as important indicators of acculturation to a new culture (Capps et al., 2010).

Researchers suggest that immigrants may be most concerned with assimilating to the U.S. culture and norms, demonstrating behaviors and attitudes experienced by the majority culture, because they become aware of their "minority status" in the new country (Harris, 2000). Others suggest that immigrants form new values, customs and traditions, as a result of adapting to the new culture (Jain & Belsky, 1997). Overall, research on immigrant fathers has found that more acculturated fathers are more engaged than less acculturated fathers (Jain & Belsky, 1997). In a

qualitative study on immigrant fathers in Canada, researchers found that fathers viewed their responsibility as guiding their children, preparing them for the future, and serving as a role model (Shimoni et al., 2003); Fathers' views on the importance of retaining cultural values and beliefs from their native country, however, varied. In contrast, other qualitative studies on immigrant fathers has found that they retain "valuable aspects of fatherhood conceptions from their countries of origin" but also incorporate new things from the new country, often describing their increased involvement as a result of Western culture (Roer-Strier et al., 2005, p. 325). Though acculturation was not measured as part of this study, it is possible that Latino immigrant fathers cultural values and beliefs may be continuously modified, given the pressures and demands that may come about because of their immigration status/experience.

*Cultural influences and understanding systems.* Latino fathers experience barriers across systems in the U.S., along with the culture shock in entering a new country, which creates a dissonance between their beliefs and those from the dominant culture. Latino families, for example, often come from societies where the government does not question a family's child rearing or disciplinary strategies. In a focus group of 11 Latino families, involved with child welfare services, they reported engaging in harsh discipline that they experienced as children and viewed it as appropriate in their culture (Earner, 2007). Families in the study reported feeling judged and misunderstood by caseworkers, which delayed the communication and reunification with their children. Though stated is an understandable concern for the child's welfare, a lack of cultural understanding across U.S. systems and policies unfamiliar to these families may consequently create barriers for fathers (and in this case, also mothers) to remain united and involved in their children's lives. Additionally, in a study of nineteen Mexican origin fathers, they reported a deep concern and worry of deportation (Behnke et al., 2008). This fear affected

their level of involvement, such that they would refrain from driving their children because of their fear of deportation. Recent immigrant fathers, also, feared involvement with the school system, as they still did not understand the schools' role in the matter of reporting undocumented parents. Overall, fathers in this study reported an immense amount of stress and uncertainty that influenced their involvement with their children across systems (i.e. schools, child welfare).

There is an overwhelming overrepresentation of men of color in poor, working-class communities. Therefore, issues of social racism and discrimination are two experiences that can affect fathers of color. This is particularly true for Latino and African-American fathers in the U.S., two racial/ethnic groups overrepresented in the low-economic strata and more readily found to be living in poverty (Gordon, Oliveros, Hawes, Iwamoto, & Rayford, 2012).

Researchers at the University of North Carolina, have reported that a father's level of psychological and emotional distress may be in part attributed to experiences of institutional racism and discrimination (Coakley, Shears, & Randolph, 2014). When a father's mental health has been affected, this interferes with mothers' willingness to parent with the father and may discourage their continued involvement (McLanahan & Beck, 2010); therefore, in such situations a father's involvement is likely to be inhibited by the mother. Issues of race, inequality, and discrimination also influence the way parents help their children understand their experiences when faced with similar issues (Ayón, 2016). For example, in a sample of Latino families, parents counseled their children to adapt and expect discrimination, to work to disprove negative stereotypes, and also work toward building their ethnic identity and pride (Ayón, 2016). In a qualitative study of Ethiopian immigrants to Canada, researchers found that systemic barriers such as racism and discrimination affect fathers' views on their worth as paternal figures (Roer-

Strier et al., 2005); therefore, this is an important barrier in need of further exploration among Latino immigrant fathers.

***Employment/Work influences.*** Employment/work influences help to describe the challenge fathers' face as financial providers of the household. Low-income fathers – typically found to be less educated and primarily racial/ethnic minority fathers– have been particularly over represented in industrial and construction-based employment (Castillo, Welch, & Sarver, 2013). This type of employment often includes poor working conditions, part-time work or seasonal or temporary employment, and minimum wage (Devault et al., 2008). Though children benefit from their father's financial contribution, the nature of a father's employment can also affect their involvement in parenting activities (Russell & Hwang, 2004). For example, low-income fathers reported that employment that required them to work long-hours during the week, inflexible work schedules that kept them away during the day and weekends, and physically demanding jobs, all affected their level of involvement with their children (Summers, Boller, & Raikes, 2004). Additionally, researchers have found that when fathers were in work environment that were less supportive (e.g., self-direction, compliments for good work, value family in the workplace), it affected a fathers' sensitivity toward their children (Goodman, Crouter, Lanza, & Cox, 2008). Though low -income fathers report valuing their provider role, they also described a form of tension between their provider and fathering roles, particularly when low-income fathers had stable employment, but lacked flexible work-schedules (Roy, 2004).

### **Fathers and Identity Development**

**Fathers' parenting role identity.** Given this study's interest on Latino fathers parenting beliefs, attitudes, and approaches, the following focuses on the parent identity and role identity literature, with a focus on race, ethnicity, and culture with respect to these identities. The

fatherhood research has focused largely on parental identity and how it influences parenting behavior (Minton & Pasley, 1996). A father's parenting role identity was defined by Ihingertallman, Pasley, and Buehler, (1993) and included a multifaceted view of the construct including: perceived competence, role satisfaction, role salience, and desired investment. These four composites, combined, have been found to be related with a father's physical involvement; however, among residential fathers, only three of the role identity constructs—role competence, satisfaction, and investment—were associated with more father involvement (Minton & Pasley, 1996). It is reported that fathers who identify strongly with their parenting role are more likely to be motivated by their beliefs of what they think fathers should do, and therefore, may be more involved in daily parental activities than fathers who do not identify strongly with their parenting role (Maurer, Pleck, & Rane, 2001). Researchers have suggested that when fathers are involved as early as the prenatal period, this allows them the opportunity to begin to develop their own father identity, which can help the father begin to form a long-standing attachment with their unborn child (Cabrera & Bradley, 2012). Indeed, Latino fathers have been found to begin their involvement in the prenatal period, indicating early signs of the importance they place on their growing family and their children (Cabrera, Fagan, & Farrie, 2008).

Despite the literature on Latino father's parenting role and father involvement, self-efficacy theory would postulate that fathers who lack skills (e.g. language, resources, overcome barriers) may feel less confident to respond in ways that encourage or support their children to be successful; therefore they may be less likely to continue to try (Bandura, 1977). However, some of the current research on Latino fathers does suggest a positive relationship between their self-efficacy and father involvement (Holmes & Huston, 2010). For example, many fathers immigrate with the hope of providing a better future for their children and family, and despite the

institutional and language barriers (Perreira et al., 2006), this is an indicator that they believe in themselves and feel capable of making a successful transitions to a new country. Therefore, this sense of confidence may encourage and motivate Latino fathers to continue to remain involved, as well as continuing to encourage and support their children throughout their development and in the successful transition to a new country. Research also postulates that when fathers are presented with alternative behavioral options through programs, they are “willing to forgo cultural norms and expectations” and redefine their roles to achieve their parenting goals (Concha, Villar, Tafur-Salgado, Ibanez, & Azevedo, 2016, p. 177). Taken together, this research indicates that fathers’ self-efficacy and beliefs about their role as fathers has implications for how they execute their roles; yet, are also amenable to change given external support through programs and services.

**Fathering, enculturation, and racial socialization.** Racially and ethnically diverse families face a multitude of stressors– work, family, discrimination, and monolingual stressors– yet, they cope within the confinements of their family. This is a form of bicultural stress, which can emerge because of living within two cultural divides (Romero & Roberts, 2003). Many times, these families attempt to socialize their children to these stressors by orienting their children to the values and beliefs of their native culture (Garcia Coll et al., 1996)– a process referred to as enculturation (Herkovits, 1948). While few studies have researched enculturation among Latino parents, theories suggest that first generation Latinos are more likely to ascribe to Latino cultural values than second or third generation Latinos, who may resonate with U.S. culture norms. Mexican-American men, in particular, have been found to cope with bicultural stress through the use of humor, religion, behavioral disengagement (i.e., substance use, denial), positive reframing, and problem solving (Ojeda & Liang, 2014). Of these coping strategies,

positive reframing and humor have been related to a positive affect among ethnically diverse populations (Vera et al., 2012). Understanding fathers' coping strategies in response to bicultural stress is critical, as it provides information of how they promote positive psychological wellbeing for their children. Therefore, racial socialization, overall, has been found to be an important function and role within families from different racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds (Garcia Coll et al., 1995).

Garcia Coll et al., (1996) reports that when parents support racial socialization within the family, children are better apt to develop a positive sense of self– a protective factor as children continue to develop and face challenges in life. For children from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds, these experiences are real and may prevent minority children from developing a healthy, confident, and strong sense of self. Therefore, parents and caregivers in the lives of these young children can begin to shape and mold these developmental processes in young children to minimize the development of prejudicial attitudes that begin in early childhood. Researchers studying enculturation, believe parents have a responsibility to help their children understand and learn to live in a society that may devalue their race, ethnicity, and cultural background (McAdoo, 1992). Therefore, parents may work to help their children become proud of their background, culture, and have an overall positive view of their racial and ethnic group. Early findings on racial socialization have supported this parenting approach, finding that it is associated with a positive racial attitude, academic achievement, and motivation for upward mobility (Umaña-Taylor, Yazedijian, & Bámaca-Gómez, 2009). Research on Latino adolescents has found that a positive ethnic identity was also related to self-esteem, and protected against psychological distress related to discrimination, stress related to acculturation, and effects of poverty (Umaña-Taylor & Updegraff, 2007). Ethnic identity affirmation, referring to the positive

feelings of one's ethnic group, was found to be a protective factor against perceived discrimination and reduced the negative effects of these circumstances in school settings (Umaña-Taylor, Wong, Gonzales, & Dumka, 2012).

Protective factors that have been found to diminish the impact of social and emotional stressors among Latino immigrant families include, personalismo (value in the interpersonal relationships), respeto (respect), consejos (advice), and familismo (Cordoso & Thompson, 2010; Parra-Cardona et al., 2006; Perreira et al., 2006). More specifically, familismo in the parent-child relationships has been found to be an essential protective factor against social isolation, discrimination and peer pressure among Latino youth in immigrant families (Cordoso & Thompson, 2010). Familismo was also a protective factor among immigrant families who experienced labor exploitation or discrimination (Parra-Cardona et al., 2006). Among Latino men, caballerismo, has been found to contribute to positive coping strategies when faced with discrimination such as, positive reframing, problem solving and using humor (Ojeda & Liang, 2014). Studies on immigrant families, including Latino families, has found that they also select values from the U.S. as well as those from their country of origin to pass on to their children—both values that may coexist, but also compete with one another (C. Garcia Coll & Marks, 2012). With that said, this sense of biculturalism (maintaining ethnic identity and incorporating other cultural considerations) has been found to be a protective factor toward resiliency— showing positive effects on psychological and cognitive development, motivation to pursue higher education, and more successful relationships with family and members in the community (Park-Taylor, Walsh, & Ventura, 2007).

Regarding incidents of racism and discrimination, African American parents have engaged in positive racial socialization with their children, which has included, “communicating

the realities of racism, while teaching cultural pride, and providing strategies for overcoming racial barriers” that builds the resiliency and positive outlook for their children (Allen, 2016, p. 1839). Latino immigrant populations would benefit from a similar approach to racial socialization given they are a “minority group” that may experience similar forms of discrimination. While some research has focused on the male African American perspective with respect to these barriers, less research has focused on the cultural experiences among Latino immigrant fathers, much less have understood how Latino fathers socialize their children to the prevalence of these experiences, and how they try to model effective resolutions of these situations for their children. Therefore, a focus of this research will also be on understanding these perspectives from Latino immigrant fathers’ self-reports.

### **Purpose Statement and Research Question**

Despite the growing body of literature on Latino families, there continues to be an incomplete picture of Latino fathers, their values, and their child-rearing beliefs and practices. The knowledge gap may be due to the variety of ways in which Latino subgroups differ including (a) their country of origin, (b) their reason for immigrating to the United States, (c) economic and financial resources/stability, (d) socialization to their cultural values and traditions, and (e) the length of time they have lived in the U.S. and/or their acculturation level. Given the variability between these factors, the expectation is that diversity will exist in the values and beliefs about parenting and child rearing practices. Knight and colleagues (1993) developed a model that identified the socialization factors that influence the ethnic identity development of Latino children– (A) Family’s Social Ecology, (B) Joint Socialization, and a (C) Child’s Ethnic Identity (see Figure 1.). Overall, this parent socialization model is described as one of the more complete and complex models describing the socialization process of racial and

ethnically diverse children, given that it considers a variety of the interrelated cultural and contextual factors that may be important as part of this process (Roosa et al., 2002). Using this model is particularly beneficial, because it sheds light on a set of complex variables in the family system that shape a fathers' parenting practices and cultural socialization. Further, it may also provide information as to why some fathers adopt parenting practices that may not be consistent with their cultural values, and potentially to understand how and why parenting approaches may change as immigrant fathers' face racial tensions and barriers in the U.S. (Roosa et al., 2002). More importantly, this model helps us understand how values change based on the context of the family, and how having a broad understanding of a parent's culture is not necessarily a good predictor of parenting values, beliefs, and practices; rather an understanding of their experiences may equally justify their approaches. Therefore, for the purpose of this research, Knight et al.'s model on Ethnic Identity Development serves as a guide to identify key variables that influence Latino fathers' enculturation. The central question guiding this research is: how do Latino immigrant fathers' cultural values, beliefs, experiences, and their understanding of their role as fathers impact their fathering practices? Additional sub questions that will guide the cultural and contextual understanding of these fathers' experiences include:

1. How do Latino immigrant fathers' interpret their involvement as fathers, and how do these roles align with Pleck's (2010) Father Involvement framework?
2. How do immigrant fathers negotiate Latino cultural values in the U.S., and how do fathers interpret their children's receptiveness to their cultural approach?
3. What barriers and/or challenges do Latino immigrant fathers identify as interfering with their paternal involvement?

4. What meaning do Latino fathers attribute to experiences with racial tensions, and how do fathers socialize their children to cope with these experiences?

## Chapter 2

### Methodology

Given the relative new uncharted research territory on immigrant fathers, Pleck (2008) has suggested the use of qualitative approaches to reveal new fatherhood constructs and dynamics that may arise uniquely from immigrant fathers. Additionally, Strier and Roer-Strier (2005) also emphasize the importance of using qualitative methodology when studying immigrant fathers, given that much of the immigration literature has focused on psychological measures of well-being and on designing programs, with few studies incorporating the voices of fathers. Raising awareness to these fathers' voices, therefore, facilitates the documentation of these fathers' views and perceptions, their experiences, coping mechanism, expectations, as well as challenges and barriers these fathers experience. Hawkins and Palkovitz (1999) state that depth and meaning in our understanding of father involvement is lost if we only consider quantitative and observable behaviors of fatherhood; therefore, a more comprehensive understanding can be achieved if consideration is also given to the meaning and salience of a father's involvement. Therefore, this study employs a basic interpretivist qualitative study design and uses qualitative principles of a grounded theory approach to analyze the data, more specifically: constant comparative methods, which involves comparing similarities and differences in the data to identify patterns. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), the key characteristics of an Interpretivist qualitative study are: (1) seeking to understand how people interpret their experiences, (2) an interest in how people construct their worlds, and (3) understanding the meaning that people attribute to their experiences. This study on Latino immigrant fathers is addressing all three components, because it will shed light on these fathers' interpretations and meaning making that may not otherwise be measured or documented.

## Participants

This study uses data from qualitative interviews collected as part of an iterative process to culturally adapt a strength-based video coaching program for low-income, Latino fathers. Data collection took place at each of the participants' home or a preferred location in an urban region in the Pacific Northwest. Six fathers, who were single, married or cohabiting biological fathers, and who were residing with at least one child under the age of five at the time of the interviews, were recruited to participate. All six fathers (100%) identified as Latino and Hispanic, and as a first generation immigrant, indicating that they were born in a country outside the United States and relocated to the United States. Five fathers reported Mexico as their birthplace, while one father reported El Salvador. Four fathers' reported Spanish as their primary language and were therefore interviewed in Spanish. All fathers reported residing in the United States for a period of 6 years or longer; one father reported living in the U.S. for a period of 28 years. With regard to the fathers' educational levels, three fathers had a high school education, one father had more than a high school education, and two fathers had less than a high school education. The ages of the fathers ranged from 25 to 43 years of age, with a mean of 37 years. This sample of fathers had an average of 3.8 children residing in the home, whose ages ranged from two to fifteen years of age ( $M = 7.43$  years). Four of the fathers were married; one father was cohabiting, and one father reported being single. With regard to employment status, four fathers were working full-time, one father was looking for work at the time of the interview, and one father was a stay-at-home parent. All fathers were recruited from an income-eligible program serving young children and families. Overall, there is variability in the age, employment, and education among this group of fathers, which adds contrast to the sample, particularly around cultural experiences in their native country and the United States. Therefore, this study employs a maximum variability

sample in an effort to surface differences among each fathers' negotiations of their cultural worlds, while continuing to find common patterns that may cut across fathers' experiences (Patton, 2015). Such variability among this group of fathers will provide multiple perspectives and insight to the varying experiences of Latino immigrant fathers, which combined may provide more information on their ethnic identity, fathering role, and experiences.

### **Data Collection and Interview Protocol**

After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board, Latino fathers who participated and completed some portion of the first iterative phase of a strength-based video-coaching program were recruited to participate. A group of ten residential, biological fathers, who met the above criterion, were read a phone script for recruitment. After the initial contact, fathers who agreed to participate were subsequently scheduled for an interview at the day and time most convenient for each participating father. Each participant gave informed consent and was paid \$30 dollars in cash as compensation for their participation in the study.

Data was collected via face-to-face interviews that lasted 120 to 150 minutes. All interviews followed a semi-structured interview format using an interview guide. Concepts and outlined questions were designated a priori; however, the participant individually determined the interview flow. This method of data collection provides an outline and framework for interviews and is helpful when expanding on previous empirical work in the field (Van Den Hoonaard, 1997). The questions were open ended to allow fathers to respond according to topics and constructs that were the most salient to them. The interview guide included five sections: 1) father's cultural background, 2) fathering and cultural influences, 4) cultural values and beliefs, 5) racial/ethnic tensions and structural/institutional barriers, and 6) cultural constructs (see Appendix A for the complete interview guide). The fathering cultural background section

included a description of the participating father's family, their family growing up, information about their relationship to their father and father-figures, and information about their experiences growing up as a Latino male in the United States. Under fathering and cultural influences, topics included a description of the perceived strengths and challenges of Latino fathers, and their transition to fatherhood in the United States as Latino immigrant fathers. The next line of questioning, cultural values and beliefs, included questions about a father's role and involvement in their family, family values, values they hope to instill in their children, cultural traditions, and a description of how fathers' encourage and support their children. Additionally, there were questions about a father's experiences with discrimination and its influences on their fatherhood role, and on their involvement as a parent across systems, context, and settings. Finally, under the section on cultural constructs, fathers were explicitly asked about Latino cultural values often cited in the literature—*familia*, *respeto*, *machismo*, and *ser bien educado*. I asked additional questions to clarify information about each predetermine topic. This approach was implemented to elicit more information in participants' responses.

All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Four of the interviews were completed in Spanish, so after they were transcribed, they were also translated into English. Marsiglio (2004; p. 61) suggests that research based on in-depth interviewing “is well suited for studying the complex web of self-reflective and interpersonal processes associated with fathering”— and thus this mode of data collection was employed for this particular study. This style of research is also beneficial, given the questions being asked, as it centers our attention on a father's own words to describe their fathering identities and practices as they see them, which will provide insight to these men's accounts of fathering in a diverse, cultural context (Marsiglio, 2004). Before coding and analysis, an independent translator translated each Spanish to English

transcription back into Spanish, a process called back translation, in order to assure the meaning for all interviews was maintained.

Pre and post interview field notes were also collected to help monitor the process of data collection and served as a mode of reflection of the data collected throughout each of the interviews. Field notes consist of observations during the interview, information about the context, physical environment, specific incidents/behaviors during the interview, the participants' verbal/nonverbal behavior, people present during the interviews, any relevant characteristics of the participant, interactions in the environment/interactions toward interviewer, researcher reflections before and after the interview, and any thoughts and reflections throughout the interview process. To provide some context to the physical space of the interview setting, I also created a diagram of the setting in which the interview was completed (please see Appendix B), as recommended by Merriam and Tisdell (2016).

### **Data Analyses Procedures**

This is a basic interpretivist qualitative study, which focuses on understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct meaning in their world, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences. Given the design this study employs, two coding schemes were used including, qualitative principles of a grounded theory approach, and analytic codes derived from the conceptual framework of this study. More specifically, a constant comparative method approach was used, which involved comparing similarities and differences in the data to identify patterns. Ryan and Bernard (2003) report that researchers can learn much about phenomena from the topics that participants avoid, either intentionally or unintentionally, and requires researchers to think critically by asking questions about what is missing; therefore, this data analysis technique was also employed.

A constant comparative method for coding and analyzing qualitative data undergoes two coding phases to interpret information: open coding and axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Three of the audio-recorded interviews were transcribed into word documents with the use of the qualitative software called Hyper-TRANSCRIBE, while others were transcribed using transcription services. Each transcription was read, while listening to the audio recording, to correct any errors and fill in any blanks in the transcription. Four Spanish interviews, which were first transcribed in Spanish, were then translated into English. Each English transcription was then translated back into Spanish, a process called back translation, to certify that the meanings of the participants' words were retained. A codebook was created to name and describe concepts in the data. Concepts were identified through the open coding phase, a process of breaking down the information into separate concepts. For example, when fathers described their experiences with discrimination, a code was created to represent how fathers' reportedly coped with such experiences. These codes included: humor, ignore and tolerate, disprove stereotypes, and self-improvement. Codes were also generated from a priori themes derived from the theoretical and empirical literature reviewed for this paper, a process Strauss and Corbin refer to as theoretical sensitivity (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). A priori codes included those directly related to Latino cultural values described in the empirical literature (e.g. familismo, personalismo y simpatía, consejos y dichos, and ser bien educado). As each interview was coded, it was also compared to the concepts already created within the codebook. If a statement did not fit an already created concept, then a new code was generated. For example, fathers in this study described experiences with discrimination. One father, however, acknowledged discrimination but indicated a unique perspective that involved reframing his experiences with discrimination; therefore a new code was generated to represent this father's unique perspective. This process continued until all

interviews were coded using the codebook. Coding continued with the grouping of concepts into categories; which represented the largest themes in the data, and are outlined below as headings in the results section. The results also include an identification of the “causes, contexts, contingencies, consequences, covariances, and conditions” that brought forward the subcategories and categories revealed in the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In other words, I also considered the contextual differences across fathers– age of immigration, education, number of years living in the U.S., and birthplace– that may have influenced these fathers’ experiences, interpretation, and socialization approaches. Throughout each coding phase, multiple memos were written to capture reflections and tentative themes and claims relevant to this study.

### **Data Quality**

To address threats to validity and reliability, and to enhance the trustworthiness of any claims and conclusions of the data, I triangulated field notes and interview data across participants. Collecting data on more than one father allowed for more variation in the data, led to a more comprehensive understanding, and increased validity of findings, and further supported participant triangulation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Throughout the data analysis process, a detailed account of the methods, procedures, and decision points in carrying out the study were documented. A running record of how categories were defined, decisions about including/excluding codes, and any questions, reflections, and decisions regarding any issues encountered with the data were also tracked. Field notes, interview excerpts, codes, and memos were also shared with a qualitative-methods design group to obtain feedback, account for researcher bias, and to examine alternative interpretations to the data.

### **Researcher Reflexivity**

In over a century of qualitative research, there has been a tradition of including reflexivity as part of this type of research design, a process in which researchers engage in explicit self-awareness and reflection as a way of reducing bias and unintended influences from the researcher or its research participants (Finlay, 2002). Therefore, the following are the academic, research, and personal influences on this work. My initial introduction to the research and work with fathers was through a university-supported research project with families, intended to adapt a strength-based intervention for fathers. As the sole research assistant on the project, I filled several different roles as an interviewer (conducting qualitative interviews with fathers), developer (assisting with the development of the intervention materials), coach (implementing the intervention), and evaluator (collecting pre-post data). Through my role as a coach, I developed close relationship with a small group of Latino fathers and their families, including the fathers in this study. The coaching relationship with these fathers is important to the context of this study.

Because my research focuses on the cultural values of the fathers I work with, I believe it is important to also share about my own cultural roots from Mexico and Guatemala. Because I straddle three cultural divides— Mexico, Central America, and U.S. culture— I acknowledge that my understanding of the different aspects of culture are unique to my own experiences growing up as a second generation Latina female in the U.S. More broadly, I have an understanding and value Latino cultural beliefs that pertain to familismo, personalismo, and respeto; which, combined frame my own understanding of the culture. I also share in the Spanish-language known to the wider Latino community. Though I may share in the language and cultural values, my time and work with this population of fathers has taught me not to assume a family's

experience has been the same as my own— and instead, I make efforts to be open minded and self-reflective in my work with each individual family. While this cultural understanding can frame my lens when working with fathers, I realize there are other aspects of my research identity that also set me as an outsider. For example, the majority of my work has focused on Latino fathers from primarily low-socioeconomic backgrounds; however, my social, cultural, educational, and economic background differs from many of the fathers I have worked with. While I believe these experiences will influence both the information Latino fathers share with me, in addition to how fathers in this study make sense of me— as a Latina female and researcher— I approached a father’s questions, comments, concerns with acceptance and compassion, so that I would remain open to understanding a father’s own cultural experience.

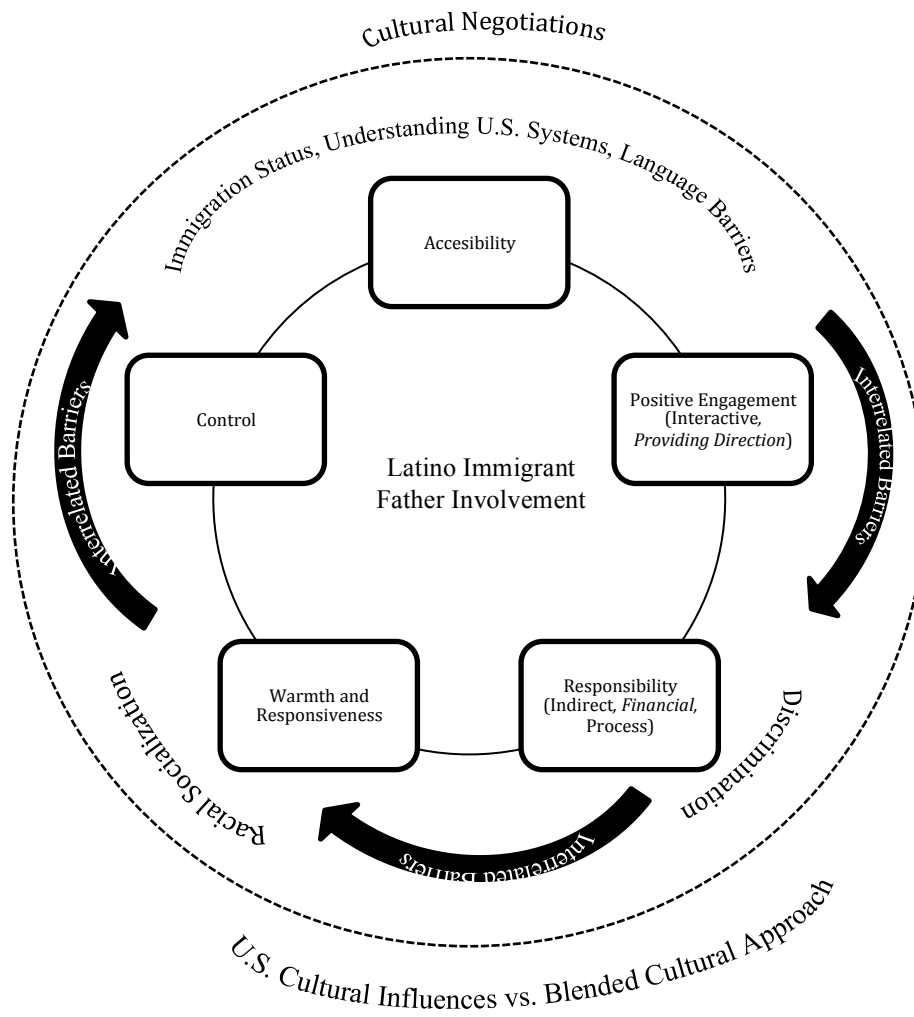
### Chapter 3

#### Results

In response to the four research questions outlined for this study, *Figure 2* represents an integration of the themes derived from interviews with Latino immigrant fathers. At the center of *Figure 2* are themes defining Latino immigrant fathers' involvement utilizing a priori codes from the Lamb and colleagues (1985) Father Involvement framework and Pleck's (2010) revised conceptualization of Father Involvement— *Accessibility, Positive Engagement, Warmth and Responsiveness, Control, Responsibility (Process and Indirect Care)*. As will be discussed further in the results, many Latino fathers' involvement extended beyond the traditional forms outlined in these western models and therefore new themes were created to fully capture the diverse forms of Latino immigrant fathers' involvement— *Providing Direction and Financial Responsibility*. The latter two were unique to this group of immigrant fathers, and appeared to be driven by the cultural and contextual factors these fathers experienced. First, Latino immigrant fathers described the varying cultures— Latin America, Mexico, or the United States— driving their involvement and parenting approaches. Therefore, the dotted circle in *Figure 2* signifies the continuous cultural negotiations fathers engaged in that impacted their involvement. Latino immigrant fathers, overall, understood cultural influences on their parenting to varying degrees outlined by the following themes— *Fathering with U.S. Cultural Influences* or *A Blended Approach to Fathering*— and are further discussed in the results section below. Secondly, Latino fathers also discussed personal, contextual, and systemic barriers influencing their involvement with their children. These barriers were categorized into three different themes including, *language barriers, immigration status and related barriers, and barriers to understanding U.S. systems*. These barriers, therefore, surround Latino immigrant fathers' involvement in *Figure 2*,

as they often influenced or prevented their participation in varying services/activities with their children. Fathers also described challenging experiences related to stereotypes and discrimination and are outlined separately in the results section. Overall, these barriers were

Figure 2. A Latino Immigrant Father Involvement Model



interrelated and are therefore represented as arrows straddling between the cultural negotiations fathers engaged in and their daily behavioral forms of involvement. Combined, this figure elucidates a model for Latino Immigrant Father Involvement, that in addition to including the components of father involvement outlined by Pleck (2010), it also includes unique forms of

these fathers' parenting that appear to be guided by the Latino culture and their experiences as immigrants in the U.S. Separate from this model, the following results will also explore these fathers' interpretations of their children's receptiveness to the cultural influences they incorporate in their daily interactions with their children and fathering approach.

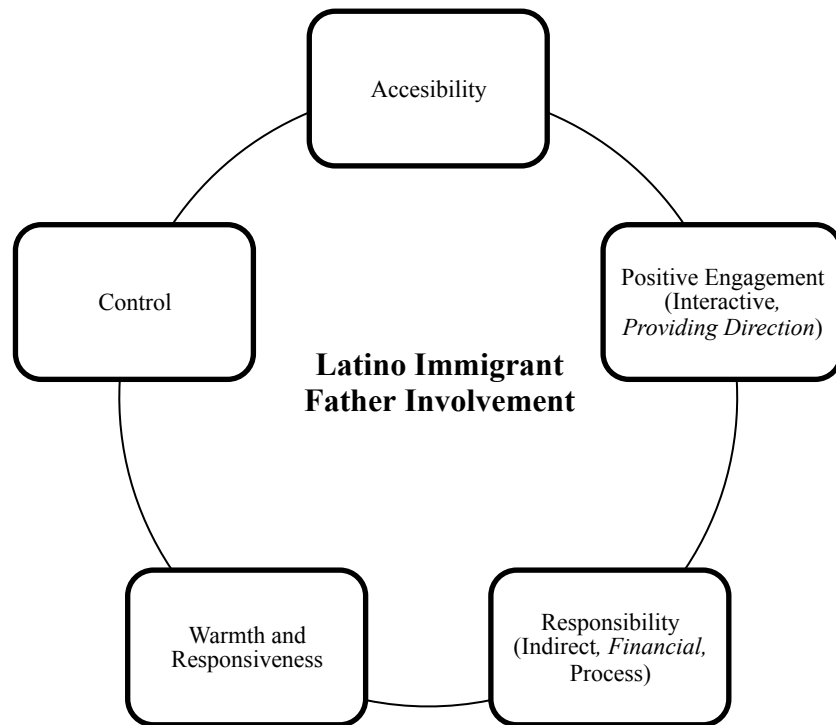
### **Defining Latino Immigrant Father Involvement– Definición del Involucramiento del Padre Inmigrante Latino**

Researchers have made attempts to conceptualize father involvement, with the intent to define and measure it. These constructs, however, have not been well studied across racially and ethnically diverse fathers, with even less research on immigrant fathers. Research has yet to map on the Father Involvement framework (Pleck, 2010) to determine its fit with Latino fathers' self-reports. Therefore, the following themes represent how Latino immigrant fathers define their involvement using a priori codes from the Lamb and colleagues (1985) Father Involvement framework, as well as Pleck's (2010) revised conceptualization of Father Involvement– *Accessibility, Positive Engagement, Warmth and Responsiveness, Control, Responsibility (Process and Indirect Care)*. As will be discussed further in the results, for many Latino fathers, reports on their involvement extended beyond the traditional forms outlined in these western models. Therefore, in addition to presenting a priori codes, derived from the Father Involvement framework, new codes were created to fully capture these fathers' responses to their involvement across other areas of fathering– *Financial Responsibility and Providing Direction*. Figure 3 shows an adaptation to Pleck's Father Involvement framework, to include two additional forms of involvement that were unique to Latino immigrant fathers in this study.

Latino immigrant fathers described their involvement in the context of how they support and encourage their children. All immigrant fathers reported on the importance of being

physically present for their children ( $N = 6$ ), defined as *Accessibility*— a concept that originated from Lamb and colleagues (1985) Father Involvement framework, but was removed from Pleck's re-conceptualization in 2010 because it was believed that a fathers' interactions with their child was driven by availability and opportunity and did not need to be considered as separate from other forms of involvement. Latino fathers also described their participation in a variety of activities with their children that ranged from play to outdoor activities ( $N = 6$ ). Their participation across these activities was captured under Pleck's (2010) construct of *Positive Engagement*. In discussing their involvement as fathers, many described the absence of their father's warmth and affection. As a result, they described an intentional approach to show their children love, affection, and appreciation. This form of involvement was therefore captured under the theme of *Warmth and Responsiveness* ( $n = 5$ ). For Latino fathers, monitoring and limit setting, was also part of their overall involvement with their children. They described a sense of responsibility with regard to monitoring the completion of their children's chores, schoolwork, or amount of television they watched ( $n = 4$ ). This form of involvement was described by Pleck (2010) as *Control*, and therefore was included as a theme. *Responsibility*, which included activities fathers engage in for their children (indirect care) and monitoring their children's physical needs (process responsibility), were also prevalent themes among Latino immigrant fathers ( $N = 6$ ), with the majority reporting on their involvement as part of indirect care ( $n = 4$ ).

Figure 3. Latino Immigrant Father Involvement Model  
Adapted from Pleck (2010)



In addition to the a priori codes derived from the Father Involvement framework, Latino immigrant fathers described two other forms of involvement that could not be explained using this model; therefore, new subthemes were created to capture Latino immigrant fathers' unique forms of involvement (italicized in *Figure 3.*). First, fathers described an important part of their involvement as being a financial provider for their immediate family (i.e., spouse and children), but also to their extended family (i.e., own parents) ( $n = 5$ ). Secondly, fathers described their involvement in terms of providing direction. In other words, they provided consejos (advice) to their children ( $n = 5$ ) and described their responsibility to guide their children in learning a variety of family values. These subthemes—*Financial Responsibility* and *Providing Direction*—are outlined in detail below, with examples following each theme.

**Accessibility.** In the mid 1980's a father's physical presence and availability to their children was considered an important part of father involvement (Lamb et al., 1985). While that

has changed in Pleck's (2010) revised conceptualization of the Father Involvement framework, all Latino immigrant fathers communicated the importance of physically "being there" for their children ( $N = 6$ ). For many of the fathers who reported the importance of being present and physically accessible for their children, their motivation and desire to "be there" was driven by the absence of their own fathers throughout their childhood. Anthony, a father of five, for example, described the joy he would have felt to have his father at home and shared his role in his children's life with an explicit reference to being physically present.

I'm looking forward to spending more time with them and being there for them the way they want me to be there. I'm here, and to me that's a great thing, because I never had my dad there. And I'm here. They are all bored, and doing their own thing, and they don't understand how happy I would've been to see my dad cooking in the kitchen. Him not ever being there let me understand how important it is to be in their life (Anthony, 33).

In addition to describing his motivation to be there for his children, he also relayed his interest in being involved in ways that would be more meaningful to his children; and recognized the importance of his role as a father. Marcos, a father of three, also focused on becoming a "better father," which he defined as "being there" for his children.

I'm focused on trying to be a better dad, where you're there for them. What I value the most... I would say being able to be there for them. Like having that stability, enough to not have to work all the time, and actually being there for them. I think I value that the most— physically being there and the same thing like my grandpa, asking them like "how was your day," or "how are things going at school." We're making a difference, in a way, because I'm actually physically there (Marcos, 25).

Similar to Anthony's involvement with his children, Marcos was also interested in maintaining a physical presence in his children's lives. For Marcos, however, being physically accessible allowed him to engage emotionally with his children. Therefore, he attempted to describe other forms of his engagement that were similar to his grandfather's approach. Marcos also recognized the value of his role and described it as "making a difference" in his children's lives.

Continuously throughout interviews, Latino fathers, shared their efforts to remain accessible for their kids. While some fathers reported taking time off to be home with their children, another father's journey to discovering the importance of being physically present for their children came because of disability and unemployment. For example, Juan, a father to three children, experienced a work-related injury and was not working at the time of the interview. Therefore, he described a variety of tasks he was involved with (i.e., picking up his children from school, helping with homework) as a product of being more physically available for his children. Jose, on the other hand, compared his work schedule to other working Latino fathers, and reported feeling thankful for the flexibility in his employment, that allowed him the opportunity to be present for his daughter. He described the following:

Unfortunately for most types of employment you have to comply with a schedule, I don't know [maybe] from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., or from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Some more, some less ... and especially for dads, for the men, it does not allow them to be with their children; that implies that they are not involved in school, doctor visits, or in their health. I have the great advantage of being able to manage my schedule a little better. I can stay with my daughter when my wife has other things... I try to [be with her], as long as possible, but especially when necessary, leaving other work things and being with my daughter (Jose, 43).

To Jose's comment about father's work schedules, Vicente, a father of seven children, described his difficulty to find time to spend with each of his children. Instead, however, he described learning to take advantage of the time he did have to be physically available for them.

Dedicating time for them can be hard for me. But, when I have the opportunity, I am there. And you have to understand one works, like every father. But taking advantage of that time. Taking advantage of their childhood is important, because, from their childhood they begin to build their lives (Vicente, 40).

Like many Latino fathers, Vicente also recognized the value in being physically present for his children throughout their development.

**Positive engagement.** In the 2010-revised conceptualization of Father Involvement, Pleck described positive engagement as a father's ability to interact with his children across activities. These interactions were characterized as either enriching or interactive in nature. Enriching activities referenced those that promoted the child's learning such as, reading together, counting, numbers, or letter sound based activities. Interactive activities, on the other hand, included play or leisure activities such as, outdoor play, video games, coloring, drawing, or pretend play. For many Latino fathers, reports on their engagement extended beyond the traditional forms outlined in Pleck's definition of positive engagement. Fathers, in particular, described a portion of their involvement in terms of *Providing Direction*— a form of sharing knowledge and experience with their children to help them avoid mistakes and were used as a form of encouragement for their children to be "someone" in life. In other words, Latino fathers gave their children consejos (advice) from which they could learn from. Because Latino fathers reported this as one of the primary forms of engagement with their children, providing direction was added as a subtheme.

*Interactive.* Latino fathers described their engagement across a variety of interactive activities, with no reference made to their participation in enriching activities. This subtheme was inclusive of the entire sample of Latino immigrant fathers interviewed ( $N = 6$ ). While fathers did not report on their participation in enriching activities, it does not imply fathers never participate in such activities; however, it is possible that given these fathers' lower socioeconomic status, level of education, time, and resources, their engagement may be limited to interactive forms of engagement with their children. Further, it is also possible that fathers, in general, are more playful and gravitate toward interactive forms of play and engagement with their children and therefore may not necessarily prioritize enriching activities.

Given Latino immigrant fathers' focus on interactive forms of engagement with their children, the following are a few direct quotes on these fathers' engagement. For example, Marcos described engaging in activities with his children: "I spend more time with them and do stuff with them, not work related. Like go swimming or go out for a walk. I am involved with them, spending time with them, like video games, and just doing activities with them (Marcos, 25)." In describing his engagement with his children, Marcos emphasized his involvement beyond work-related tasks, as this had been his own father's form of involvement with him. Therefore, he appeared to be making an effort to extend his involvement with his children beyond the narrow form of involvement his father had with him. Most Latino fathers reported participating in outdoor activities with their children, often making it a whole family outing or event—demonstrating forms of familismo.

While most fathers described engagement in activities outside of the home (i.e., going out to eat, park, swimming, walking etc.), Jose described a more creative and imaginative form of engagement with his three-year old daughter and described the following:

The box that you saw in the entrance, the cardboard box ... The one that looked like a castle, we sat down to work on it just after we moved, it was one of the boxes that was left there and I said, “come on let’s make a castle.” We had a good time there just cutting it out (Jose, 43).

In addition to engaging in creative activities with his daughter, Jose also participated in completing puzzles, coloring, painting, as well as other outdoor activities.

***Providing direction.*** Unique to this study was a form of positive engagement in which fathers described guiding their children, sharing knowledge and experience with their children to help them avoid mistakes and/or provide them with consejos to improve themselves— *Providing Direction*. In other words, fathers gave their children consejos (advice) from which they could learn from. All fathers reported on some form of providing direction ( $N = 6$ ), whether it was instilling a particular value, giving their children advice about school, or teaching their children how to carry themselves to avoid being stereotyped. Fathers, overall, provided guidance and direction on the following: obtaining a U.S. education, respect, ser bien educado, family unity, responsibility, and developing a work ethic. Providing direction, as a subtheme, was added to the theme of positive engagement because this was Latino fathers’ secondary form of engagement with their children across all ages. Unlike traditional western models that do not take into account this area of parenting, for Latino immigrant fathers it was a salient role. Oscar, for example, described providing direction for his children with school related issues such as, bullying and gossip, and centered his consejos on the value of respect and ser bien educado. He described the following:

I’m always directing and guiding them about not getting involved in things they should not be involved with— fights or if someone offends them, like the famous bully. I think

we are involved in their education (ser bien educado). Because sometimes they hear a word elsewhere that they don't hear from us and they say to me: "Hey, that girl said this." -"You know what? Do not listen to them, you just say what you need to, but do not say that" because it sounds bad to us. So in that way, I try to participate more with them (Oscar, 43).

Oscar also advised his children to perform well academically, so they could become "something more" – referring to an educated professional. Similarly, other Latino fathers also encouraged their children to pursue a higher education, using their own work experiences and hardships as examples for reasons of why they can do better. Vicente, for example, described how he advised his children to take advantage of educational opportunities that would equip them to handle challenges in life.

As a Latino father, I teach my children to take advantage of the opportunities they have that we did not have in our country. Because they are in school, since childhood, they can begin to equip themselves responsibly, so when they face difficult things in life, they are going to be more capable of dealing with them. One of the strengths that I can teach them, or transmit, or instill in them is to be responsible in everything they do, in this case studying (Vicente, 43).

Instead of simply guiding them educationally, other fathers described guiding their children's decision making and helping them understand the foreseeable consequences of their actions and behaviors. Anthony, for example, described teaching his son about tattoos, and the judgments and stereotypes he endured because of them. On appearance, Anthony is of average height, dark skinned, with tattoos running along side his forearm, arm, and neck. Given the stereotypes he has disproved and tried to overcome, he described how he advised his son to make different

decisions about tattoos on his body. Though the advice fathers gave and the approach they chose to take (i.e., teaching, sharing life experiences) differed, fathers believed their advice and providing direction was done primarily with the intention to provide a better life for their children. Jose, a 43-year old father said it best– “I believe that, as a father, it is your obligation to try as hard as you can to give your children, not the greatest luxuries, but the best opportunities [in life].” Overall, fathers identified their *consejos* as a way of positively contributing to their children’s development and recognized it as a form of positively engaging with their children.

**Warmth and responsiveness.** “I tell my children, you know, ‘I love you,’ I love them” (Oscar, 43). As Oscar has described in this first quote, many Latino fathers interviewed described part of their involvement as demonstrating warmth, affection, appreciation through praise, and encouragement ( $n = 5$ ). Pleck (2010) conceptualized Warmth and Responsiveness as a component of a father’s involvement, and referred to it as a father’s ability to show forms of affection toward their children (i.e., saying “I love you”) and showing appreciation to their children. Therefore, Latino immigrant fathers’ interviews were coded with this a priori code in mind. Contrary to the historical representation of Latino fathers as the head of household, disciplinarian, and as afraid of showing warmth and love (Mirandé, 1986), this group of fathers described making intentional efforts to show warmth and affection toward their children as part of their involvement. Latino fathers’ reasons for making this a part of their involvement, many times, had to do with their own experiences with their fathers. Other fathers described their involvement as evolving to include showing warmth, affection, and appreciation for their children. Oscar, a father of four, for example, described how important it was for him to regularly show his love and affection for his children.

With my children it is always four kisses every day, when I arrive home and when I leave. And that's not because, "son, come and give me a kiss, " they come on their own. Sometimes when I leave my youngest son comes to me and he knows [he gets a kiss]. Sometimes if he sees that I forget to give his brothers and sister a kiss, he will send me to give them a kiss. I believe that I am giving them what I didn't have, the love of my parents (Oscar, 43).

Oscar reflected on much of his childhood, and the impact of his parents' separation, the remarriage of his father, followed by becoming a ward of the state and living in a group home. Despite his experiences, Oscar remained optimistic about his family and valued his involvement as a father. As Oscar described in his final statement, he provides his children with the love that was once absent from his childhood, and is now an important part of his involvement.

Different from Oscar is Vicente, who reflected on the evolution of his fathering role to becoming more affectionate with his children. Vicente described his previous interactional style similar to that of his father and great-grandfather. At the time of the interview, however, Vicente described overcoming his original form of parenting to showing love, affection, and learning with his children. Through this form of engagement Vicente was trying to "build up" his children's self-esteem, with fear that pressures from outside the family would counteract his childrearing efforts. Vicente described the following:

I now put into practice with them what my father did not, which is to show them love and affection. I want to relate to them, because they are in a stage where one is trying to build them up and on the outside, someone else may be trying to destroy them. So that's why it's important. That's why I'm more involved with them, and when I get home I try to get

more involved in a personal and intimate way with them so they do not learn what we can teach them from someone else (Vicente, 43).

It was not uncommon for Latino fathers to also describe their responsiveness to their children in the context of praise and encouragement. Marcos, for example, one of the youngest fathers interviewed, described his interest in building a relationship with his children and in being a father figure that his children could trust. Further, he described the importance of using genuine praise, so that it would increase its meaning for his children.

You kind of know what to expect and how to react to certain things. Like when they do something bad or when they do something good, and how you should react, like "good job." When my first son was born, he would do something really cool or something really good, and it was like "okay, good job" [flat tone]. He's a kid so you have to be more like "Yeah! Good job!" [with an excited tone]. He does something good and it is like "all right, good job!" Like "great, you get a 10!" "I'm proud of you," like I do that more (Marcos, 25).

Fathers across other interviews also reported on the importance of rewarding and showing appreciation to their children for something well done. As an extension of their involvement with respect to warmth and responsiveness, fathers were also observed interacting with their children throughout the interview. These interactions showed brief moments when fathers were responsive to their children and demonstrated warmth in their responses. In particular, Anthony, a father of five children, was in the kitchen throughout the interview making lunch for his children. As Anthony was sharing about his concerns as a father, his three-year old daughter walked up to him. Anthony asked, "What's up mommy? Are you hungry?" His daughter responded with a big smile, "Yes." With a warm and positive tone, Anthony responds, "What do

you want me to make you? I'm gonna make you something, okay? Promise. Go. It's gonna be a surprise." In addition to noticing his daughter's initiation to communicate and responding to her, Anthony also used an affectionate nickname for his daughter – "mommy." Though fathers provided different examples of their involvement, warmth and responsiveness was a clear pattern across many Latino fathers.

**Control.** The revised Father Involvement framework, Pleck (2010) also described a father's involvement in the context of paternal monitoring, limit-setting, and decision making for the child's needs– defined as *control*. Many Latino fathers described their involvement within this context, describing situations in which they monitored the completion of chores, amount of television their children watched, homework/school requirements, and setting rules/consequences for behaviors. Interestingly, father involvement in the context of *control* (monitoring) was only prevalent among the older group of Latino fathers (all 40 years and older) ( $n = 4$ ). This phenomenon may be explained by the following: first, the older group of Latino fathers had more school-age children; thus, it is possible that increased monitoring, rule-setting, and consequences may be more prevalent among an older group of children. Secondly, it is possible that the older group of fathers were more confident and experienced in their roles as fathers and therefore described monitoring and control more confidently, whereas younger fathers may still have some insecurities about their parenting approach, including their control/monitoring efforts.

Jose, a 43-year old father, for example, described the ways in which he believed he supported his daughter through limit-setting and paternal monitoring. For Jose, his monitoring was described in the context of limit setting and being able to take time off work to take care of his daughter when his wife was away.

I believe that one way I support her is, although not always possible or that it always works, but it is to define the rules for her [for example]: "You have to do this", "This you can do, but this you have to do." [Are there other ways you are involved?] Fortunately my work allows me to schedule it on my own time, so that when it is necessary or when I can, I always want to, but I can help my wife with our daughter too. Sometimes she has to go to English classes, and instead of looking for another person to watch her, I watch her. I try to, when possible, but especially when necessary, to leave other things and be with my daughter (Jose, 43).

Similar to Jose, Oscar, a 43-year old father, also described part of his involvement as limit-setting, particularly in terms of completing chores, learning to clean-up after themselves, and teaching them to help around the house. Further, Oscar described how important it was for him to support his children in school and monitor their grades and homework completion.

Well, I support them right now at school, help them at home, for example, teach them to clean up after they eat, clean the table, and do their corresponding chores. [When asked specifically about school] Well, reading and studying with them. Even though I get home tired, there is always a day when I sit down with them, I check their grades. The good thing is that my oldest daughter has taught me, she doesn't lie to us, because she says "Dad I want you to learn so that you can check my brothers grades too." I have gone to conferences, although I have trouble making the time to go. I know the director, her teachers and she walks with me, she says: "Look, I'll introduce you to my teacher" and I get a lot of information from her teachers about her and I think that's good (Oscar, 43).

While Oscar engaged in different types of monitoring, his involvement differed in that it appeared to be guided by his 15-year old daughter, who also wanted him to understand how to

monitor her school work. Unlike other fathers, Oscar received support from his daughter to make his monitoring more effective, as well as seeking direct contact with school staff who could provide him with additional information about his children's school performance. Monitoring the completion of chores and routines was also consistent with Vicente's parenting, a 43-year old father. He described encouraging his children to participate in daily chores and monitoring their completion of chores. Vicente believed this type of monitoring would foster his children's responsibility, and in turn provide them with the "freedom" to engage in preferred activities.

I encourage them sometimes, by saying to them, "if you do what you have to do [chores], and if you want to have a sleepover with your cousin or your friend, I encourage you to comply with what your parents have outlined for you" (Vicente, 43).

Engaging in control/monitoring of their children took other forms; for example, Juan, a 40 year old father, described monitoring his children's after school routine, particularly the amount of television his children watched and he communicated his reasoning behind this type of monitoring.

I teach them to draw, help them with homework when they get home from school. After they finish, I let them play a little while, an hour or so. If they want to watch TV for a while, just a little while, and then I turn it off because I don't like them watching too much of it. It damages their eyes (Juan, 40).

Unlike the majority of fathers who reported their involvement in terms of control, there was a group of fathers who did not describe their involvement in this context. Instead, these fathers described a sense of insecurity in their parenting roles, often questioning the importance of their involvement and/or whether they were "doing the right thing" as a father. Of interest, is the fact that these fathers were also the youngest fathers in the sample (under the age of 34) ( $n =$

2). Anthony, for example, described a variety of challenges he had been experiencing during the past year including, marital discord, homelessness, and job loss. With these challenges in mind, Anthony described feeling insecure about his level of involvement and presence in his children's lives and therefore questioned whether his involvement was beneficial for his children.

We seem to be distant right now, because of everything that has been happening, you know. So, I put distance between them too. It's been tough because I shouldn't, but I think they're the ones that make me weak. I have to put them a little bit on the side so that I'm a little stronger to be able to deal with the relationship. [My concern is] that I'm not going to be there for them. But then at the same time, I feel like maybe I shouldn't be there for them. Maybe that'll make them happier, better, you know? I'm still wondering, if I stay in their life, am I going to damage them more (Anthony, 33).

In addition to describing his insecurities as a parent, Anthony described the emotional vulnerability he felt when he experienced a closer relationship with his children. Given the difficulties he was experiencing, his resolution to the emotional turmoil was to create distance between him and his children, to which he appeared to express some guilt. Similarly, Marcos, a 25-year old father described the challenges he experienced as a young father at only 16-years old, and questions that still remained about whether his parenting approach was the "right" approach.

With my first son I was ... I didn't know what to do, or how to do it. Being a dad at a young age was really difficult. I guess everyone has their own way of, you know, parenting. We always, of course everybody thinks they're doing the right thing, so hopefully I'm doing the right thing, the way we're raising them (Marcos, 25).

A fathers' level of parenting confidence may explain the difference among fathers' involvement with respect to control (monitoring). It is possible, for example, that the older group of fathers were more confident in their roles and therefore were able to describe their involvement in terms of limit setting, monitoring, and control; whereas the younger group of fathers may still be evolving in their paternal role, may still experience some insecurities, and may still be trying to find effective approaches to their parenting.

**Responsibility.** Responsibility is a construct that was added as a separate component to the revised conceptualization of the Father Involvement framework. Pleck defined responsibility in two different forms, *indirect care* and *process responsibility*. Responsibility, in the form of indirect care, refers to a father using financial resources to purchase and arrange services for their child including, social, health, or caretaking concerns. Although Latino fathers described their primary form of involvement as a financial provider (i.e., working to pay rent, bills, food), according to Pleck's model this role is not part of indirect care. Under indirect care, a father's financial resources have to be spent directly on the child (i.e., clothing, toys, activities). The role as a financial provider was excluded from Pleck's framework, given that providing financially focuses only on a father's ability to earn money to support a family, without direct implications of how the fathers' income is benefiting the child.

Given the majority of Latino immigrant fathers described their involvement in terms of their financial support and its contribution to their household including, food, rent, bills etc., it is important to value this role for Latino fathers. Fathers specifically emphasized this role throughout interviews, often describing their employment as physically exhausting and requiring much of their time, that it prevented them from spending time with their children and/or participating in other forms of involvement (i.e., attending children's games). Fathers believed

their role as a financial provider contributed to their children's overall wellbeing, such that they paid household bills, provided stable housing, and worked so their children could focus solely on school. For some fathers, serving as a financial provider was beneficial for their nuclear family, but also their extended family (i.e., children's grandparents). Given the strong focus on fathers' *financial responsibility*, it was added as a subtheme to Pleck's Responsibility construct.

Responsibility in the form of process responsibility, further, refers to the process of monitoring that the child's needs for the first four components of the revised Father Involvement framework are being met (i.e., positive engagement, warmth-responsiveness, control, and indirect care). However, because fathers in this sample also described the importance of being physically present for their children, *Accessibility* was also considered as the fifth component fathers' could monitor. Therefore, fathers could describe monitoring their physical presence to ensure their availability to their children. All three forms of responsibility are not mutually exclusive; therefore, fathers could identify with any form of involvement—*financial responsibility*, *indirect care*, and *process responsibility*. Each subtheme is described in further detail below, along with examples from fathers' interviews.

***Financial responsibility.*** As is described above, financial responsibility was used to encompass Latino fathers' value on their role as financial providers. Therefore, it was defined as the importance fathers' placed on their ability to earn money to support their nuclear and/or extended family. With this definition in mind, the majority of fathers interviewed described a sense of financial responsibility ( $n = 5$ ). At the same time, fathers described the ways in which their financial responsibility prevented them from spending time with their children and/or participating in other forms of involvement. For example, Jose described his obligation and

necessity, as an immigrant father, to be employed to provide for his children's basic needs (i.e., food, housing).

Part of the obligation as a dad is to fulfill our duty to make sure that the child does not lack anything, at least none of their basic needs, so that the child fulfills their obligation to do well in school. Unfortunately, as a Mexican father, or any other father, but mainly as an immigrant father, you have to work to be able to live and to eat. When you arrive you have no bank account, so the first thing is to work because you are looking for a better future not just for yourself, but also for your children. But sometimes you get a little out of balance and you neglect your children a little. Regardless of whether you are Mexican or Latino or whatever, I believe that it occurs especially among immigrant families— the need to work, as much as possible, to be able to live and to eat (Jose, 43).

Jose described the benefit of fulfilling the role as the financial provider in his family, such that his children are able to focus solely on school and have their needs met. However, he also described how this opportunity to work and provide comes at the cost of having time to spend with his children. Similarly, Vicente, described his financial responsibility to his family that was often at the cost of a job that required strenuous physical work. He described the challenge in knowing the value of education, but described being unable to pursue it himself due to his responsibility to provide financially for his family.

We connect to jobs, that one could say, is hard work. It is work that a Latino is used to, it doesn't matter what country you come from. We come to do work that is tough. It's a challenge to raise children here because you come to work in what? Well, whatever you can find. It is a bit more complicated to say "I am going to study," because with children

it is a little more difficult. What we want is to provide for the household, and contribute to the growth of our children (Vicente, 43).

For many immigrant fathers it was important for them to maintain jobs to help their family move ahead. There jobs were often described as physically demanding and/or that required a long commute keeping them away from their children and family for longer periods of time. As Oscar described it, “ My responsibility now is to see how I can help my family, keep myself busy [referring to maintaining employment], and to bring in and cover household expenses.”

Though most fathers viewed their role and responsibility as a financial provider, one father differed. Instead, Anthony, distanced himself from that role and described most Latino immigrant fathers as concerned with “their status.” Anthony believed that because most Latino fathers grew up in their native country, where resources were scarce, they became overly focused with earning money to obtain physical belongings in the U.S. (i.e., car, clothing). Therefore, Anthony reported caring more about fostering a relationship with his children, and using his financial resources to “have fun” with his children– involvement that aligned more closely to indirect care and process responsibility.

I do have fun with them, we clown and we laugh. I know a lot Hispanics that came from Mexico and they don't have that with their parents, por que haya la vida se vive mas dura (because life over there is much tougher). Mas diferente (more different), you know? There is less money and you have to stretch out more [with your money]. They come over here and they get their money, and they are like, "Wow." They work hard for their status, you know? As opposed to me, I work hard so I can have fun with them [children] (Anthony, 33).

*Indirect care.* All Latino immigrant fathers interviewed reported their involvement and responsibility in terms of indirect care ( $N = 6$ ), often describing ways in which they allocated their financial resources to purchase and arrange services for their children including, social, health, school, or caretaking concerns. Fathers described their financial resources being primarily allocated toward school and educational expenses, different from Anthony's report in the earlier excerpt. For example, Vicente described a situation where his son was worried about taking college level courses in high school, due to the financial expense required. Vicente, however, interpreted the situation as an opportunity for his son, who had been doing well academically, to continue to learn and improve himself. Therefore, he was willing to pay his son to continue with such courses.

My son was quite advanced and they were giving him the opportunity to take college-level courses, although he was only in his second year of high school. He was worried because he had to pay. I told him, "don't worry about the money, if they are giving you the opportunity to take advanced courses that you would take when you leave high school anyway, don't worry. That tells me your hard work is paying off. Do not worry about it right now, if we have to pay, we'll pay. So, do not worry about that" (Vicente, 43).

For Latino fathers with young children in school, they reported using their financial resources to help fund their children's field trips and/or provide financial support for anything their teachers requested. Juan, for example, described the following:

I support them, like with things that teachers tell me, whether they need this or that. So it is whatever they say there [school]. I support them in that. And in other activities they ask me about. Like when they go out on a camping field trip, and the teachers say "give them money, so they can buy some juice, clothing" and all that (Juan, 40).

This pattern of allocating financial resources for their children's educational needs was consistent across most fathers. Fathers continuously described the importance of an education and with no hesitation allocated a portion of their financial earnings for their children's educational needs. Jose, a father to a 4-year old daughter, differed in how he allocated his financial resources for his daughter. Because she was not yet attending school, Jose described the importance of exposing her to a variety of activities early on, so that one day, when she was old enough, she could choose a sport/activity to continue to pursue.

We have made the effort so that only I work. We know that if we both worked, maybe we could be better off; but we have made the effort so that I work and my wife stays with our daughter. She is not going to school right now, so she and her mom go to many classes, ballet, swimming, stimulating classes ... so that one day she can choose what she wants (Jose, 43).

In addition to fathers' describing their financial responsibility for household expenses, they also described their responsibility to allocate financial resources that would benefit their child's learning, education, and/or learning of extra-curricular activities. Combined, these forms of indirect care are characterized primarily as purchasing and arranging service needs for their children (i.e., school, extra-curricular activities).

***Process responsibility.*** Unlike other subthemes, process responsibility specifically refers to a monitoring process in which fathers are attuned to their child's needs with respect to five components of father involvement including, positive engagement, warmth-responsiveness, control, indirect care, and accessibility. While many fathers did not explicitly state monitoring each of these areas of their involvement, they did communicate a sense of worry and concern when specific forms of involvement were or had been lacking prior ( $N = 6$ ). In other occasions,

fathers described a conscientious approach to their involvement, where they described their intention for specific forms of involvement and how they attempted to incorporate these forms of involvement into daily interactions with their children. Forms of involvement that were more closely monitored among Latino immigrant fathers included, warmth and responsiveness and accessibility. With respect to Warmth and Responsiveness, for example, some fathers described observations of their children's behavior when they became less versus more involved.

Monitoring their involvement, therefore, became a conscientious approach for some fathers, describing their effort and intention to show affection and interest for their children. Vicente, for example, described what he believed would happen if he remained emotionally distant from his children— they would ignore him. Therefore, he established a routine after work that included brief check-ins with all seven of his children. These check-ins became his way of remaining involved and showing an interest for each of his children.

What happens when you do not get involved with them, they [children] tend to ignore you. They no longer care what you think, because you never try to get involved with them. When we do get involved, they realize there is an interest in knowing more about them, or in how their day went. When I get home, I try to talk with each one. With the oldest most of all, because they are the ones who are in a difficult stage and they can hide things from you. The little ones, they say everything without holding back. With the oldest, there may be things they are ashamed of or do not want to share, and it is better for them to have the freedom to express themselves and say what is bothering them (Vicente, 43).

For Vicente, monitoring his involvement with his oldest children appeared to be the most concerning at the time of the interview, particularly, because he believed they were experiencing

some difficulty milestones in their lives. Therefore, he continuously offered to be emotionally available for his children, by checking in with them daily as well as demonstrating care and affection—also described in an earlier theme (warmth and responsiveness).

Monitoring their involvement through observation was commonly expressed by fathers, and was therefore continuously coded as part of process responsibility. For Latino fathers, it was particularly important to be physically present for their children. Therefore, many fathers described setting aside time to be with their children and family. However, for fathers who were experiencing a disconnect between their value and behavior concerning physical accessibility, they shared a worry and understanding of their absence. This form of reflection and understanding was considered a form of process responsibility, because fathers were aware of what was lacking and monitored their accessibility to their children. Anthony, for example, described looking forward to spending more time with his children, and shared his disappointment for being physically absent.

I'm looking forward to spending more time with them and being there for them the way they want me to be there. Maybe better our relationships with them. We seem to be distant right now, because of everything that has been happening [marital discord]. So, I put distance between them too, and it's been tough because I shouldn't. It's kind of messed up, but they do make me soft, because they're my kids (Anthony, 33).

Overall, Latino fathers' appeared to monitor and be attuned to their children's needs with respect to warmth-responsiveness and accessibility. It is possible that fathers monitored these aspects of their involvement because they considered them to be the most important; however, both of these forms of involvement were also reportedly lacking from their own paternal figures. Therefore, it

is possible Latino fathers are intentionally trying to be warm, responsive, and accessible to their children, with hopes of providing a different experience and father-figure for their children.

Because Latino immigrant fathers straddle two cultural divides, they often have to decide between embracing different pieces of the varying cultures— Latin America, Mexico, or the United States. Therefore, the following are results describing how fathers negotiate their own Latino cultural values and traditions with the U.S. culture norms/values. In so doing, fathers also described the evolution of their paternal roles and involvement since residing in the U.S.

### **Negotiating Cultural Values – Negociando Valores Culturales**

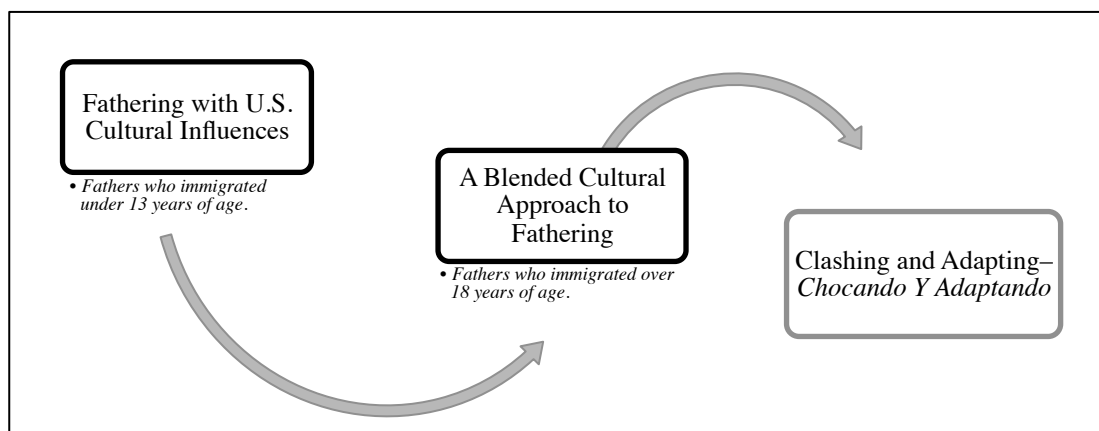
Latino immigrants in the United States often have to balance their own cultural traditions and values with those of the majority culture (Cabrera & Garcia Coll, 2004). While acculturation status is often used to assess the ongoing process of change that occurs when multiple cultures come into contact with one another (Glass & Owen, 2010), the following is an attempt to qualitatively understand how Latino immigrant fathers negotiate Latino and U.S. cultural influences. Given this group of immigrant fathers all had U.S. born children, the following will also explore these fathers' interpretations of their children's receptiveness or acceptance to the cultural influences they incorporate in their fathering approach.

Latino immigrant fathers understood cultural influences on their parenting to varying degrees. Fathers who immigrated at a much younger age often described stronger U.S. cultural influences on their fathering practices ( $n = 3$ ), while fathers who immigrated at 18 years of age or older often described a blended approach to their fathering, thus incorporating aspects of Latino and U.S. cultural influences ( $n = 3$ ). Both interpretations of these fathers' cultural influences are captured under the following themes— *Fathering with U.S. Cultural Influences* and *A Blended Cultural Approach to Fathering*— and are outlined in *Figure 4* and as headings below. Further,

while the degree to which fathers explicitly endorsed Latino and/or U.S. cultural influences varied, they all described some aspect of familismo (i.e., family cohesion, unity, family rituals) throughout their interview. Research suggests that familismo is a culture specific value among Latinos that despite acculturation, this population tends to hold this cultural value at a high level of importance (Sabogal, Marin, & Otero-Sabogal, 1988). Therefore, it is possible that fathers who immigrated at a younger age are more heavily influenced by the U.S. culture and norms, yet still equally value family cohesion.

All Latino immigrant fathers also reported an attempt to introduce their children to culture specific traditions, including foods and the Spanish language. Despite their efforts, these fathers described a general impression of resistance from their children when introduced to Latino specific traditions ( $n = 5$ ). While the resistance was not confrontational in nature, fathers described how their children made comparisons between Latino culture and the U.S. culture that interfered with the adoption of Latino traditions in their home. These fathers' interpretation of their children's receptiveness to Latino cultural traditions is captured under the following theme—*Chocando y Adaptando (Clashing and Adapting)*— and is outlined below as a heading.

Figure 4. Themes on Latino Immigrant Fathers' Cultural Negotiations



**Fathering with U.S. cultural influences.** As part of the interview, fathers were generally asked about their parenting approaches, including how they support and encourage their children, and how they defined their involvement in their family. With every response, fathers' were also asked whether Latino or U.S. cultural influences swayed their fathering approach in one direction or the other. Fathers were evenly divided on this issue, with half reporting a stronger U.S. cultural influence ( $n = 3$ ). Interestingly, this group of fathers had also immigrated to the United States much younger, all under 13 years of age. While level of acculturation is not addressed as part of this study, traditionally researchers have used number of years since living in the U.S. as a proxy for acculturation (Capps et al., 2010). Therefore, considering the number of years these fathers had been living in the U.S. (ranging between 17 and 28 years) and the age at which they immigrated to the U.S. (ranging between 5 and 13 years of age) it is possible that this group of fathers may have a stronger affiliation/acculturation to the mainstream culture. As a result, they may have ascribed to the cultural values of the U.S. at a younger age and have now carried these values over to their role as parents. Marcos, a father who immigrated at eight years of age, for example, described his involvement in terms of play and encouragement (e.g., "Good job! You get a 10!"). While he monitored his involvement by making comparisons to his father and grandfather, he described his view of fathering as more "americanized" and used behavioral observations of other fathers to decide on his use of different parenting strategies.

Well I've been, kind of, really americanized. I didn't really see a culture to follow. Except my grandpa, and he was only there for a few years. A lot of this was because I moved. My parents brought me back [to the U.S.], but I think if I would have been there a little longer [Mexico] I don't know if it would have been better or worse. But, yeah, I never

really focus on nationality or you know race. I just kind of see good dads do good things, so I just kind of focus on what they're doing (Marcos, 25).

More specifically, Marcos made a contrast comparison between his involvement and the involvement of other Latino fathers, and referenced the kind of language and discouragement he observed among males in his family. Instead of following their path, he described his efforts to encourage his children and increase their self-efficacy to accomplish their goals.

I remember a couple of my uncles say “no seas niña, no seas mariqua” (“ don’t be a girl, don’t be a sissy”) and stuff like that and I don't think I do that. I'm more “like come on, just get it done, like that kid did it, is that kid better than you?” I try to encourage them more, in a way [that I am] not putting them down. I would say [I also try] to stay consistent in pushing them to do something they don't feel like they can do, but that you know they can do without having to do the same thing, of putting them down.

Of the fathers who immigrated at a younger age, Anthony, who immigrated at 5 years of age, described the negatively perceived influence of the male Latino culture— machismo. While he believed Latino men strongly valued their family, as he did, he did not believe he was influenced by the Latino culture, alone, given his belief it had “too much machismo.” Therefore, he described the following:

[In response to how much of his father involvement is influenced by the Latino culture]  
Not too much. If I was to go, to like, try to motivate myself through our Latino culture— there would not be that much motivation. There really wouldn't. Because mucho machismo, you know? Mucho machismo (a lot of machismo). See there is a lot of love involved in there too, but through our cultura that is more like status. At least I think so (Anthony, 33).

By status, Anthony referred to his belief that other Latino immigrant fathers' tend to value their monetary belongings, as opposed to valuing time with their children. In contrast to the traditional held belief, Anthony described how his involvement was different from other "macho" Latino men, where he was involved across home and school contexts.

I do have fun with them [children]. We clown, we laugh, you know? I know a lot of Latinos that came from Mexico and they don't have that with their parents, por que aya la vida se vive mas dura (because life over there is much tougher). And I work hard so I can have fun with them. I learned to enjoy them. I try to go to their [school] functions and take them out to eat.

Consistent with Anthony's idea about "machismo," Marcos, also described a shift toward more egalitarian roles in his family as part of growing up in the U.S. Thus, he described a contrast in his mindset from when he first became a father to this point in his fatherhood journey.

I feel like at first I was in my head more— "okay, I go to work and you take care of the kids." And now it's more, "let's both work together and do what we can together, and we can achieve more." That's how I see it now. Where there's more, at least between us, we are both a team. Not like, "you do this and I'll do this." You don't have your own separate roles but it's more of a team effort (Marcos, 25).

Though Marcos explicitly stated being influenced by the U.S. culture with respect to his "Americanized" fathering and egalitarian roles, his responses still had some commonalities with family cohesion and family togetherness (i.e. "team effort"). Juan also described his fathering as influenced by the U.S. culture; however, he primarily referenced employment, food security, and U.S. child protection laws as key influences in his fathering. He described the government's

indirect support for his family, by allowing him the opportunity to work and receiving financial assistance for food, particularly when it was scarce in his family.

Yes, [it's influenced] by the United States. I am thankful for all the support the United States has given us. Their support has helped us with food. If they didn't, I couldn't even imagine... Well we work, but it is not enough. The U.S. allows us to work and they give us the support to continue to raise our children, and for that I thank them very much.

They support me and I support my children, and so we can move forward (Juan, 40).

In addition, Juan reported the U.S. child protection laws as also guiding his parenting, particularly in his disciplinary approach. He reported learning how to treat his children without violence, and was thankful for being provided an alternative approach.

In the United States, I have learned that you should not behave badly with your children or anything like that. It's the law here in the United States, and that's okay with me. I like all the advice they give us about how to treat our children, because sometimes there is a lot of violence between parents and their children. Sometimes they do not obey these laws.

One additional commonality across this group of fathers was their focus on how residing in the U.S. impacted their relationship with their children. Most fathers described learning to “enjoy their children,” learning to encourage their children without insults, and disciplining their children without “violence.” While it is unclear whether these factors are solely related to U.S. culture, they are different approaches fathers learned to use from residing and participating in programs and services in the U.S., and thus denoted them as influential to their parenting.

**A blended cultural approach to fathering– Latino cultural influences.** In contrast to fathers who reported parenting with U.S. cultural influences alone, three remaining fathers

intentionally incorporated Latino cultural values with U.S. influences into parenting their children in the U.S. With respect to the Latino culture, fathers described the positive and negative influences their culture could have on their parenting, particularly referencing familismo, ser bien educado, and machismo. Jose, a father who immigrated to the United States at 34 years of age, for example, explains this divergence between potential strengths among Latino fathers, as well as cultural barriers that might interfere with their involvement as fathers. He described the following:

[Our culture] influences us for good and for bad. It influences us in a good way because despite everything, in our Mexican culture, Latin culture, family is still the most important. It influences us a little in a bad way because within that there is still a macho or machismo culture and I can tell you from cousins, friends, acquaintances, that they are proud of never having changed a diaper or never having given a bottle to their children. Not me, it is something I did enjoy, it's not "oh, I changed her diaper," no, if I had to do it I did it, and nothing happened to me ... so I say it influences us for good and for bad (Jose, 43).

Jose primarily described incorporating particular aspects of the Latino culture that he believed influenced his involvement in a positive way. Therefore, in addition to incorporating the value of familismo, he was also concerned with teaching his daughter about the catholic faith. Similarly, other fathers continued to describe the contrast in cultural values between their country of origin and the U.S., and understanding this difference formed the basis for incorporating a blend of cultural values from both countries. Oscar, a father who immigrated at 24 years of age, for example, described learning to let go of machismo since living in the U.S. and described an

appreciation for his wife's contribution to their family, which aided his transition toward egalitarian roles.

Since living here, I have learned to stop the Mexican machismo. At the beginning it was "no, pues aqui nomas mis chicharrones truenan" ("well here we do what I say"), but then I learned that you have to wash the dishes, you have to help do laundry and all that. My wife sometimes goes to medical appointments, and since they are in school right now, she has to go and take the children out of school because of their appointments ... and I can help our family by at least washing my clothes. Nothing has happened, and many Mexicans say "oh, es que tú eres mandilón" ("oh, it is because you are controlled by your wife"). I do not see why that is if the woman works too, she contributes to the family, she helps me. If she did not support me, I would also have to take the kids to school and medical appointments. Right now our daughter has soccer, volleyball, so my wife is the one who takes her in the afternoon, because I try to work 8-10 hours a day. It is quite helpful what she does (Oscar, 43).

Despite letting go of characteristics associated with the Latino culture—Machismo—Oscar also described aspects of his culture that remained, and combined with U.S. influences contributed to his parenting approach. For example, he attributed 50% of his parenting to U.S. influences coming directly from his children's school. The remaining 50%, however, he attributed to Latino cultural traditions, including food and language. Combined, therefore, he described his fathering practices using a blended cultural approach.

I think the influences of each is 50% [Latino and U.S. influences]. There is 50% that comes from the Spanish language, Latino food, and the education we provide. We give

our children a type of education as Latino or Mexican parents that is unique and the other 50% comes from their participation in school.

With regards to providing “a type of education as Latino parents,” Oscar was referring to *ser bien educado*— a value that more broadly encompasses teaching respect toward others. Of interest, is how Oscar separated out the education he can provide as a Latino parent and the education the school provided. While both are described as valuable for him, in the following excerpt he described his interest in providing his children with a Latino education:

What I mean by *ser bien educado* is in the way they speak, the way they greet others, how they welcome family, friends, or wherever we go that they are simply respectful. Also, that they respect their elders and not equal themselves or their conversations to that of their elders.

The value of *familismo* continued to permeate throughout these fathers’ interviews, referencing the importance of remaining “united” as a family. Just as Jose described *familismo* as a positive attribute of the Latino culture, this continued to be one of the primary values that was explicitly stated and intentionally incorporated in these fathers’ parenting. For example, Vicente, a father of seven children, described the beauty in spending time together with his family.

One of the main Latino values is to learn to live together, to spend time together. It is seldom that we leave someone behind, because we all like to go together. My oldest son sometimes feels embarrassed going out with so many brothers and sisters, but it is something that we teach them. It's beautiful and it's very rare to see a big family. That's something we teach them, to have unity among them. Sure, there will always be arguments between them, but everything has a resolution. We teach them that although

they are all different, they cannot forget they are related and have the same blood (Vicente, 40).

**A blended cultural approach to fathering– U.S. cultural influences.** While Latino values were important among this group of fathers, they also described common U.S. influences that contributed to their development as fathers. The U.S. influences most commonly described, for example, was the importance of forming a father-child relationship, that included valuing each child as an individual and demonstrating love and affection to them. Second to that, however, were fathers' reports on more egalitarian roles between them and their wives. Though these parenting components were described as U.S. influences, fathers also described the absent relationship with their own fathers. Vicente, for example, described the father-child relationship among Latinos as nonexistent, and attributed his growth as a father to the support he received from organizations and programs in the U.S.

It's the culture here in the United States, because it is where we have learned more about how to deal with our children and how to relate more with them; Which we did not learn from [our culture], we did not know it. The relationship between parents and children did not exist in our culture, it is different from what exists here in learning to relate to your children. More than anything, when we arrived here, that is when I learned– how to form a relationship between father and child, and to build more trust between us. Although I did not have this experience, it is something I learned, that today serves us well, because I am able to share it with them. So I can say that here in this country, there is help, it is available.

In a similar fashion, Oscar described beginning to “know” his children as a product of his participation in organization and services that helped to educate him as a parent. As a result, he

learned to give his children the love and affection he did not receive from his own parents, and described how he has changed this for his children. Further, he reported on the differences in the type of involvement between Latino fathers and mothers, and the lack of awareness a father may have about how their children are learning and growing— a role he wanted to change.

As immigrants in this country we have to go to programs that can educate us as parents, like this organization, for example. Here I learned to be a father, to know my children, to know how they grow. I looked at my son when he used to hit his head on the edge of the table, now his neck reaches the edge of the table, and I realize that he is growing. But many fathers do not pay attention and the mother is the one who realizes that a child is growing. And these programs have helped me realize how our children are growing.

Something we learned too, like I was saying, growing up for me there was no love; there was not that hug, a "I love you". Our mother was never looking for us to say "my son, I love you." And it's important because children are like this. Right now I give my children four kisses a day, when I get home and when I leave. I believe that I am giving them what I did not have, the love of my parents (Oscar, 43).

Among the strategies he used to build a relationship with his children, he described a father-friend approach. These conversations led him to learn about issues concerning his children at school. Through this relational approach, Oscar has found his children have built a sense of trust with him.

They trust me a lot more. For example, sometimes I speak to them as a friend and sometimes as a parent. When I speak to them as a friend they start telling me things. And in that way my relationship with them has changed compared to before. I go out with them. I buy them an ice cream and I talk to them as a friend and they talk to me.

While the U.S. influences were mainly described in the context of strengthening the father-child relationship, including showing love and affection, Jose, a father who immigrated to the U.S. at 34 years of age, described the use of positive reinforcement as a parenting tool learned by the culture he observed in the U.S. In contrast, he described his experience in Mexico, where the parenting culture was primarily focused on providing “criticism or correction,” and not necessarily recognizing something done well. To this point, Jose described the benefits he gained from incorporating this strategy in parenting his three year old daughter.

[It is] an influence of the American culture ... in Mexico it is not very common ... maybe with this new generation, but with us, or as children, or even as an adult at our age it was not very common to value, recognize, or appreciate things that are well done. Yes, criticism or correction was normal when you did something wrong, but when you did something right, it is not in our culture to recognize you for it. Here [in the U.S.], it is; I see "good job" is totally common, it is already cultural. That helps me because I ... No one is the best and no one is the worst in the world, and if you come across good and bad tools, you have to grab what is good from both [cultures] and use it (Jose, 43).

Fathers incorporating a blended approach to their fathering also reported more egalitarian roles, often describing it as, “letting go of Machismo.” To this point, Jose, described his observations of the more egalitarian culture in the U.S. that has continued to influence his involvement in other areas of his daughter’s life.

Well that's where it influences or is mixed with the American culture [and Latino culture], which has more of an equal, egalitarian role between men-women. That is, if at some point the woman is the one who has to work and the father stays at home, he does it and nothing happens.

**Clashing and adapting– Chocando y adaptando.** Though only half of the fathers' in this sample intentionally incorporated Latino cultural values with U.S. influences into parenting their children in the U.S., all fathers reported on instances when they anticipated resistance from their children or were met with resistance when attempting to introduce their children to a Latino cultural tradition ( $n = 5$ ). Research suggests that parents and children experience higher levels of stress and conflict when children are more assimilated to the mainstream culture than their parents (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1994). Therefore, the following theme was warranted to represent these fathers' frustration or indifference with the resistance they experienced from their children about decisions they made to teach and/or introduce Latino culture-specific traditions. Fathers' used words like, "clash" and "adapting," in the context of these conversations, and therefore were used to formulate the theme, *Clashing and Adapting– Chocando y Adaptando*.

Immigrant fathers' across these interviews understood the cultural mismatch between their children and themselves, which they believed arose from their children being born in the U.S. Vicente, for example, described his difficulty in trying to teach Latino culture-specific values and the frustration experienced by his children, as well as their resistance to his approach.

We live in a country where we were not born, we did not grow up here. They are, you can say, living in their country, but in my case it is a bit complicated and it is difficult to understand them because we live in another country. We want to teach our children, who are not from our country, to live in our culture... and so we clash sometimes. It is difficult for them and frustrating, because we do not allow them to grow up in a [U.S.] culture we did not grow up in (Vicente, 43).

For most fathers their children were old enough to declare an interest in the Latino culture or U.S. cultural influences. Jose, a father to a three year old daughter, in contrast explained the foreseeable shock he expected his daughter to experience once she entered school. As a Spanish-English interpreter, he also encountered many situations in which children of Latino immigrant parents dominated the English language and understood U.S. systems to a greater degree, that was then used to keep information from their parents. In this case, less resistance was experienced by the child, but rather there was an imbalance of power in the information known to the parent and child that has the potential to affect dynamics between them. He described such situations, for example, in the context of U.S. laws, school systems, and the Spanish language:

In these times it is not easy [to be a Latino father], because in the first few years you are trying to teach or educate your children in one way, but I know the American culture will shock her. Starting with the language; through my work, I have seen a very big problem with recent immigrant parents and their children. First, you are told "do not yell", "do not hit" because otherwise "they will call the police and you will be deported." That generates disciplinary problems with children, because of that fear that is instilled in you. I have seen children whose parents cannot raise their voices to, scold them, or they think they can't, much less hit them ... and children begin to understand that it won't go passed that and so they do what they want (Jose, 43).

In addition to the fear immigrant parents may have of deportation with regard to disciplinary approaches, Jose also described how children may have a dominant understanding of U.S. school systems, which may affect parents' involvement and knowledge of their children's academic progress.

First there was a fear you would be deported and so you would not go anywhere, not to an office, school, nowhere because of that fear. Then, in such cases parents ask: - "How was school?" - "Good." And children can keep saying they are doing well all year and at the end of the year they don't pass. Without mastering English [as a parent] or without some support services it is hard for them [parents] to ask "hey, what is going on with my child?" That must be very difficult. It also has something to do with not knowing, not dominating it [culture], and not being an expert.

Other fathers experienced resistance against their Latino culture in daily interactions or conversations about their home country. Oscar, for example, described his challenge in being a Latino father, with U.S. born children and the strong opposition his children had to visit or live in Mexico.

Well, being a Latino parent is a bit difficult here. For example, as a father I tell my children, we are going to Mexico. They tell me, "no dad, what happened? I'm not going to go there, I was born here." So for me it is a bit difficult, but I would like to take them to Mexico, but maybe not to live there, because they are from here. And besides my daughter does not want to, she wants to work and to study here. So, as a Latino father it's a bit difficult for me. I always tell them we are Mexican, and our culture is like this, but many times it [culture] changes (Oscar, 40).

Oscar appeared to understand that his strong identification with the Mexican culture was different from his children, and therefore did not have plans to force their travel to Mexico, a country that was unknown to them. Though he understood his children's resistance, he found it challenging as a Latino father. Similar to Oscar's experience, Juan, a father of three, also described a similar circumstance in which his children described their interest in continuing to

live in the U.S., with no interest of visiting his country of origin– Mexico. Other cultural divisions between a father’s identity as a Latino and their children’s American identity continued to occur in other ways within Oscar’s family. Though in a playful context, he described this type of division between the family in the context of soccer games.

[Our] culture [changes], let’s take soccer for example. When Mexico plays against the United States, we do not know who to cheer on. Do they support me or do I support them. There is no fight, of course. It’s just for fun. It is just different cultures, but we learn to adapt.

The latter portion of this quote– “learn to adapt” was not uncommon across fathers’ statements in response to the cultural resistance they experienced from their children. The *adaptation* fathers’ described took many forms. For example, some fathers described adapting traditional cultural foods or holiday rituals, so their children would begin to accept parts of the traditional Latino culture. Although these rituals were no longer exactly as they had learned or experienced them, fathers’ continued to provide opportunities for their children to learn about them. Marcos, for example, described his interest in exposing his children to foods he grew up with such as, “huevos con frijoles,” or cactus; Instead, his children asked for “mac and cheese” or created their own versions of Mexican foods.

Traditionally, like food wise, my son likes tortillas– that’s it. Nobody else likes anything. “Like I got to eat this?” And they put the red chili peppers on it and blend in the cheese, and my son calls it “Mexican pizzas,” and if it’s his own twist, sure! Whatever, just eat it. They don’t like cactus, they don’t like beans, they don’t like huevos con frijoles (eggs with beans)- “there you go, here”- they say “why? Just make me mac and cheese, like can you do that?” In a way I want them to kind of learn more stuff (Marcos, 25).

Marcos also encountered resistance in trying to teach his children Spanish. Because his extended family spoke English, his children often questioned their need to learn Spanish when family members understood them. To this point, Marcos described added pressure from his extended family about not teaching his children Spanish; therefore, he described his efforts to expose his three sons to the language.

I've been trying [to teach my kids Spanish], because I was taking a lot of heat from my grandma and my grandpa. My grandma, my dad, my mom, a lot of my relatives were like— “why are they not speaking Spanish? You know, it's going to help them in the long run.”— “It's like okay, I'm trying but in the long run they don't really need Spanish because you guys speak English so why do they need to learn Spanish?” They don't like it. My son told me, “I don't know why I need to speak Spanish when they all speak English.” So I tell them things like “el carro” (“the car”) or “vamos a comer” (“we are going to eat”) and stuff like that, so I'll say it in Spanish and say it in English. I know that they can understand it in English, so they can put two and two together, and that's kind of how we're going about it.

Juan, a father of three who has been living in the U.S. for over 25 years described the changing cultural traditions in his family that have been prompted by his children's interest in following U.S. traditions. According to Juan, his children's interest and knowledge of U.S. holiday traditions began when they first attended school. In the following excerpt, Juan described how the Latino tradition to open Christmas gifts on December 24<sup>th</sup> changed over the years, and how they have now adopted the U.S. custom of opening gifts the following day.

For Christmas, our traditions are that we put up a christmas tree, put lights up, and baby Jesus. We used to open gifts on the 24<sup>th</sup> here too, but because our traditions have changed,

we now open them the next day. We do it, well, so that we can go along with the traditions here. We told them [our children] about the 24<sup>th</sup> and they said “no dad,” because they know the Americans open them the next day. So they also want to open them the next day and they want everyone to do it together. They have friends at school and they ask them “when do you open your presents?”– and they respond– “we open them the next day, too, on the 25<sup>th</sup>” (Juan, 40).

Overall, immigrant fathers’ adoption of Latino and U.S. cultural influences varied. Many fathers described maintaining a value in familismo, and made additional attempts to introduce cultural traditions and/or holiday rituals to their children. Despite “clashing” or being met with resistance from their children, fathers were interested in “adapting.” This was often a product of how much fathers learned as part of the U.S. culture or through added support from parenting services/organizations. This apparent resolution, of the incompatible cultural beliefs between fathers and their children, appeared to be resolved among many of the fathers interviewed and is consistent with prior research on immigrant parents in the U.S. (Aldoney & Cabrera, 2016). A father’s cultural adaptation is represented in the following quote by Vicente, a father of seven children:

We have been adapting, and thanks to everything we have learned, we have been developing our, not culture, but the teachings that we bring or that I have learned as a father. I continue to consider myself a Latino father in matters of teaching them how we lived and our values, because they can also learn from that (Vicente, 43).

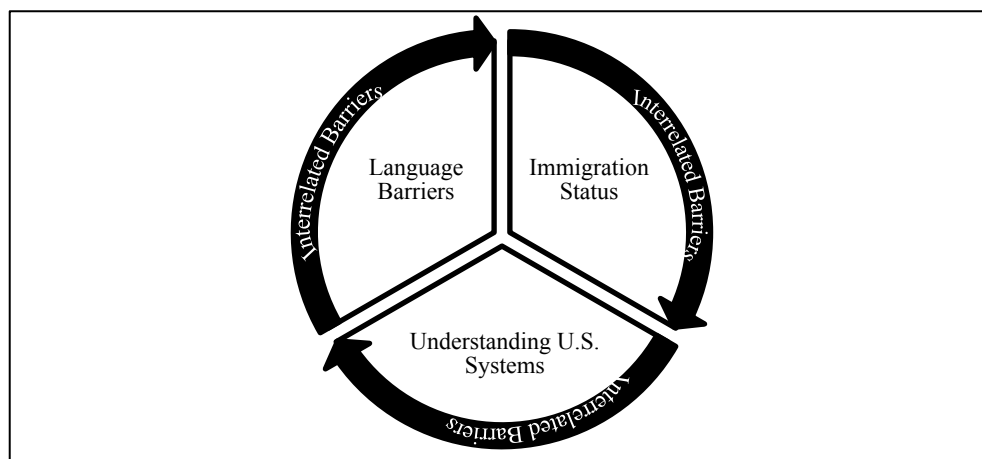
Though adaptations to parenting approaches were taking place across many Latino immigrant fathers in this study, Vicente outlined an important distinction that his Latino culture was not changing, because his values remained the same; however, his “teachings” and broader

behavioral parenting approaches were evolving as a product of his learning and growth as a father.

### **Perceived Barriers to Latino Father Involvement– Barreras Percibidas Para el Involucramiento del Padre Latino**

A significant portion of the semi-structured interviews with Latino Immigrant fathers focused on their cultural values/beliefs and how these values/beliefs informed their parenting practices; however, Latino fathers also discussed personal, contextual, and systemic barriers impacting their involvement with their children—language, employment, work stability, housing, understanding U.S. systems, and stereotypes. These barriers were categorized into three different themes including, language barriers, immigration status and related barriers, and barriers to understanding U.S. systems (please see *Figure 5*). Though fathers described challenging experiences related to stereotypes and discrimination, this topic is presented separately in the results section given its depth and social-emotional impact on fathers and their children. Overall, the following themes were compiled to shed light on the contextual and environmental influences experienced by Latino immigrant fathers in the U.S. and the impact they have on their involvement with their children.

*Figure 5. Perceived Barriers to Latino Immigrant Father Involvement*



**Language barriers.** As part of the interview, Latino fathers were asked about the challenges and/or barriers they experienced that interfered with their ability to support, encourage, or maintain involvement with their children. The majority of fathers reported difficulty acquiring the English language and the barriers to participate in their children's education, particularly assisting them with homework, as well as becoming involved in their children's medical care (n = 4). For example, Oscar described how difficult it was for him to help his children with their homework when it was all written in English and simply encouraged his children to work and study hard. In addition to the language barriers, Oscar also described difficulty with the content of their homework, which was an added complexity to his involvement.

It has been difficult for me to see my children's homework all written in English. I understand my youngest son's work, but with my daughter, she says, "Daddy look" and I see her doing her work. I tell her, "let God help you, because I can't." And I tell her study, because it looks very difficult... Yes, it is the biggest challenge (Oscar, 43).

Similarly, Jose, described a fear fathers may experience in participating or getting involved with their children's school services due to language barriers and or documentation status. As an interpreter himself, Jose observed this fear among fathers, which kept them from asking for an interpreter or have an understanding of their right to receive interpreter services.

Sometimes it's a bit difficult, for a person who does not speak the language and who is not well educated, and that's something I've seen too. They don't know how their children are doing in school. A father who does not speak English and has a fear ... right now is not so much the fear of being undocumented, before there was a greater fear. By law they

have to offer you interpreter services either physically, by video conference, or by telephone ... I think that it must be very difficult (Jose, 43).

Language barriers also affected other forms of indirect involvement, which Pleck (2010) defined as fathers scheduling/completing tasks for their children relating to a variety of social, health, medical or caretaking tasks. This was particularly true with respect to scheduling medical appointments for their children and/or comprehending information from the doctors when their children were ill. Oscar, described experiencing these challenges and reported having difficulty remaining involved in scheduling/attending medical visits for his children. To ameliorate this barrier he described how he relied on his daughter for translation support.

My daughter helps us a lot with the interpretation. She will let us know– “You know daddy I'm going to call, I'm going to do this.” She makes appointments, and she helps us a lot. As a father, it has been difficult to help them in that way. Or sometimes with medical appointments you have to take an interpreter and all of that. And the truth is that I am not that involved with it (Oscar, 43).

Overall, it may not be surprising that Latino immigrant fathers described language as a barrier to their involvement. Of interest, however, is the way in which language become the gateway to other forms of involvement such as, medical or educational support for their children. This barrier helps to explain why traditional western models of Father Involvement may not always be representative of immigrant fathers' involvement, given other barriers may interfere with different forms of involvement– indirect care (responsibility).

**Immigration status and related barriers.** Fathers also described barriers related specifically to their immigration status, that with it brought challenges to the type of employment they received, working multiple jobs/longer hours, and housing (n = 4). Latino fathers described

attaining jobs that required extraneous labor, often because as immigrants they arrive to the U.S. with an urgency to begin providing for their family, and may accept jobs not many others will. These forms of employment, however, were described as difficult, extraneous, and exhausting that interfered with other aspects of their life. Vicente, for example, described his work experience as an immigrant and shared a prominent concern of losing his strength to continue to work before his children were fully grown, as this would affect the family.

As immigrants, we bring the ability to work in tough conditions, you can say. I work like a Latino is used to, no matter what country you come from. We do difficult work, that is sometimes a challenge to raise children here, because one comes to work in what? Well, whatever we find. There is the challenge for many parents, that unfortunately our strength to continue to work sometimes ends, and if our children are still not fully grown, that is tough (Vicente, 43).

Most fathers spoke about the type of employment they were currently in that included construction, painting, or working in a lumber factory— all types of employment common among immigrant men. Collectively, these types of employment were often described as requiring long hours, not including the commute that often added additional time to their workday. Jose, for example, described the all too common scenerio of immigrant fathers working long, difficult hours that may prevent fathers from participating in other activities with their children.

Unfortunately most types of work have you on a schedule from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. some more, some less ... and that's usually a fathers's schedule, so it does not always allow them to be with their children; not involved with things at school, they are not involved in doctor or health related concerns for their child (Jose, 43).

Latino fathers also described barriers related to legal documentation that interfered with steady employment, as well as providing stable housing for their family. Oscar, for example, described his dream of owning a home. His dream was to have his family of six move out of their two bedroom apartment and into a home they could own, and described the challenge he has faced in pursuing this goal.

The truth, finding a home to live is also a challenge. Since I arrived in 2006, 2005 [to WA] I tried to buy a house and I have not been able to. The amount I earn is fine, I can do it, but because of my status in this country they ask us for things that we do not have, like a social security number. With work, I have also had some challenges, but I have told them " I have been here since 1997, and it has not been an obstacle for me." I learned to work and I don't need much, but now I see that we need a home. We do not want to leave the apartment we are in, until we have a home. It is a challenge, it is an obstacle for us (Oscar, 43).

Despite these circumstances, Latino fathers described the importance of sharing these experiences with their children— hardships with employment and difficulty obtaining housing— to motivate them to do well in school and pursue a higher education. In doing so, fathers commented on teaching their children to value their belongings and to only ask for what they “need” not just what they “want.” Below is how Oscar approaches this discussion with his children, explaining the importance of obtaining a U.S. education.

It is nice to teach children to value what they have, and teach them to use what they need and not what they want. I tell them, "You want the best, it has to cost you." That is what I try to teach them. Many kids have cell phones, but I want my children to study. And many times technology now a days can spoil them and I want them to study. The little bit

that I understood from a Boeing Engineer [whom I worked for] is "teach your children how to earn money" (Oscar, 43).

Broadly, all fathers described a number of barriers relating to their immigration status. Of interest, however, is that fathers who reported on these barriers were also fathers who were over the age of 40, and who had immigrated to the U.S. as adults (18 year of age or older). The younger group of fathers interviewed ( $n = 2$ ), nevertheless, did not report on such barriers. While fathers were not directly asked about their legal documentation as part of the interview, it is possible that younger fathers may have applied for and received legal documentation, given they arrived to the U.S. much younger. Alternatively, both of these fathers were primarily English-speaking, and therefore, may not have experienced the same barriers as some of the older Spanish-speaking immigrant fathers interviewed.

**Understanding U.S. systems.** Of the six fathers interviewed, two fathers identified challenges in understanding varying U.S. systems including the education, health service, and the legal systems ( $n = 2$ ). Both fathers who identified some difficulty in understanding U.S. systems were also fathers who immigrated to the U.S. as adults over the age of 24, and therefore may have experienced greater difficulty becoming acquainted to the varying systems. Oscar, for example, described his experience when learning his wife was pregnant with their first child. He described confusion and a sense of urgency to take his wife to the emergency room, with fear that she was severely ill. Because he was unfamiliar with the area, he described driving his wife to an emergency room 200 miles away, to a place that was familiar to him. As much as other barriers were intertwined— language barriers— Oscar turned to the yellow pages seeking support. He described encountering two social workers, who have become friends of the family, and who have provided them with the needed support to navigate systems in the U.S.

I remember when my wife was first pregnant, we did not know where to turn. Because I did not know Washington, I had to take her to the emergency room in Oregon, a place that I knew. For me those times were difficult, because she did not know how to get around on the bus and I could not leave work. I felt happy because it was my first child here, but the truth is that I felt desperate. It was complicated. We took the yellow pages and found the name of two social workers, who are still our friends and who have come to know all of our children. She answered my call and said "I'm going to help you" (Oscar, 43).

Educational systems were also considered challenging to understand for fathers. Jose described his understanding of Mexico's educational system and progression in school, in terms of grades and curriculum, but was honest about his confusion when children in the U.S. began school.

The educational system and programs are different. For example, in Mexico, sometimes children go to kindergarten, then preschool, then they enter first grade and here it is different, here it is kindergarten at 4, and then you go to elementary school... I don't think there is preschool or maybe there is some sort of pre-school, but that's where we are still lost. I declare myself lost in this. That is one challenge. Another, that is very common is sometimes you do not have much control or knowledge of how school is going for your son and if you have more children, then that's more (Jose, 43).

For many fathers, these barriers were interrelated. Their language barriers interfered with their ability to obtain different jobs that maybe required English skills; at the same time, their English language skills interfered with their ability to understand and become acquainted with varying U.S. systems their children were a part of such as school, clinics, or hospitals. Conversely, it can also be said that their immigration status complicated their employment options, which

consequently also affected the amount of time, energy, and flexibility they had to participate fully in activities/services offered to their children. Fathers were also asked about their experiences with racism, discrimination, and institutional barriers, to which all fathers described having experiences with; therefore, the following are these fathers' voices on issues of discrimination and how they have learned to socialize their children to deal with such circumstances.

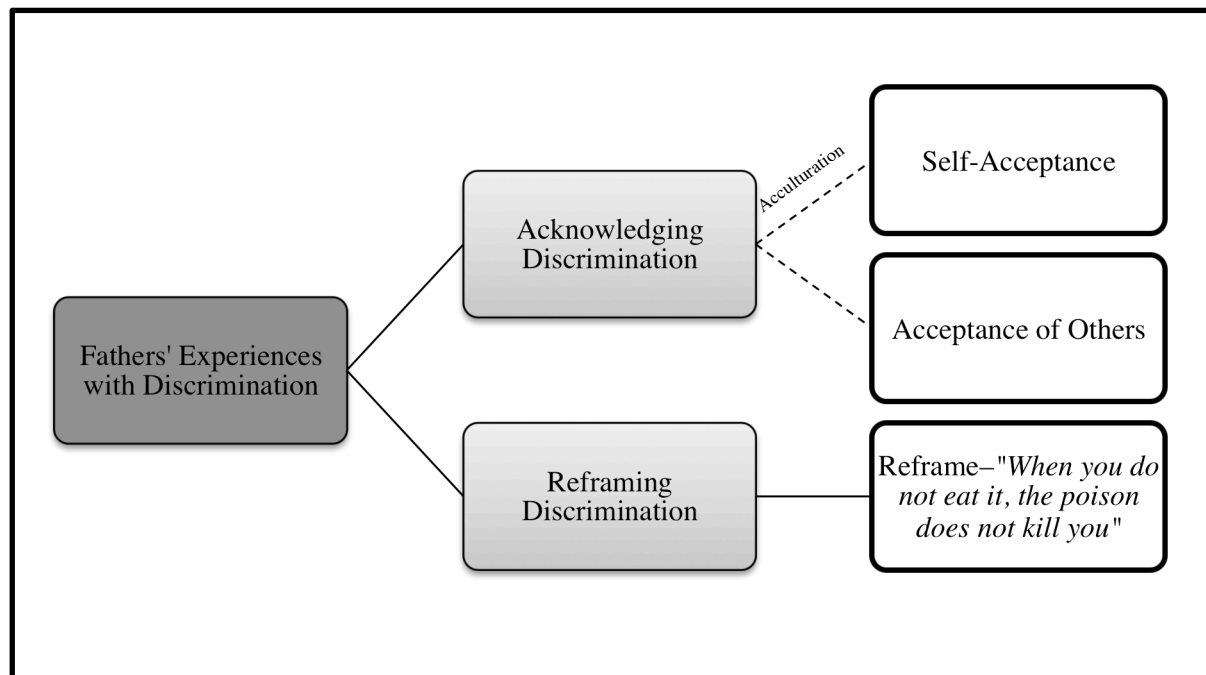
### **Discrimination and Racial Socialization– Discriminación y Socialización Racial**

Issues of race, inequality, and discrimination influence the way parents help their children understand their experiences when faced with similar circumstances (Ayón, 2016). Among Latino immigrant fathers, controversies about immigration and legal documentation in the United States make this population of fathers particularly vulnerable to discrimination and racism. Therefore, the following is an attempt to understand these fathers' experiences with racial tensions, how they interpret such situations, and the consejos (advice) they plan to give their children regarding discrimination and racial tensions.

Latino immigrant fathers reported a series of experiences with racism and discrimination across a variety of settings and contexts. Some fathers described their experiences in the context of labor exploitation, while other fathers' experiences occurred in public places. Just as these fathers' experiences differed, so did their interpretation of these situations. The majority of Latino immigrant fathers in this study ( $n = 5$ ) acknowledged that they would be subject to discrimination, and while they did not condone people's actions, they regarded these situations as occurring to them and/or their children. One father, however, differed in his interpretation of discrimination. Instead of calling it as it was—discrimination— this father refused to acknowledge these situations as such, and instead reframed situations and sought alternative explanations for his experiences with discrimination. Both interpretations of these fathers' experiences are

captured under the following themes– *Acknowledging Discrimination* and *Reframing Discrimination*– and are outlined below as headings. Further, these different interpretations of discrimination influenced these fathers’ *consejos* (advice) and the resistance or understanding their children reported on the issue. Latino immigrant fathers’ *consejos*, for example, centered on three different themes– *self-acceptance*, *acceptance of others*, or *reframing*– that were dependent on how fathers interpreted their experiences with discrimination. For fathers who reported an expectation or an acknowledgement that discrimination existed, for example, focused their *consejos* and socialization approach on cultivating their children’s understanding of their racial/ethnic identity, or learning to tolerate and accept others in this country. One Latino father refused to acknowledge discrimination, he preferred, instead to teach his children to reframe the situation (see *Figure 6.* for the flow chart). Themes and sub-themes are described in more detailed below.

*Figure 6.* Emerging Themes on Fathers’ Experiences with Discrimination and their Socialization Approach



**Acknowledging discrimination.** The majority of Latino immigrant fathers in this study ( $n = 5$ ) reported an understanding, expectation, and acknowledgement that discrimination was something they would experience as “outsiders” of this country – brought about by the color of their skin, stereotypes of Latino fathers, their documentation status, or judgments about their child rearing practices. After spending over six years in the United States, Jose, for example, discussed his first experience with racism, and hoped it would be his last.

Once I did get a person who was on the same elevator, I was with a a friend. I was helping him as an interpreter; and he was an older man. And suddenly the man turns and says: "Go home." I was surprised. "Yes, go back to your island," he tells me, "where are you from?" I said "Mexico." "Ah, I thought you were Samoans," he says, "but go back to your country anyway." And it made me feel weird because it's the only time that's happened to me. He was an older man, so we were not going to argue with him; you simply listen and ignore it. But I was very struck by the fact that this happened to me. Finally, you realize that ... he first tells you, he thinks you are Samoan, then he realizes that you are Mexican ... that is, it is a generalized sense of racism. So it has happened once in 5-6 years, then nothing happens. I believe that it has to happen at least once in everyone's life, hopefully not more (Jose, 40).

Similar to Jose's experience, Vicente, a father of seven, described his understanding for why as Latinos, they are likely to experience discrimination and makes a reference to the color of their skin. His understanding is that being Latino, is not something you can let go of or deny, because it gets manifested through the color of your skin– something that is visible to others and may be used as a marker by others to judge or discriminate against you. As Vicente discussed discrimination, he also described how one responds also needs to differ:

As Latinos we probably have to face people that may reject us for being Latinos. But, on our part it does not have to be that way, because we are all human beings, born in different countries. But the fact that we are here does not mean that we are illegal. We are simply in a country where we are not more than anyone else. But, you cannot say you are not Latinos [referencing his children]. They manifest it. Then, I tell them. That is something that can happen. Because you cannot be or say that you are gringos and gabachos. They can't, they cannot manifest it (Vicente, 40).

For fathers that arrived to the United States at a younger age, their imminent sense of not belonging began while in school. Marcos, one of the youngest fathers interviewed for this study, arrived to the United States when he was eight-years old and described his first experience in a U.S. school:

I didn't know what people thought of me, because they looked at me differently; I couldn't understand what they were saying. So, I knew I had to pick it up quick [English] because I needed to... I was going to be here for a while, so I needed to learn it and make sure I could talk to these people. And then... I was kind of a clown I guess, so that way whenever I got bullied I just kind of laughed it off- about being Mexican, or being different- Like different colored skin, if that makes a difference to some people (Marcos, 25).

**Fathering and racial socialization.** In addition to describing his experience with discrimination, Marcos, also described using humor to cope with being bullied because of his racial/ethnic background. Similarly, other Latino immigrant fathers interviewed concurrently described how they managed these situations, each different from the other. A fathers' interpretation of their experiences and way of coping with these situations considerably

influenced the ways in which they advised their children on similar issues. Fathers that acknowledged the existence of discrimination and racism, for example, described using humor to cope with the perceived judgments by others. While some fathers used humor to deflect any name-calling, other fathers wanted to improve a certain set of skills (e.g. accent, learn English) to minimize discrimination, and other fathers simply disproved any stereotypes imposed on them. Given these interpretations, Latino immigrant fathers reported providing the following consejos (advice) to their children: *Accept Yourself*, *Dismiss it and Be Yourself*, *Disprove Stereotypes*, or *Accept Others*.

Each fathers' consejos differed on one aspect— the advice was in reference to either *self-acceptance* or an *acceptance of others*. In other words, fathers' referenced advice that would support their children in accepting themselves, their racial/ethnic identity, and their overall sense of worthiness (self-acceptance); while another father provided advice around how to understand and accept others who discriminate against them, so as not react in the same way others may have treated them (acceptance of others). Both themes related closely to Latino cultural values, which provided insight to a father's social ecology. Advice veered toward self-acceptance, for example, related to a father's encouragement to help their children remain true to who they were including their skin color, their attitude, and in their interpersonal interactions— thus, building their children's Latino ethnic pride. Advice centered on an acceptance of others, on the other hand, related closely to the value of *Personalismo* and *Simpatía*— values that embrace a collectivist frame. Values of personalismo and simpatía are characterized by the importance Latinos place on interpersonal relationships and getting along well with others, therefore, fathers' may be teaching their children to accept and tolerate others to maintain harmonious relationships.

The following are these fathers' self-reports of how they socialize their children to deal with discrimination.

*Self-acceptance.* Among Latino immigrant fathers who acknowledged that discrimination existed and could reference this situation happening in their own life, they also chose to explain these situations to their children. Only a subset of them ( $n = 4$ ), however, gave their children advice to support their own understanding of themselves, their racial/ethnic identity, and their overall sense of worthiness— a definition used to capture the theme of self-acceptance. Unique to this group of fathers is that all four fathers had all been residing in the United States for over 15 years. Their framework for understanding discrimination also differed in that teaching their children to accept themselves, both racially and ethnically, resembled the U.S. focus on individualism. Each father focused on telling their kids to “just be themselves,” to accept the fact that they were “Latinos,” and be comfortable with who they were, saying “you are who you are.” Therefore, this group of Latino immigrant fathers reported providing the following type of advice: *Accept Yourself, Dismiss it and Be Yourself, and Disprove Stereotypes.*

*Accept yourself.* Vicente, a father of seven, notes that his advice to his children is to help them understand they may encounter individuals who may reject them based on their racial/ethnic presentation, and believed that being Latino was a piece of themselves they could not hide— it is an embodiment they manifest. Vicente's efforts were not to have his children reject their culture or their racial/ethnic identity, rather to understand “they are who they are,” and it is to be viewed as something to be proud of, not something to hide from. In his own words, Vicente, says the following:

We are all human beings born in different countries. But the fact that we are here does not mean that we are illegal. We are simply in a country where we are not more than

anyone else, but you cannot say that you are not Latinos [referencing his children]. They manifest it. You may have to deal with people like her [woman who discriminated against his family]. It was an experience that everyone lived through. The children, more than anything, with her. Then, I tell them, “that is something that can happen. Because you cannot be or say you are gringos and gabachos.” They cannot, they cannot manifest that. You are who you are. They are from here, but because of the color of their skin, there may come a time when they meet a person like her. But let's learn not to respond in the same way that people respond (Vicente, 40).

*Dismiss it and be yourself.* Marcos, a father of three, interpreted discriminations as “mistakes” people make, and although his mode of coping was to use humor to deflect or depersonalize the situation, he encouraged his children, instead, to “just be themselves.” Marcos stated the following:

Well, I don't think my kids get bullied at all. I don't know, but if so I would kind of have the answer which would be the same thing, just you know... whatever, people are going to be people and make mistakes and act dumb or whatever. There is nothing you can do, so just be yourself (Marcos, 25).

When referencing his own experiences with discrimination, Marcos, acknowledged that people have insulted him, but that in itself does not change who he is; it is for that reason that he advised his children to embrace their identity. This fathers' perspective on discrimination is also external, in that he believes people's stereotypes do not represent the truth of who he is— they are only misperceptions people have based on what they see and think of him. Therefore, Marcos chose to just be himself, instead of trying to change himself. In addition, Marcos also believed his children would not experience discrimination to the same degree he did. Unlike him, he

described his children as “light skin,” often not identified as “Mexican,” and therefore he believed his children would escape this type of misjudgment. In his reasoning, Marcos described the following:

I haven't really given them any advice, besides you know brush it off. Because I reacted the wrong way for most of this stuff and in my head I know what to tell them if, you know stuff like that goes on. Like if you get called a name or something, we don't really categorize them as Mexican, and they don't really look Mexican besides the middle guy, like they say “ira ese Mexicanito” [look at that little Mexican]. My dad calls the middle guy “Mexicanito” and “guerito” [little Mexican and white one] is the older one. Because they look ... one is lighter and one is darker. I guess, I don't know. But it is more of a caring nickname, like de cariño.

*Disproving stereotypes.* Anthony, a father of five described his experience with discrimination that was documented via field note excerpts. Anthony described going to dinner with his wife at a “nicer restaurant,” where they were escorted to the back of the restaurant to be seated. Once seated, he reported waiting for over one hour for someone to take their order, but no one ever came, so they decided to simply leave the restaurant. While this father did not describe a direct interaction with anyone at the restaurant, it was the absence of the interaction and the passive refusal to serve them that was interpreted by this father as discrimination. Further, Anthony described his interpretation of the situation and reported that he has been “judged” by others based on his appearance— often perceived as a *cholo* (gang member), because of his clothing and tattoos running alongside his arm and neck.

While Anthony was not surprised by this experience, he has come to understand how his physical appearance has influenced people's perceptions of him. Therefore, in response to these

experiences, Anthony has refused to explain himself to people, and instead works to disprove people's misinterpretations of him and encourages his kids to do the same. More specifically, he reported encouraging his son to refrain from getting visible tattoos. In this example, Anthony, recognized that discrimination exists and has come to expect it. While he does not deny these situations exist, he has chosen to use his experiences as an example to explain to his son, at 14-years old, why it is important for him to be conscientious and aware of his physical appearance, to keep him from experiencing the same kind of discrimination he has only come to expect.

One commonality across all four fathers, despite acknowledging that discrimination existed, is they all wanted their children to refrain from responding with the same degree of "anger" that others may have used to discriminate against them. Many fathers, for example, used words like "don't get mad," or "don't respond the same way they did." Each of the fathers' reasoning varied, however. Many wanted to keep their children from getting "mad," because as younger men they previously reacted in a similar way, and learned that it was not the most effective response. Marcos, for example, was adamant to explain to his children that there was no reason to get "mad," as he found it was unhelpful. Therefore, Marcos explained the following:

For my older one, I kind of tell them some stuff like that [referring to discrimination] and then he'll be like "okay," and so they see some people are like that. So when you're faced with such a thing, you know how to react— "don't get mad, it's going to happen and they're idiots" (Marcos, 25).

Other fathers were fearful that developing a sense of anger would lead them to irrational decisions, as one father described— "It may lead them to kill." Instead of anger, all four fathers wanted their children to be more responsible in their actions. Culturally, this *consejo*, or advice can be interpreted in one of two ways. First, fathers could be instilling the value of "ser bien

educado” among their children, which encompasses the value of being respectful, kind, and having good manners. Secondly, it is possible that all fathers wanted their children to refrain from responding to discrimination with anger, because it would continue to perpetuate the stereotype that other people may have of them, or they may simply be trying to protect their children against the anger of people who discriminate against them. Because, fathers were not asked to elaborate on their responses, it is not known what reasoning supported these fathers’ *consejos*.

*Acceptance of others.* Among the fathers who acknowledged discrimination, one father differed in the kind of advice he planned to give his daughter regarding discrimination. This particular father was also a relatively new immigrant father, with only six years of residency in the U.S. Unlike the other four fathers who focused their advice on helping their children accept themselves as Latinos, Jose focused his advice on helping his daughter tolerate and accept all people from culturally, diverse backgrounds. Jose’s socialization approach appears to be more collectivist in nature, such that he is focused on helping his daughter build an acceptance of others, rather than focusing on her own individual understanding and acceptance of herself. What is known to be common among the Latino culture is having values of *personalismo* and *simpatía*— characterized by the importance on interpersonal relationships and getting along well with others. Given this cultural value, it is possible this fathers’ advice also stems from his value of having his daughter develop cooperative relationships with others, and treating others with kindness and respect. Jose described the advice he plans to give his three-year old daughter and the hope he has that she will learn to tolerate and accept other immigrants to this country.

Yes it influences, because we have to teach our children that, especially ... well, they were born here, but that we are the ones that come from another place, that you come a

little bit against the current to a strange place. A new place, different, so, just like we have been accepted, we also have to accept them, or tolerate it. I think that it does influence it a lot in that regard (Jose, 40).

Unique to Jose, is his sense of appreciation to the country and people in the U.S. who have accepted him. It is this acceptance that he and his family have received, and it is out of a sense of respect that he advises his daughter to also be accepting and tolerable of all other people— further suggesting that she also refrain from discriminating against others. To support this vision of acceptance, Jose described how important it was for him to stay involved in organizations and social and political movements that respect the rights of all immigrants and non-immigrants.

We have participated or we have been involved with the people of *One America*. They had their beginnings after 9/11, precisely because after the events of 9/11, it increased racism, that fear of other cultures, especially Muslims. I mean, they saw Muslims and associated them with being terrorists, right? Then from there they began to work to defend their opportunities, the rights of immigrants and of non-immigrants. We have tried to get involved a little there, as residents of a community or members of a community.

Further, he described his surrounding community, filled with people from different cultures, languages, traditions etc., and it is this community that Jose hoped to expose his daughter to, so that she would understand there are people different from her, yet should be equally valued.

I feel that we are in the right place because living in such a place allows my daughter to see that there are very different people, totally different from the way you dress, what you eat, how you act, your religion, and the way your family develops. It's unlike Mexico. I would have had the opportunity to show her other things, but not to see or to live this day by day. In Mexico, from time to time you will see people of color; you might see

someone who is very dark, but not African American... But not with the multiculturalism there is here, of Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese ... all that (Jose, 40).

Unlike other fathers in this study, Jose, has only resided in the United States for six years, and is the only father in this sample with a college education from Mexico, and whose socialization approach to help his daughter cope with discrimination centers on a collectivist frame. His *consejos* focus on teaching his daughter about other cultural groups and being accepting of other communities. Given Jose's unique demographic factors, acculturation and education may contribute to a father's socialization approach toward discrimination and other racial tensions.

**Reframing Discrimination – “When you do not eat it, the poison does not kill you,”**  
**“Cuando tu no lo comes, el veneno no te mata.”** Contrary to the majority of fathers perceptions, expectations, and acknowledgement that discrimination existed and it was something they would experience, Oscar, described a unique perspective that involved reframing his experience with discrimination; an approach that he described by using un *dicho*, a folktale or saying. He described the following:

The truth is I reject all that, I do not know what made me strong, but I always say, "When you do not eat it, the poison does not kill you." I like to ask advice from older Americans... I asked an elderly man once: "What do you do to last so long?" And he said "ignore." When I get angry, she [wife] ignores me. Then when someone gets angry with you, ignore it, so it does not hurt you, do not poison yourself. So I think that has made me strong, not to be discriminated against, that is, I do not take it as that. Out in the streets sometimes someone passes you or you get insulted. Sometimes we make mistakes that maybe we should not, they may insult me, but that does not mean they discriminate against me. If I made a mistake I accept it, I'm sorry; But I do not feel discriminated

against. If I go and request a job and they tell me there is none, I do not feel discriminated against; even if that was a form of discrimination. And I've never looked at it that way.

So I do not feel discriminated against even if they have done it against me.”

Oscar's approach to dealing with racism and discrimination is different from all other fathers in that he refuses to acknowledge it has happened to him; rather, he has chosen to interpret the situation differently so that he is not hurt or affected by people's actions. It is his reframing of the situation and optimism that he attributes his strength and resiliency to, as a Latino immigrant father, and attempts to pass on a similar teaching to his children. Throughout these interactions, Oscar has found that his 14-year old daughter is more sensitive to discrimination and he has received pushback from her in situations that have occurred to them as a family, that she has interpreted as discrimination, but that Oscar has refused to acknowledge. For example, the following is how these conversations play out between him and his daughter:

My daughter seems to notice this more, discrimination: -“Papi, did you see? They went ahead of us. Yes, hija, but leave them, maybe they're in a hurry. Dad, but that's not right. I know, hija, but it happened.” And sometimes we are in a place that sells food and we are waiting to order something and suddenly someone else comes along and they attend them first. -“Papi, did you see? Yes, I did, but we're over here. But he did not ask us.” So they notice this more than I do. I try to control it.

For Oscar, reframing discrimination helped to ameliorate the potential impact it could have on him, but for his 14-year old daughter it appeared to be more difficult to let go and reframe the situation without having her father validate her feelings and perceived experiences with discrimination. Oscar recognized this challenge for his children and described efforts to “control it.” It is possible his efforts to do so included continuing to help his children reframe

discrimination, but because Oscar was not queried on how he tried to “control it,” it is difficult to draw definite conclusion into what this meant for Oscar.

## Chapter 4

### Discussion

The majority of the father-involvement research has focused largely on data from middle-class, white, European-American families, and research on Latino immigrant fathers, in particular, has fallen behind. Therefore, as one of the few studies exploring Latino immigrant fathers, this study extends previous research by (re)defining Latino immigrant father involvement beyond western models, understanding the evolution of Latino cultural values among immigrant fathers and understanding the contextual barriers they experience to their involvement. Specifically, this study was guided by four research questions: (1) How do Latino immigrant fathers' interpret their involvement as fathers, and how do these roles align with Pleck's (2010) Father Involvement Framework? (2) How do immigrant fathers negotiate Latino cultural values in the U.S., and how do fathers interpret their children's receptiveness to their cultural approach? (3) What barriers and/or challenges do Latino immigrant fathers identify as interfering with their paternal involvement? (4) What meaning do Latino fathers attribute to experiences with racial tensions and institutional barriers, and how do fathers socialize their children to cope with these experiences?

#### **How do Latino immigrant fathers' interpret their involvement as fathers, and how do these roles align with Pleck's (2010) Father Involvement framework?**

The first research question attempts to understand how Latino immigrant fathers' interpretation of their involvement aligns with or differs from western models of father involvement, specifically Pleck's (2010) revised *Father Involvement* framework— Positive Engagement, Warmth and Responsiveness, Control, and Responsibility (Process and Indirect

care). Research on Latino fathers shows they are warm and are spending more time with their children than previously known (Cabrera, Hofferth, et al., 2011), and this was in fact representative of the Latino immigrant fathers in this study. Therefore, contrary to the previously held stereotypes of Latino fathers, immigrant fathers in this study reported their involvement across five domains including, *accessibility*, *positive engagement* (interactive, providing direction), *warmth and responsiveness*, *control*, and *responsibility* (indirect care, process, financial).

Latino immigrant fathers' involvement did not exactly map on to the Father Involvement framework developed by Pleck (2010); however, immigrant fathers believed their involvement across other areas were still contributing to their children's development and benefited the family unit. Fathers, for example, described two forms of involvement that could not be captured using Pleck's framework— first, fathers described their involvement in terms of *providing direction*, an extension of traditional forms of positive engagement. In other words, they provided *consejos* (advice) to their children and described their responsibility to teach/guide their children in learning a variety of family values. Fathers' also described their role as a financial provider for their immediate and extended family, an integral part of their involvement and was added as *financial responsibility*— an extension of the responsibility construct. Further, it is important not to discount the degree to which familismo and other Latino values may influence Latino fathers' involvement and contribute to their child's healthy development— beyond what cognitive stimulating activities can provide. Perhaps these immigrant fathers' adherence to cultural values of familismo, respeto, and ser bien educado encourage their involvement across other domains of involvement than what has been traditionally studied among Latino fathers (i.e., financial provider, providing direction). In this case, these fathers' involvement also manifested across a

variety of domains not traditionally represented in western Father Involvement models, yet may provide different but positive outcomes for Latino children and youth in the U.S. In fact, these findings are consistent with research suggesting that Latino parents, overall, view their involvement as motivating their children through cultural narratives (Goldsmith & Kurpius, 2017), emphasizing the value of education through consejos (LeFevre & Shaw, 2012), and providing the basic necessities for their children (clothing, food, and shelter) (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001)— all linked with positive academic outcomes among Latino children (Ceballo, Maurizi, Suarez, & Aretakis, 2014).

Fathers in this study, further, were re-defining machismo, such that they appeared to identify more closely with the provider and protector role— both positive characteristics of caballerismo. Indeed these roles may be overshadowing some of the progressive attitudes and fathering practices— positive engagement and showing warmth and responsiveness— that are positively influenced by Latino cultural values and are becoming prevalent among this group of fathers. In accordance with Knight et al.'s model on *Parent Socialization and Latino Ethnic Identity*, a father's involvement was contingent upon the importance they placed on Latino values— captured under a father's social ecology; that is, their cultural values and beliefs about the importance of family, their cultural and family background, and acculturation influenced their fathering approach. Glass and Owen (2010) both postulate that familismo and machismo are the most important Latino values that have implications for the role and behaviors of fathers in the family. For example, fathers with high values of familismo may be focused on participating in activities that are in the best interest of the family, which may mean providing financially to meet the needs of their children and family (immediate and extended family), and therefore may spend the majority of their time fulfilling their financial responsibility. Fathers

also reported more interactive forms of involvement (i.e., playing), which indicates they are involved in ways that promote family cohesion (i.e., family outings), rather than engaging in enriching activities (i.e., reading)– which may be viewed as more individualistic.

Latino immigrant fathers' in this study also based their involvement on an intergenerational experience that help to explain why fathers placed a strong value on accessibility and demonstrating warmth and responsiveness to their children. For many fathers who reported an importance on being physically present and accessible for their children, their motivation and desire to “be there” was drive by the absence of their own fathers. Research using an attachment theoretical framework have found that “attitudes about father involvement develop through both positive and negative family of origin experiences” (Beaton, Doherty, & Rueter, 2003, p. 150). In particular, Floyd and Morman (2000), contend that father involvement is based on compensation effects and modeling from their own father figures, which predicts that “men who are dissatisfied with the [type of ] fathering they received will feel compelled to remake the fathering experiences into something more positive for their own sons, thus compensating for a perceived lack of caring, nurturing, or involvement from their own fathers” (p. 349). Therefore, findings from this qualitative study are consistent with the compensatory effect, such that Latino immigrant fathers valued being physically accessible to their children, given the absence of their father figures and demonstrated a warm, caring, and nurturing presence for their children, given it lacked in their own father-child relationships.

In the Latino family literature, fathers are described as responsible for reinforcing familial values and beliefs such as familismo, ser bien educado, and respeto (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992); thus, their involvement extends beyond positive engagement in activities, warmth and responsiveness, control (monitoring), and responsibility (process and indirect care), and also

includes monitoring the manifestation of family values among their children (providing direction) and providing for the family unit (financial responsibility). Overall, this study lends support to the idea that traditional western models on father involvement are not inclusive of immigrant fathers, and therefore a model for Latino Immigrant Father Involvement is provided (*Figure 2*). Unlike other fathering frameworks, this model fully considers the Latino culture and these fathers' experiences as immigrants in the U.S. to understand the complexities of Latino immigrant fathers' involvement in raising American children.

**How do immigrant fathers negotiate Latino cultural values in the U.S., and how do fathers interpret their children's receptiveness to their cultural approach?**

While acculturation status is often used to assess the ongoing process of change that occurs when multiple cultures come into contact with one another (Glass & Owen, 2010), the second research question contributes to the literature in that it provides a qualitative account of how Latino immigrant fathers negotiate Latino and U.S. cultural influences. The father involvement literature has well established that paternal involvement is related to positive child and family outcomes; among immigrant fathers, however, sociocultural values about their roles and expectations and social context in the U.S. may differ, and lead to differences in their parenting over time. Latino immigrant fathers in this study understood cultural influences on their parenting to varying degrees. Fathers who immigrated at a much younger age often described stronger U.S. cultural influences (i.e., egalitarian roles, praise etc.) on their fathering practices, while fathers who immigrated at 18 years of age or older often described a blended approach to their fathering, thus incorporating aspects of Latino and U.S. cultural influences. Although acculturation was not measured as part of this study, fathers' reports on how they adopted and negotiated aspects of their culture in the U.S. context resembled the idea of

assimilation and integration across the acculturation continuum. Assimilation, for example, would postulate that Latino immigrant fathers who arrived below the age of 12 have relinquished aspects of their native culture and have adapted to the majority culture, and therefore use these influences in their parenting (Berry, 1980). Latino immigrant fathers who immigrated to the U.S. as adults, however, may have integrated cultural norms from their native culture, as well as those from the U.S. majority culture, and thus demonstrated an integration (biculturalism) of both cultures in their parenting (Berry, 1980).

There was a striking resemblance across fathers' endorsement of U.S. norms that influenced their parenting, primarily transitioning to more egalitarian roles (i.e., "letting go of Machismo"), and incorporating praise, warmth, and affection in their parenting. These findings are consistent with prior qualitative research on Latino immigrant fathers residing in the U.S., who reported more "gender progressive" roles than fathers residing in Mexico (B. Taylor & Behnke, 2005). This may be explained twofold. First, fathers may develop more egalitarian gender roles with increased residency in the U.S., which is known as more of a progressive and egalitarian culture (Leaper & Valin, 1996). In fact, research has found that after living in the U.S. for a period of ten years, immigrant men begin to resemble U.S.-born populations, often leading them to become more egalitarian (B. Taylor & Behnke, 2005). Secondly, scholars have suggested there may be specific characteristics, motivation, and/or circumstances which prompt their immigration to the U.S.; thus, it is possible that more progressive fathers are at greater likelihood to immigrate to a different country (B. Taylor & Behnke, 2005). While an informal association between Latino fathers' age of migration/ number of years residing in the U.S. and adoption of U.S. cultural influences versus a blended approach to fathering was made, this study lacked data measuring acculturation, which in fact makes it difficult to establish why some

fathers maintain some aspects of their Latino culture, while others do not. These findings, however, along with fathers' statements about "letting go of Machismo" suggest that historical depiction of Latino fathers are inaccurately reflecting their involvement and the value they place on their role as fathers.

Another interesting finding is that regardless of fathers' reports on whether they were influenced more by Latino versus U.S. cultural influences, all fathers described some aspect of familismo (i.e., family cohesion, unity, family rituals). Research suggests that familismo is a culture specific value among Latinos that despite acculturation, this population tends to hold this cultural value at a high level of importance (Sabogal et al., 1988). Therefore, despite fathers' immigration to the U.S., they may still equally value family cohesion. This finding is consistent with research on immigrant families, showing that these families' unique challenges (i.e., employment, socioeconomic challenges, language, discrimination) may lead to either closer family relationships or disengagement among the family— both with implications on parenting practices (Reardon-Anderson, Capps, & Fix, 2002). Thus, Latino immigrant fathers in this study may be forming closer family relationships and retaining familismo, which research has shown influences paternal involvement (Glass & Owen, 2010). Maintaining familismo may have further implications for Latino immigrant fathers' role and identity as fathers, such that they may place more importance on their involvement to support their family and may continue to maintain an emotional connection among members of the family (family cohesion)— all supporting their role and identity as fathers.

Latino immigrant fathers also reported an attempt to introduce their children to culture specific traditions, including foods and the Spanish language. Despite their efforts, these fathers described a general impression of resistance, from their U.S. born children, when introduced to

Latino specific traditions. This resistance may be a result of different perceptions between immigrant parents and their U.S. born children. Children of immigrant parents, for example, may be trying to balance the demands of the American culture (i.e., speaking English, music, clothing, food) with the Latino traditions introduced by their parents (i.e., Spanish, traditional dishes) (Zhou, 1997). Immigrant parents, on the other hand, may be focused on trying to retain familial traditions while attempting to move ahead economically in a new society. This form of tension between father and child may come about because children spend a number of hours at school and are exposed to the U.S. culture via their peers and teachers that may allow them to learn the U.S. culture at a faster rate (Auerbach, Silverstein, Zlotnick-Woldenberg, Peguero, & Tacher-Rosse, 2008). Of interest in this study is that Latino immigrant fathers were willingly modifying their Latino cultural traditions to adjust to their children's preference for traditions/norms of the host society. This was particularly true for the practice of Latino traditions (i.e., Christmas traditions), foods, and Spanish language. This form of creating a new culture, as a result of two (Latino and U.S.) cultures coming into contact with one another, is consistent with Auerbach et al., (2008) view of the term *Creolization*, referred to as a process of redefining values and cultural norms— in this case, a distinct cultural adaptation of Latino and American fathering. It is possible that Latino immigrant fathers may be more inclined to change traditions/ rituals/practices for the sake of maintaining close and harmonious relationships within the family (familismo). However, fathers may continue to maintain Latino values (familismo, ser bien educado, respeto), as they may be more significant to this group of fathers and therefore may be less amenable to change. For Latino immigrant fathers in this study, the cultural tensions they experienced were viewed as an opportunity to adapt to their children's cultural preferences and less as an obstacle to overcome. Overall, fathers' sociocultural beliefs about their roles and

expectations may be sensitive to change over time as their children get older, and as social, political and cultural climate of the U.S. change; therefore, research should continue to track the evolution of these changes.

**What barriers and/or challenges do Latino immigrant fathers identify as interfering with their paternal involvement?**

The third research question explores barriers among Latino immigrant fathers, given that researchers studying immigrant populations have found they experience a variety of stressors including, language barriers, underemployment, unemployment, change in their identity roles, and barriers to services that impact their parenting roles (Capps et al., 2010). For many fathers in this study barriers were interrelated. They discussed personal, contextual, and systemic barriers impacting their involvement with their children that were categorized into three different themes: language barriers, immigration status and related barriers, and barriers to understanding U.S. systems. Despite these barriers, Latino fathers used their experiences to guide, teach, and protect their children from undergoing similar hardships; thus, using barriers to guide their use of nontraditional forms of father involvement— providing direction, cultural narratives, consejos.

Consistent with prior research on immigrant men, Latino fathers in this study described barriers related specifically to their immigration status that with it brought challenges to the type of employment, number of hours worked per week, employment across multiple jobs, and attaining housing for their family. This finding can be explained twofold. First, it is possible that fathers lack documentation status to reside in the U.S., which further complicates steady employment and housing. Secondly, fathers were primarily Spanish speaking and therefore may experience barriers to employment that are intertwined with language barriers. English language proficiency has also been associated with educational involvement and participation among

Latino parents, (Schvaneveldt & Behnke, 2012) consistent discipline (Dumka, Roosa, & Jackson, 1997) and parental warmth (Calzada & Eyberg, 2002). Therefore, English language proficiency can also be viewed as a gateway to other forms of positive involvement among immigrant fathers.

Research on immigrant men shows they arrive to the U.S. with a limited education and assume employment in extraneous labor (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006), with much of their employment in construction and agriculture. Both forms of employment place demands on men's physical wellbeing and time. Therefore, although employed, they may still lack physical and financial resources, as well as time and energy that constrain their level of involvement. Some research on Latino immigrant families, however, argues that families may actually have better social and economic stability in the residing country that may increase their ability to execute their parenting roles (Strier & Roer-Strier, 2010). Despite competing views on the impact of immigration to paternal involvement, what is known is that it places additional demands on fathers to provide financially for their family and to adapt to cultural demands and different social supports in a new country— combined, these changing demands may influence their parental involvement (Suárez-Orozco, 2008).

Another interesting finding is that fathers, who immigrated as adults, identified challenges in understanding varying U.S. systems including the education system, health service systems, and the legal system. A case study by Taylor (2006) on group therapy with immigrant Latino fathers found that immigrant men felt disempowered in the U.S., because their children had greater understanding of the U.S. legal system— often threatening their parenting and disciplinary approaches. Though this group of fathers experienced similar barriers, instead of feeling disempowered or frustrated, they recognized the barriers and were making efforts to

overcome them (i.e., learning English, working to provide financially, taking time off to attend school conferences/events); therefore, demonstrating strength and courage to learn and grow alongside their U.S. born children and continue their involvement as fathers.

Despite barriers experienced by Latino immigrant fathers, above all, they described the importance of sharing these experiences with their children. In doing so, they hoped to motivate their children to do well in school, pursue a higher education, and avoid the kind of economic hardships they experienced. The Latino family literature categorizes this kind of informal support as cultural narratives and teachings, also known as *consejos* (Aldoney & Cabrera, 2016) and is considered an important role and responsibility among Latino parents (Goldsmith & Kurpius, 2017). Latino fathers *consejos* were primarily focused on academic success and motivating their children to “be something.” By this fathers referred to pursuing a professional career that would provide them with a better future and a different experience in the U.S. Similar to findings in this study, research on Mexican immigrant parents has found they foster success in their children by sharing about their hardships (past and current) to help their children understand the benefits of being a well educated person in the United States (Goldsmith & Kurpius, 2017). Despite the language and immigration related barriers experienced among Latino immigrant fathers, they made efforts to use these experiences in a productive manner and fought to participate in other forms of involvement with their children— providing direction, cultural narratives, *consejos*.

Overall, Latino immigrant fathers’ involvement is guided by the barriers they experience in the U.S., therefore, researchers and policy makers should consider ways of integrating newcomers to systems in the U.S as it has implication for fathers’ engagement across systems and services their children are a part of and may participate in (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco,

2009). This study, further, adds to the literature because it shows that language barriers among immigrant fathers often becomes the gateway to other forms of involvement such as, participating in educational, medical or health related supports for their children. These same barriers also help to explain why traditional western models of Father Involvement may not always encompass the involvement of immigrant fathers, given they experience many other contextual barriers that interfere with traditional forms of involvement included in western models– such as, indirect care (responsibility).

**What meaning do Latino fathers attribute to experiences with racial tensions, and how do fathers socialize their children to cope with these experiences?**

The fourth research question attempts to add to the parent enculturation literature to understand Latino fathers' experiences with discrimination and how it influences how they socialize their children to the Latino culture. It is clear that Latino immigrant fathers encounter discrimination based on the color of their skin, their language, or immigration status – each event with different implications on how fathers' approach these situations. Despite these experiences, Latino Fathers countered discrimination in varying ways. Many fathers had a strong racial ethnic identity that helped them cope with these experiences in a positive way, yet other fathers utilized humor to deflect stereotypes. In socializing their children to deal with racial tensions, many fathers, relayed the importance of accepting their cultural background, and used that as a tool for their children to build a strong sense of self that would aid them in overcoming challenging social and political dynamics. Yet, other fathers valued *ser bien educado*, and therefore advised their children to accept others, show respect and kindness toward others despite discriminating actions. In other words, a fathers' Social Ecology (cultural knowledge, Latino ethnic identity, and acculturation) informed their parenting approach to help their children understand

discrimination. Although, a fathers' acculturation to the U.S. culture was not directly measured as part of this study—the number of years fathers in this study had been residing in the U.S.—it appeared to be a factor in the type of consejos fathers provided regarding discrimination, such that they focused on either reaffirming their child's identity as Latinos or teaching them to accept others in this country. Overall, this study extends the use of Knight et al.'s Parent Socialization and Ethnic Identity model to understand how a fathers' Social Ecology influences the development of their child's racial ethnic identity, centered on their experiences with racial tensions in the U.S. (1993).

Although research on a father's ethnic-racial socialization practices is widely understudied, fathers in this study demonstrate that they play a critical role in helping their children understand issues regarding race, inequality, and discrimination. Latino immigrant fathers in this study engaged their children in discussions that facilitated an open dialogue about values in the Latino culture, diversity, and nationality. As part of these discussions, fathers promoted their children's tolerance for people from different cultures, and stressed that being discriminated against for being Latino was no reason to treat others the same way. Fathers, overall, are engaging in communication and socialization strategies to protect their children from the effects of discrimination, but also to value and respect the cultural differences of others— an extension of the traditional held beliefs of Latino fathers as being distant and uninvolved.

While most fathers in this study were acknowledging and adapting to discrimination, one particular father refused to acknowledge discriminating acts against him or his children, and instead ignored his daughter's efforts to communicate such actions she was witnessing. According to Swim and Thomas (2006), avoidance coping strategies, such as ignoring discrimination, have been linked to a sense of helplessness and lower self-esteem in children.

Therefore, while this father's efforts to reframe, ignore, and dismiss events of discrimination were perceived as helpful, it can have some devastating outcomes for Latino children and youth—evident by the resistance this father experienced in his discussions with his daughter on discrimination. On the other hand, when parents respond to discrimination in a proactive way through discussion, self-affirmation, and explaining others' misconceptions, these youth tend to have higher levels of self-esteem (Hughes et al., 2006). In light of the outcomes that can come from a parent's ethnic-racial socialization, it is important to support parents in learning to foster effective discussions around discrimination and how to teach effective coping strategies in these situations.

Of the themes reported in this study— Acknowledging Discrimination, Self-Acceptance of Latino Ethnic Identity, Accepting the Diversity of Others, and Reframing Discrimination— three resemble those found in Hughes et al., (2006), such that they also found that parents focused on cultural socialization and prepared their children to expect bias or discrimination from others. In this study, additional themes emerged— reframing discrimination— broadening our understanding of how fathers, in particular, deal with discrimination. Unlike Hughes et al.'s focus on African American parents (2006), thematic differences found in this study may be a result of the focus on a different cultural group of fathers, specifically, and a focus on an immigrant population that is more susceptible to overt discrimination, given social and political dynamics in the U.S.

Overall, Latino immigrant fathers' parenting approaches are influenced by their experiences in the U.S (i.e. discrimination); therefore, it is important to understand racial tensions and discrimination and their impact on Latino immigrant fathers as it holds significant implications for father engagement across systems of care. While fathers in this study did not report a direct impact between their experiences with discrimination and their engagement in

systems their children were a part of (i.e. schools), other studies have found a direct impact between discrimination and participation in educational systems (Jimenez-Castellanos & Gonzalez, 2012). In particular, providers need to examine the policies, practices, and personal biases that may engage or disengage fathers, as these may continue to undermine the strong cultural resources Latino fathers and their families bring that contribute to a diverse society. Future research is also needed to solicit the perspective of youth to understand how they view their discussions of race, culture, and ethnicity with their fathers. This information would potentially shed light on programmatic approaches for teaching parents to have effective conversations with children about discrimination, and promoting healthy coping strategies.

### **Strengths and Limitations of the Study**

There are several strengths to this study. First, the present analysis is based on a sample of immigrant fathers, a population often understudied. Second, it uses father's own self-report about their fathering practices, Latino cultural values, and identity and role as fathers in the U.S. Third, the present study offers a timely analysis of ethnic and racial discrimination, an area that is in need of continued understanding and development. As with all studies, the results of this research must also be interpreted in light of its limitations. First, the relatively small sample size and the fact that all of the participants were Latino immigrants living in the Pacific Northwest region, combined limit the generalizability. Second, findings of this study reveal a positive attitude toward paternal involvement that could be the product of self-selection bias, given that fathers in this study were recruited because of their participation in a strength-based fathering program and that the research was voluntary. It is possible that Latino fathers who are less engaged or involved with their children would be less likely to participate in this type of study. Further, it is important to interpret these results in light of my prior role as a coach to these

fathers, through the implementation of a strength-based fathering program, as this may have influenced these fathers' responses. Third, this study lacked longitudinal data measuring acculturation; therefore, it is difficult to establish why some fathers were more likely to adopt U.S. norms and expectations versus Latino cultural norms. Fourth, this study was limited by the fact that the majority of the fathers were from Mexico and El Salvador, making it difficult for this study to apply to the greater Latino population abroad and within the U.S.

### **Future Direction**

Despite these limitations, this study provides the beginning foundation upon which to build future research. Thus, one recommendation is for future researchers to move beyond "simplistic analyses" of father involvement toward more comprehensive studies looking at cultural variations associated with Latino fathers' multifaceted roles. Fathers' perceptions of their involvement with their children and family, identity, and roles are likely to vary greatly according to their acculturation to the U.S. Other factors such as recent immigration status and socioeconomic status may also influence paternal roles; therefore, it is important to replicate this study with inclusion of fathers from a diverse level of acculturation and socioeconomic backgrounds. Overall, the Latino immigrant fathering literature would benefit from developing greater depth in the following areas: (1) examine how Latino cultural values influence the development of fathers' roles and identities with continued residency in the U.S., (2) consider how perceived barriers impact a father's involvement over time, (3) examine how different forms of a fathers' racial socialization impact Latino children's perceptions of discrimination/racial tensions, and (4) further explore how the Latino Immigrant Father Involvement model outlined in this study (*Figure 2*) generalizes to other Latino immigrant fathers within the U.S. or abroad. Overall, the Latino immigrant fathering literature may benefit from also conducting qualitative

interviews with mothers and children, as it would provide the triangulation needed to examine the similarities and differences in the perception of fathering.

### **Conclusion**

This research moves the conversation beyond a deficit based model of Latino fathering, and instead embraces the strengths they bring to their children and families, and the importance they place on their paternal role. Latino fathers in this study, for example, were more involved with their children and more emotionally attuned than their own fathers had been— demonstrating an intergenerational improvement in Latino father involvement among this group of fathers. Revisiting Knight et al., (1993) model on *Parent Socialization and Latino Ethnic Identity* helps to further explain how Latino immigrant fathers draw from their social ecology (i.e., generational status, Latino cultural knowledge, and acculturation) and from the dominant U.S. culture (joint socialization) to parent their children; contributing to their children’s enculturation to the U.S. Unlike traditional western models that describe factors influencing a fathers’ involvement, Knight et al.’s, model provides a comprehensive look into the cultural complexities facing immigrant fathers in the U.S., particularly those related to their social ecology, joint socialization, and how they may be interrelated with their fathering practices. The latter continues to be an important variable to consider, given that a father’s cultural values in the home may be inconsistent across school and other community contexts that may challenge their parenting approach— as was found with fathers in this study. Lastly, these findings show that fathers were also willing to include “new” teachings and practices into their parenting, showing the complex process of adaptation and becoming bicultural. To conclude, the following is a closing remark from Jose, who described his view on fathering, which is similar to many Latino immigrant fathers interviewed and his views of learning to be a better father— “ [fathering] is a

matter of trying to learn a little more to be able to teach my daughter a little better.” Given the growing Latino population in the U.S., understanding the role of Latino fathers has implications for their children’s development– a growing portion of our future population. Therefore, policy and programmatic work will need to be guided by this implication and consider the value in seeking Latino fathers’ involvement and engagement in research and across contexts.

#### Note

1. Names have been changed to ensure confidentiality.

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## Appendix A

## Father Interview Guide

Section	Questions Asked
I. Cultural background	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Can you tell me a little bit about where you were born and where you grew up?</li> <li>2. What was your family like growing up?</li> <li>3. [Father figure present] How was your father involved growing up?</li> <li>4. [Grandfather present] How was your grandfather involved growing up?</li> <li>5. [For fathers who immigrated to the U.S.] What was your experience like when you first came to the U.S.? In your opinion, how did these experiences influence you when you became a father?</li> <li>6. [For fathers who were raised in the U.S.] What was it like to grow up as a Mexican-American/Latino male in the United States? In your opinion, how did these experiences influence you when you became a father?</li> </ol>
II. Fathering and cultural influences	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tell me a little bit about what it is like to be a Mexican-American/Latino father in the U.S. now?</li> <li>2. In your opinion, what are some of the challenges Mexican-American/Latino fathers face in the U.S.?</li> <li>3. What would you say are strengths that Mexican-American/Latino fathers bring to their children and families?</li> <li>4. [Fathers who had their first child in the U.S.] Tell me about your experience becoming a father in the U.S.</li> </ol>
III. Cultural values and beliefs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What do you see as your involvement in your family? How much of your involvement do you think is influenced by your Mexico/Latin culture?</li> <li>2. How is U.S. culture influencing your role [involvement] as a father?</li> <li>3. How do you think your involvement, as a father, is different/similar than other Mexican-American/Latino fathers?</li> <li>4. As a father, what are the things you value most in your family?</li> <li>5. As a father, what are the things you value most and hope for your children?</li> </ol>

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6. What cultural traditions do you want to pass on to your kids? What are some things you are doing to ensure this is something they learn?
7. How important is it to you that your children speak Spanish (and/or native indigenous language)?
8. In your role as a father, what are some ways that you try to support your kids? [If applicable] Are there barriers you have experienced in trying to provide this support?
9. What are some ways you try to encourage your kids? As you think about your child(ren) growing up, what words would you like them to use to describe you?
10. As a Mexican-American/Latino father, who do you feel supports you in being the father you want to be? How has this changed over time?
- IV. Racial/ethnic tension and structural/institutional barriers
1. As a Mexican-American/Latino male, have you had experiences where you have been discriminated? If so, can you share this experience with me?
2. How does this influence your role as a father? How does it affect the ways you try to get involved as a parent (i.e. services, activities, school)?
3. How does it influence the advice and guidance you give your children? What is the advice you give your children/plan to give them regarding this issue?
4. Is this a challenge you face daily? If so, how do you overcome it?
- V. Cultural constructs
1. [For each construct– Familia, Respeto, Machismo, Ser bien educado] What does \_\_\_\_ mean to you?
2. Of these words/phrases, which is the most important to you as a father?
3. Aside from the list of words/phrases I have here, are there any others that you use within your family?
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Appendix B

Observation protocol

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Father ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview location: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of people present: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle one: Pre-interview      Post-interview

Observation about context, physical environment, setting, people present

Observations during the interview (i.e. body language, eye contact, specific incidents/behaviors during the interview, relevant characteristics of participant, interactions during the interview)

Personal reflections (pre or post interview)

Sketch of interview setting

Notes and consideration for future interviews: