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Exploring Beliefs and Parenting Behaviors in Context: Mexican American Mothers' Cultural
Values and Responses to their Toddlers' Emotions

By

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

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of the

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

DAVIS

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Committee in Charge

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Abstract

A cultural-ecological perspective elucidates how culture informs caregivers' beliefs and values, as well as their caregiving behaviors in response to their children's emotions. In infancy and toddlerhood, caregivers are responsible for externally regulating their children's emotions and physiology through their behavioral responses to children's arousal. Yet, little has been documented about the cultural values and emotion socialization behaviors of Mexican American mothers at this important time for caregiver-child interactions. The overarching goals of this dissertation were to explore (a) Mexican American mothers' cultural values, (b) mothers' behavioral responses to toddlers' difficult emotions (e.g., sadness, fear, anger), and (c) associations between cultural values and emotion socialization behaviors using quantitative data from bilingual English/Spanish interviews with Mexican American mothers. **Paper 1** describes Mexican American mothers' cultural values (i.e., familismo, respeto, religion, traditional gender roles, independence/self-reliance, competition, material success) and applies culturally informed theorizing to understand within-group differences in cultural values based on cultural (i.e., generational status, enculturation, acculturation) and minority status factors (i.e., education, discrimination, and economic hardship). **Paper 2** describes how mothers react to their toddlers' difficult emotions with their supportive or nonsupportive responses and examines associations between Mexican American cultural values (e.g., familismo, respeto, religion, traditional gender roles, and independence/self-reliance) and mothers' emotion socialization behaviors. These two papers are intended to make meaningful contributions by integrating a culturally informed framework to understand Mexican American mothers' beliefs and behaviors, in context, at a fundamental time in their children's development.

General Introduction to Papers

Beginning in infancy, humans' biological, emotional, and behavioral systems are organizing, integrating, and responding to the social environment (Darling & Steinberg, 2017; Posner & Rothbart, 2000; Tucker, Luu, & Pribram, 1995). Infants are reliant on their caregivers and have an evolutionary need to be cared for and loved to survive (Bowlby, 1969). Due to limited self-regulatory and communication capacities, infants and toddlers require caregiver support to stabilize their emotions, physiology, and behavior when they are expressing negative affect, physiological arousal, or unmet needs (Beeghly & Tronick, 2011). Caregivers meet their infants' and toddlers' needs by providing supportive, sensitive caregiving, which involves an accurate perception of the child's signals and prompt, age-appropriate responses (Ainsworth et al., 1974; Bowlby, 1969). Through this dynamic process of destabilization and caregiver support of stabilization, young children develop the capacity to regulate these interconnected biobehavioral systems (Montirosso & McGlone, 2020; Thelen & Smith, 2007). As young children increase their regulatory capacities, they show increases in positive affect (Tronick, 1989) and physiological recovery to distress (Conradt & Ablow, 2010). Their cues motivate parental responses, with crying and negative emotions prompting a range of caregiver reactions, from closeness (Ainsworth, 1979) to anger, anxiety, or withdrawal (Frodi & Lamb, 1980; Hibel, Buhler-Wassmann, Trumbell, & Liu, 2019; Leerkes, Parade, & Gudmundson, 2011). Over time, how caregivers respond to infants' and toddlers' cues sets the stage for long term regulatory abilities. Supportive responses predict children's greater prosocial behavior and fewer internalizing and externalizing symptoms (Leerkes, Blankson, & O'Brien, 2009; Moed, Dix, Anderson, & Greene, 2016). Harsh, punitive, or withdrawn caregiving jeopardizes children's

ability to appropriately manage challenges, increasing internalizing and externalizing symptoms (Feldman et al., 2009; Harden, Buhler, & Parra, 2016; Margolin & Gordis, 2004). Children with better self-regulation skills are more likely to be socially and academically competent and less likely to be anxious, depressed, aggressive, physically ill, unemployed, and use substances later in life (Robson, Allen, & Howard, 2020). This important process of regulating biological, emotional, and behavioral responses begins with caregiver-child interactions in their home and cultural contexts (e.g., Bush & Peterson, 2013; García Coll et al., 1996; Repetti, Reynolds, & Sears, 2015; Thompson, 2019; Vélez-Agosto, Soto-Crespo, Vizcarrondo-Oppenheim, Vega-Molina, & García Coll, 2017).

Culture is dynamic and nuanced and has been described as “the ways of life of a community, extending across several generations, with continual modifications by individuals and generations” (Rogoff, 2011, p. 13). Beliefs and behaviors that are learned, shared, and exhibited by a group of people are an important part of culture (Yosso, 2005). Bioecological frameworks of human development and attachment theory highlight the influence of the socio-cultural context on the quality of caregiver-child interactions, caregivers’ beliefs and values, and caregivers’ responses to children (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Garcia Coll et al., 1996; Stern et al., 2021; Vélez-Agosto et al., 2017). Caregiving behaviors are socialized through cultural norms and caregivers’ early experiences (Sameroff, 2009). For example, based on their location in the world, social positioning, and customs, caregivers differ in the amount of gaze, vocalizations, and bodily contact behavior they express toward their infants (Feldman, 2007b). Culture impacts all aspects of family life, from the places that infants sleep, to the activities that infants experience, to how infant cues are interpreted, to how caregivers respond to infant cues (Bornstein et al., 2017; Campos & Kim, 2017; Kuchirko & Tamis-LeMonda, 2019; Vélez-

Agosto et al., 2017). Though infants' and caregivers' regulatory systems are responsive to context, much of the existing research has been conducted out of context, both physically (i.e., research laboratories) and theoretically (i.e., ignoring social factors; Shiffman, Stone, & Hufford, 2008). Researchers need to embrace the complexity of studying cultural context (Campos & Kim, 2017; McCall, 2005).

In the United States, caregivers are socializing their infants within a broader social system of institutionalized power and oppression, where people are stratified and marginalized based on intersecting social categories such as race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, immigration, and socioeconomic status (SES; Causadias & Umaña-Taylor, 2018; Crenshaw, 1989; Collins, 1986; DuBois, 1903, 1989; hooks, 2000). Caregiver-child interactions can be conceptualized as reflecting an “adaptive culture - a mix of history, traditions, and adaptive responses to present contextual demands - and not solely as individual patterns of interactions” (Garcia Coll et al., 1996, pg. 1908; Perez-Brena et al., 2018). Socially marginalized communities, including the Mexican American community, have cultural wealth, including beliefs and behaviors, that promote positive outcomes (Yosso, 2005). Culturally grounded research that centers Mexican American caregivers is needed to understand the contexts that children are adapting to as they develop.

Recent growth in the U.S. Latinx population has been driven by the birth of new babies. From 2010 to 2019, 9.3 million Latinx newborns were born in the U.S. and, in 2017, 54% of immigrant children in the U.S. were Latinx (Child Trends Databank, 2017; Krogstad & Noe-Bustamante, 2021). Mexicans and Mexican Americans make up 62% of the U.S. Latinx population (Krogstad & Noe-Bustamante, 2021). Mexican Americans live between (at least) two cultures and mothers are raising their children as they integrate these two cultures (Harkness &

Super, 2020; Parra Cardona et al., 2012). The following dissertation extends the literature and includes mothers and toddlers from Mexican American cultural backgrounds to understand the within-group diversity of cultural beliefs and parenting behaviors.

Understanding caregivers' beliefs, thoughts, and feelings may be captured most accurately through self-reported methods that document the individuals' subjective cognitions and perceptions (Repetti, Wang, & Sears, 2013). Thus, Paper 1 explored mothers' self-reported Mexican American cultural values and implemented culturally informed theorizing (White, Knight, & Roosa, 2015) to understand how cultural factors, such as generational status, enculturation, acculturation, and minority status experiences like discrimination and economic hardship predict the endorsement of cultural values. Paper 1 assessed associations among maternal experiences and the cultural values that underlie parents' motivations and behaviors, while avoiding overgeneralizing their experiences. This research addresses a gap in the scientific literature about the cultural values of bicultural Mexican American mothers of infants. The process of designing programs with the cultural values of the community has proven to improve access and uptake of services, which is especially important among Latinx families who are more likely to be excluded from services (Parra Cardona et al., 2021). Communicating these findings on cultural values and collaborating with intervention scientists has the potential to improve family services for Mexican Americans living in northern California.

Caregivers' responses to children's emotions have important consequences for child development (Buhler-Wassmann, Hibbel, Fondren, & Valentino, 2021). Given that culture influences the extent to which parents would see children's emotions as appropriate and the types of responses they would engage in, scholars have called for explorations of cultural differences in emotion socialization behaviors (Eisenberg, 2020; Raval & Walker, 2019; Hajal & Paley,

2020). Paper 2 attended to this by describing the predominant emotion socialization behaviors of Mexican American mothers in response to their toddlers' experiences of difficult emotions such as anger, sadness, and fear (Fabes et al., 2002). Further, Paper 2 expanded Paper 1's findings by examining how cultural values predict supportive and nonsupportive emotion socialization behaviors. It sought to illuminate cultural strengths that may foster supportive responses to children's negative emotions in Mexican American families.

The present studies documented and centered the perspectives and experiences of Mexican American mothers, especially as they relate to cultural processes, including cultural values and caregiver behaviors in response to their children's emotions (Eisenberg, Hernández, & Spinrad, 2017; McCubbin, 2006; White et al., 2013). These papers contribute to my research program of interest, which is focused on how caregivers are nurturing their children's emotional and physiological wellbeing and what systemic, interpersonal, and intrinsic factors support them or challenge them. The project has theoretical and practical significance given that increased knowledge of Mexican American cultural values and parenting practices has the potential to inform researchers and practitioners who seek to build trusting relationships with caregivers aligned with their cultural values and promote healthful, culturally competent strategies for improving caregiving and caregiver-infant relationships. These findings may provide an evidence base for designing culturally relevant programs and policies to support caregivers in raising healthy infants within their communities. Both papers are formatted with an Introduction, Method, Results, Discussion, and Reference section.

Paper 1

Culturally informed theorizing about bicultural Mexican American mothers' values

Culture can be thought of as “the *ways of life* of a community, extending across several generations, with continual modifications by individuals and generations” (Rogoff, 2011, p. 13). Thus, culture is dynamic, situational, and changes over time (Causadias & García Coll, 2022). Theories of human development, including ecocultural theory and the integrative model, explain that child development occurs within a cultural context (Fuller & García Coll, 2010; Worthman, 2016). Patterns of affect, behaviors, and cognition are socialized directly and indirectly by families, communities, and systems (White et al., 2021). Mothers are often the main socializers of culture for children and maternal culture guides caregiver- and child-related outcomes, beginning in infancy (Buhler-Wassmann & Hibel, 2021; Hrdy, 2000). Among Mexican American families, mothers’ values and ethnic socialization are the primary influence on their children’s value system (Knight et al., 2011). Understanding caregivers’ beliefs is essential to understanding the social and cultural factors that influence the development of children.

Immigrant families integrate and adapt to the cultures of their countries of origin and their new home countries. People who identify as Mexican American share the same ethnicity and are part of both Mexican and U.S. American communities. This bicultural experience has been insightfully described as juggling cultures and living at the borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987). Being biculturally competent allows people to respond in behavioral, affective, and cognitive ways to meet the demand of both heritage and host cultures (LaFromboise et al., 1993). The process of adapting and identifying with the heritage Mexican culture is called enculturation, while the process of adapting and identifying with the host U.S. American culture is known as acculturation (Gonzales et al., 2002). Enculturation and acculturation occur in parallel, over time, within-individuals and throughout various cultural domains including the development of values (Knight et al., 2018; White et al., 2018). Bicultural individuals adapting to both cultures have

knowledge of and facility with the beliefs and values of heritage Mexican and host U.S. American cultural systems (Dalal Safa et al., 2021; LaFromboise et al., 1993).

Mexican American Cultural Values

Important Mexican cultural values include familismo, respeto, religion, and traditional gender roles (Brophy-Herb et al., 2016; Knight et al., 2011; Morelen & Thomassin, 2013). Familismo encompasses beliefs and behaviors emphasizing the centrality of family, turning to family for support, comfort, and resources, as well as feeling obligated to give back to the family (Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam, 1999; Knight et al., 2010; Sabogal et al., 1987). Valuing familismo translates into factoring family opinions and wellbeing into important life decisions, committing to family over individual needs, and supporting family in physical, emotional, and financial ways (Calderon-Tena, Knight, & Carlo, 2011; Campos et al., 2014; Halgunseth et al., 2006; Negy & Woods, 1992). Respeto refers to being well-mannered, polite, treating people with respect, and especially, the importance of children to deferring to their parents' and elders' wisdom on decisions (Calzada, Fernandez, & Cortes, 2010; Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Dixon, Graber, & Brooks-Gunn, 2008). The goal of respeto is to maintain interpersonal harmony (Halgunseth et al., 2006). Religious values indicate spiritual beliefs and having faith in a higher power and prayer (Knight et al., 2010; Morgan Consoli & Llamas, 2013). Most Mexican people grow up in Catholic and other Christian denomination households (Flores, 2013; Morgan Consoli & Llamas, 2013). Lastly, the sociocultural scripts of traditional Mexican gender roles privilege a heteronormative family structure with a loving, sacrificing mother and a powerful, supreme father (Nuñez et al., 2016). Mexican women are expected to be protected, while Mexican men are expected to be the financial breadwinners and heads of the household (Knight et al., 2010). Overall, Mexican cultural values of familismo, respeto, religion, and traditional gender roles

reflect a culture characterized by interdependent relationships and collectivism (Campos & Kim, 2017).

Mexican Americans have highlighted dominant U.S. cultural values as independence and self-reliance, material success, and separating oneself through competition and personal achievement (Knight et al., 2010). What Mexican American groups viewed as dominant U.S. cultural values are in line with what white, non-Latinx, upper middle-class U.S. Americans list as their important values (e.g., self-direction and individualism; Doran & Littrell, 2013; Markus, 2017). The dominant U.S. American capitalist structure shapes beliefs that people are autonomous individuals, independent, and free from collective control (Hook & Markus, 2020). Valuing independence and self-reliance refers to being able to take care of yourself and solve your own problems, without being dependent on others (Knight et al., 2010). Valuing material success refers to the belief that having a lot of money is linked to earning respect from others and happiness and that children should be taught to have a lot of money (Knight et al., 2010). People who value competition and personal achievements place importance on being better than others, getting ahead, winning, and accomplishing goals (Knight et al., 2010). Dominant U.S. cultural narratives center on personal choice and individual responsibility and these narratives have systemic implications (e.g., limited government intervention; Hook & Markus, 2020).

Culturally Informed Theorizing about Predictors of Cultural Values

The current study aims to explore maternal beliefs and values that are thought to set the stage for their infants' development and guide their parenting behavior. Asking questions about how Mexican American mothers integrate values from both Mexican and U.S. cultures is an example of culturally informed theorizing (White et al., 2021). Building from the framework of culturally informed theorizing, I explore differences in traditional Mexican and dominant U.S.

cultural values based on cultural variables (e.g., enculturation, acculturation, generational status) and minority status variables (e.g., discrimination, economic hardship, education). These factors have been identified as important considerations for cultural socialization research (Parke & Buriel, 1998).

Mexican American parents raise their children as they integrate these two cultures and cultural models of parenting reflect changes in enculturation, acculturation, and generational status (Fuller & García Coll, 2010; Harkness & Super, 2020; Parra Cardona et al., 2012). Research has uncovered that, across generational status, Mexican American mothers valued aspects of agency, conformity, and relatedness. However, there were differences in the degrees of importance of values. For example, later generation Mexican American mothers valued promoting autonomy in their children more than earlier generation mothers, though earlier generation mothers valued teaching children obedience and manners more than later generation mothers (Suizzo et al., 2019). The more educated mothers were, the less they valued teaching obedience and manners; however, this association was stronger for third generation mothers than for second generation mothers (Suizzo et al., 2019). First-generation Mexican parents are more likely to identify with traditional Mexican values whereas their second-generation children are more likely to identify with dominant U.S. values and traditions (Coatsworth, Pantin, & Szapocznik, 2002). Research into Mexican American cultural values from a developmental science perspective posits that adolescents have greater exposure to and interactions with dominant U.S. American culture, and thus, endorse more individualistic values and less heritage Mexican values than their parents (Gonzalez et al., 2018). Not all Mexican American adolescents follow the same trajectory in the development of their values, with some moving toward and others away from heritage values (Gonzalez et al., 2018; Matsunaga et al., 2010). As the

adolescents who were surveyed and their contemporaries transition into parenting, their values will be important for the new generation of infants' development. The current study explores the values of Mexican American emerging adults who have become parents themselves.

Specifically, I will examine the degree to which the mothers agree with Mexican heritage values and dominant U.S. values, and which values are most salient to them. Further, I will assess how the cultural variables (e.g., enculturation, acculturation, and generational status) are associated with variation toward and away from Mexican heritage values and dominant U.S. values.

Mexican American women are constructing their identities within a context of structural inequality shaped by systemic oppression and privilege (Viruell Fuentes et al., 2012). Mexican American immigrant families face barriers and disadvantages that put them at risk for poverty, low paying jobs, and limited educational opportunities (Non et al., 2019). Further, low-income Mexican origin families are often the target of discrimination in the U.S. These inequalities exacerbate parenting stress and may affect ideologies and maternal cultural values (Halgunseth et al., 2006; Naumann, Benet-Martinez, & Espinoza, 2017; Parke et al., 2004). Importantly, mothers adapt to their contexts and show resilience by maintaining their cultural strengths in the face of societal marginalization (Kasser, 2011; Perez-Brena, Rivas-Drake, Toomey, & Umaña-Taylor, 2018). For example, it is possible that mothers with lower financial resources place more value on familismo, because they either rely on their families for support or have higher obligations to support their families (Toyokawa & Toyokawa, 2019). Black feminist scholars have introduced the prism of intersectionality, which recognizes that each person's identity includes multiple social factors that may privilege or marginalize the individual in different ways within the context of white supremacist capitalist patriarchy (Crenshaw, 1990; Collins, 1990; hooks, 2000). The current study considers the Mexican American mothers' social positioning in

relation to environmental stressors and the systems of power within the U.S. context by examining the associations among minority status variables (e.g., discrimination, economic hardship, and education) and the endorsement of Mexican heritage and dominant U.S. cultural values (Cole, 2008; McCall, 2005; Parra & Hastings, 2018; Torres et al., 2018).

Overall, identifying as bicultural is not a homogeneous experience and individuals create multiple representations of what it means to be Mexican and Mexican American (Benet-Martínez et al., 2021). Cultural values offer a window into understanding the process of bicultural experiences (Negy & Woods, 1992). The extent to which mothers are internalizing cultural values associated with either Mexican or dominant U.S. culture may depend on how strongly they identify as Mexican and/or U.S. American (Kiang & Fuglini, 2009; Knight et al., 2011). Bicultural Mexican American people have been socialized into both cultures; therefore, their Mexican heritage and U.S. American host values are expected to be positively associated with each other (Knight et al., 2010). As mothers adapt to their context, they go through the process of choosing which values to uphold from their Mexican culture and which ones to adopt from their U.S. American culture (Halgunseth et al., 2006; Parke & Buriel, 1998). This paper puts cultural values into a broader context by considering the associations among values and cultural variables (e.g., enculturation, acculturation, and generational status) and minority status variables (e.g., discrimination, economic hardship, and educational status). These within-group differences contribute to a variety of ways that parents adapt to their environment, what they value, how they respond to their children, and ultimately shape their children's development (Garcia Coll et al., 1996; Haft et al., 2021; Hill et al., 2003; Suizzo et al., 2019).

Methods

Participants

This study included 111 mothers who identify as Mexican American ($M_{\text{age}}=22.98$ years, $SD=3.83$, 18-38 years old). Mothers were recruited as part of the California Babies Project, a longitudinal study of child development within Mexican American families funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. Data for this study were collected during mothers' first California Babies Project visit between 2016 and November 8, 2021 ($N=78$ from the 6-month visit, $N=33$ from the 18-month visit) with their child that participated in the study ($M_{\text{age}}=10.39$ months, $SD=6.00$, 3.78-27.93 months). The families reported an average annual income of \$30,001-\$35,000, with a wide range from less than \$5,000 to \$95,001+. Demographic information is available in Table 1.

Measures

Cultural Values

Mothers completed the Mexican American Cultural Values scale (MACV; Knight et al., 2010), which includes 50 value-based statements about familismo, respeto, religion, traditional gender roles, competition and personal achievement, independence and self-reliance, and material success. The familismo subscale was created using the means of the familismo support, obligations, and referent subscales. Examples of the statements in the MACV scale include, "It is important for family members to show their love and affection to one another," and, "Religion should be an important part of one's life." Mothers answered how much they agree with each value statement on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 = "Not at all," 2 = "A little," 3 = "Somewhat," 4 = "Very much," and 5 = "Completely." A composite of Mexican heritage values was created by combining the means of familismo (e.g., support, referent, obligations), respeto, religion, traditional gender roles. A composite of U.S. mainstream values was created by combining the means of independence & self-reliance, competition, and material success. Reliability

coefficients (α) were 0.87 for familismo total, 0.82 for respeto, 0.88 for religion, 0.61 for traditional gender roles, 0.66 for material success, 0.56 for independence and self-reliance, 0.67 for competition and personal achievement, 0.92 for Mexican heritage values, and 0.74 for U.S. mainstream values.

Cultural variables

Enculturation

Enculturation was measured based on the Mexican Orientation Subscale (MOS) of the 12-item Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans II-Brief (Bauman, 2005). Items included “I speak Spanish,” “I enjoy Spanish language TV,” and “My thinking is done in the Spanish language.” Mothers responded on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 is “Not at all,” 2 is “A little or not very often,” 3 is “Moderately,” 4 is “Much or very often,” and 5 is “Extremely often or always” ($M=3.76$, $SD=0.95$, $\alpha=0.89$).

Acculturation

Acculturation was measured based on the Anglo Orientation Subscale (AOS) of the 12-item Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans II-Brief (Bauman, 2005). Items included “I speak English,” “I associate with Anglos,” and “My thinking is done in the English language.” Mothers responded on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 is “Not at all,” 2 is “A little or not very often,” 3 is “Moderately,” 4 is “Much or very often,” and 5 is “Extremely often or always” ($M=4.02$, $SD=0.73$, $\alpha=0.77$).

Generational Status

Mothers reported their generational status. First generation was measured as answering yes to “You were born in Mexico or another country” ($n=41$). Second generation was measured as answering yes to “You were born in U.S.A; either parent born in Mexico or other country”

(n=54). Third generation was measured as answering yes to “You were born in U.S.A, both parents born in U.S.A and all grandparents born in Mexico or other country” (n=9). Fourth generation was measured as answering yes to “You and your parents born in U.S.A and at least one grandparent born in Mexico or other country with remainder born in the U.S.A” (n=3). Fifth generation was measured as answering yes to “You and your parents born in the U.S.A and all grandparents born in the U.S.A” (n=3; 1 missing).

Minority Status Variables

Discrimination

Mothers reported their perceptions and experiences of discrimination using statements that reflect discrimination and prejudice that Mexican or Mexican Americans might experience in their neighborhoods, schools, and workplace. The original measures were developed with African American samples and were adapted for use with a Mexican American sample (Hughes and Dodge, 1997; James, Lovato, & Cropanzano, 1994). Items include “People assume that you are not as smart or capable as others because you are Mexican/Mexican-American” and “You are treated with less respect than other people because you are Mexican/Mexican-American.”

Mothers responded about their experiences with discrimination on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 is “Almost never or never;” 2 is “Sometimes;” 3 is “A lot of the time;” 4 is “Almost always or always” ($M=1.64$, $SD=0.45$, $\alpha=0.87$).

Economic Hardship

Unmet Needs. Mothers answered about being able to afford the kind of home, clothing, car, food, and medical care that their family needs using a 4-point Likert scale where 1 is “Not at all true” and 4 is “Very true.” These items were reverse coded and averaged. A higher score refers to more unmet needs. ($M=1.66$, $SD=0.73$, $\alpha=0.89$).

Difficulties Making Ends Meet. Mothers answered about difficulties making ends meet. They answered the question, “Over the past 3 months, how much difficulty have you had with paying your bills” and responded with a 4-point Likert scale where 1 is “No difficulty at all” and 4 is “A great deal of difficulty.” They also answered, “Over the past 3 months, generally, at the end of each month did you end up...” where 1 is “With more than enough money left over;” 2 is “With some money left over;” 3 is “Somewhat short on money;” 4 is “Very short on money.” These responses were averaged and a higher score refers to more difficulties making ends meet. ($M=3.80$, $SD=1.41$, $\alpha=0.71$).

Educational status

Mothers reported the last grade they completed in school from 1=elementary to sixth grade ($n=0$), 2=seventh to eighth grade ($n=0$), 3=ninth to twelfth ($n=66$), 4=one to two years of college ($n=32$), 5=three to four years of college ($n=3$), or 6=college graduate or higher ($n=9$; 1 missing). A higher score refers to higher educational attainment.

Procedure

The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board. Data were collected from the California Babies Project, a longitudinal study on Mexican American family stress and resilience. Recruitment for the California Babies Project initially stemmed from a large, in-depth longitudinal study called the California Families Project, which began in 2006 with a group of fifth graders and their families in Northern California. California Families Project youth who became parents were invited to participate in the California Babies Project. Employing a snowball recruitment strategy, the California Babies Project staff encouraged participants to invite their families and friends to join the project. Lastly, participants were also recruited from posters at community establishments (i.e., restaurants, libraries, and grocery stores). Bilingual

Spanish/English project staff called families, who were eligible for participation if their infants were between three- and nine-months-old or fifteen- and twenty-months old (i.e., 6 month visit and 18 month visit, respectively). Informed consent was obtained by the mothers at the first visit, which took place in person or, after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, over the phone. Mothers answered various questionnaires about their cultural values, ethnic identity, and demographics. At the end of the visit, they were compensated \$100 for their time.

Analytical Strategy

First, I analyzed descriptive statistics and preliminary analyses for all cultural values, as well as Mexican cultural values and mainstream U.S. cultural values subscales, using SPSS Version 27. I ran a paired sample t-test to test for significant differences between traditional Mexican heritage values and dominant U.S. values. Next, I used R to run multiple linear regressions with the independent variables, including acculturation, enculturation, generational status, educational status, discrimination, and economic hardship (e.g., difficulties making ends meet, unmet needs), to understand how these variables were associated with Mexican heritage cultural values and U.S. mainstream cultural values. The multiple linear regressions include (1) Mexican heritage values as the dependent variable, and enculturation, acculturation, generational status, educational status, discrimination, unmet needs, and difficulties making ends meet as the independent variables; (2) Dominant U.S. values as the dependent variable and enculturation, acculturation, generational status, educational status, discrimination, unmet needs, and difficulties making ends meet as the independent variables.

Results

Cultural Values Descriptive Statistics

Mothers reported familismo ($M=3.35$, $SD=0.42$) as their highest value, followed by religion ($M=3.33$, $SD=0.59$), respeto ($M=3.32$, $SD=0.62$), independence and self-reliance ($M=2.87$, $SD=0.63$), competition ($M=2.42$, $SD=0.76$), traditional gender roles ($M=2.07$, $SD=0.70$), and material success ($M=1.64$, $SD=0.54$). Of all the familismo subscales, mothers endorsed support the most ($M=3.62$, $SD=0.46$), followed by obligations ($M=3.31$, $SD=0.54$) and referent ($M=3.18$, $SD=0.57$). Bivariate correlations yielded significant and positive associations between Mexican heritage values and dominant U.S. values ($r= 0.32$, $p=0.001$), but mothers endorsed the composite of Mexican heritage values ($M=3.12$, $SD=0.40$) significantly more than dominant U.S. values ($M=2.31$, $SD=0.46$; $t(109) = 16.93$, $p<0.001$; See Table 2).

Examining Cultural and Minority Status Variables to Predict Cultural Values

A multiple linear regression was used to predict Mexican cultural values based on mothers' enculturation, acculturation, generational status, educational attainment, discrimination, unmet needs and difficulties making ends meet ($F(7,78) = 2.40$, $p=0.03$, adjusted $R^2=0.10$). Analyses yielded significant and positive associations between generational status and Mexican heritage cultural values ($B=0.14$, $p=0.02$), though there were no significant links with enculturation or acculturation. Both discrimination ($B=0.19$, $p=0.04$) and unmet needs ($B=0.03$, $p=0.04$) predicted stronger Mexican heritage cultural values; however, education and difficulties making ends meet were not significantly associated. See Table 3.

A multiple linear regression was used to predict dominant U.S. cultural values based on mothers' enculturation, acculturation, generational status, educational status, discrimination, unmet needs, and difficulties making ends meet ($F(7,78)=2.79$, $p=0.01$; adjusted $R^2=0.13$). Analyses yielded no significant associations between dominant U.S. values and cultural variables (e.g., generational status, enculturation, or acculturation). However, discrimination ($B=0.31$,

$p=0.004$) predicted stronger dominant U.S. cultural values. Education, unmet needs, and difficulties making ends meet were not significantly associated. See Table 4.

Discussion

This descriptive, exploratory study offers a contextualized understanding of the cultural values that Mexican American mothers of infants are internalizing and integrating from both Mexican and U.S. American culture. Few studies have explored the values of bicultural Mexican American mothers of young children, even though research has supported that mothers are the main cultural socializers (Tsai et al., 2015; Knight et al., 2011). A mother's cultural identity informs her behavior with her infants and organizes the opportunities and constraints in the infants' developmental setting (Rogoff, 2003); thus, caregiver-infant interactions are shaped by culture (Buhler-Wassmann & Hibel, 2021; Feldman & Masalha, 2007). Bicultural identity development is a process of being exposed to two cultural systems and adapting to these systems (Dalal Safa & Umaña-Taylor, 2021). While this is an ongoing lifelong endeavor, adolescence and young adulthood are sensitive periods for identity formation. The Mexican American mothers in this study, most of whom are in their early twenties, are simultaneously determining their identities as they parent their infants. They have internalized and endorsed both traditional Mexican and dominant U.S. American values.

This group of bicultural Mexican American mothers report higher levels of traditional Mexican values such as respeto, familismo, and religion. This suggests that they have strong connections with their Mexican heritage (Knight et al., 2011). Overall, mothers endorse traditional Mexican cultural values at higher rates than the dominant U.S. values. They are not alone in maintaining a strong connection to their heritage culture. In a research study of 48 Latina mothers from Mexico and the Dominican Republic, mothers highlighted respeto,

familismo, and religion as the most important values to pass onto their children (Calzada et al., 2010). Further, a recent report documents that 77% of Latinx U.S. Americans say they are very familiar with their origins and 71% say they feel a strong connection with the cultural origin of their family (Cohn, Brown, & Lopez, 2021). Latinx U.S. Americans see their country of origin as central to their identity. Altogether, these Mexican American mothers living in the U.S. embody a bicultural cultural model, espousing both traditional Mexican and dominant U.S. values (Aldoney & Cabrera 2016; Kagitcibasi, 2005; Suizzo et al., 2019).

The most prominent values endorsed by this group are likely to lead to benefits for the mothers themselves and their families. Valuing familismo has been associated with fewer depressive symptoms, attenuating perceived stress, greater thriving, more supportive coparenting behavior, and more shared positive emotion between parents and toddlers (Corona et al., 2017; Lindsey, 2018; Lindsey, 2022; Morgan Consoli et al., 2016; Stein et al., 2015). Mothers' respeto has been linked to their parenting behaviors (i.e., higher sensitivity and cognitive stimulation) and seems to promote toddlers' positive moods and inhibit negative mood (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2020). More salient religious beliefs may offer parents more hope, resilience, and thriving when dealing with adverse situations (Henderson, Uecker, & Stroope, 2016; Morgan Consoli et al., 2011; Morgan Consoli et al., 2016). Religion has been associated with decreased parenting stress and increased satisfaction among predominantly white U.S. American young parents (Henderson et al., 2016). Though Mexican heritage values are not exclusively associated with positive outcomes, this link between cultural values and positive parenting has sparked a call to continue theorizing about the development of cultural values and the processes through which they influence healthy family development (Corona et al., 2017).

A good starting point to build these theories is the integrative model of child development of ethnically and racially diverse children, where social positioning and stratification are considered at the core of child development (García Coll et al., 1996; Stein, Gonzales, García Coll, & Prandoni, 2016). In the United States, people are stratified based on race, ethnicity, gender, social class, and immigration status (i.e., foreign, undocumented, and migrant). Culturally competent research endeavors must contend with issues of power, social stratification, and historical inequality. In this study, I employ culturally informed theorizing and intersectionality frameworks to explore how this group of Mexican American mothers who share the same gender and ethnicity differ in cultural orientation (e.g., enculturation, acculturation, generational status) and experiences of oppression and inequity (e.g., discrimination, economic hardship, limited education) that may contribute to their socialization and cultural values.

Models of minority stress posit that racism, prejudice, discrimination, and oppression, and the residential, economic, social, and psychological segregation that ensues, often inhibit ethnically and racially diverse people from attaining positive developmental competencies (Myers, 2009; Parra & Hastings, 2020). At the same time, belonging to a racial or ethnic community often promotes healthy child outcomes as it socializes cultural values, pride, and a connection to traditions and legacies. Families adapt their culture and interactions to history, traditions, and context (Garcia Coll et al., 1996). It is interesting to note that, for these Mexican American mothers living with lower socioeconomic status, the least important values were material success and traditional gender roles. Experiences of marginalization by dominant power structures in society may strengthen Mexican American mothers' cultural strengths and values (Lozada et al., 2022; Perez-Brena et al., 2018). This study identifies contextual forces that are promoting and inhibiting cultural belief systems.

This exploratory work found that minority status variables like discrimination and economic hardship were linked with mothers' Mexican heritage values, and discrimination was also linked with mothers' dominant U.S. cultural values. Recent research has identified differences in the consequences of adversity among Mexican American youth living in Northern California based on their ethnic-racial identity and coping strategies (Stein et al., 2022). The current study adds to the literature by illuminating positive associations between adversity (i.e., discrimination and economic hardship) and Mexican American cultural values. The correlational nature of the study makes it impossible to provide evidence about causality; however, experiencing challenges like greater economic hardship and discrimination could lead people to draw on their Mexican cultural values as a source of resilience. It should be noted that a study on Latino adolescents more broadly showed that familismo had protective effects for youth's mental health, but that discrimination still continued to cause harm (Stein et al., 2015). To understand the link between discrimination and dominant U.S. American values, one potential hypothesis is that families might endorse values like independence, competition, and material success to adapt to the dominant culture in an attempt to minimize further experiences of discrimination. This would be an example of assimilation, whereby the dominant U.S. context forces immigrants to adopt its values to gain social acceptance and protect against alienation. Another potential interpretation is that the women who have more dominant U.S. American values find themselves in contexts where they are more likely to be discriminated against, which are likely mixed or predominantly white spaces.

Generational status and experiences of enculturation and acculturation did not map onto traditional Mexican or U.S. mainstream values in expected ways. Generational status was positively associated with more Mexican heritage cultural values. Though mothers with more

enculturation would be expected to report higher levels of traditional Mexican values or more acculturation to report higher levels of mainstream U.S. values, there were no such associations. The enculturation and acculturation scales are focused on language and describe people who speak, write, and consume media in Spanish as more enculturated and who speak, write, and consume media in English as more acculturated. Speaking Spanish enables people to connect with other members of the Mexican and Latinx community, especially elders, who speak Spanish and occasionally indigenous languages but not English. Speaking English in the U.S. grants access to educational, employment, and social opportunities. This study finds that bilingual mothers, monolingual English, and monolingual Spanish mothers in the sample are just as likely to endorse Mexican and dominant U.S. values. In other words, no matter the language or media that they interact with, mothers are reporting similar cultural values. These results suggest that even as languages may change, heritage values can still be maintained and held.

An important implication for future research and intervention is that language may not be a sufficient indicator for understanding these complex experiences of enculturation and acculturation. Future research should include other culturally significant practices, such as celebrating Mexican holidays and visiting Mexico. Further, researchers and practitioners need to go above and beyond translating materials or interventions that were developed with another cultural sample. Instead, research and programs (e.g., preventions and interventions) should be rooted in the cultures of the communities they are intended to serve. For example, Parra-Cardona and team (2019) added sections to their parenting interventions for Mexican American parents that addressed experiences of biculturalism, immigration, and discrimination. This adaptation led to an uptake in services from a hard-to-reach group. Thus, culturally informed theorizing and

exploring the important cultural values of a community can strengthen society's ability to support Mexican American families.

The current study explores what it means to identify with both heritage Mexican and national U.S. American cultures (Dalal Safa & Umaña-Taylor, 2021). Bicultural people do not have to choose between being one or the other and instead incorporate values from both cultures into their ways of thinking. Though many of us experience the dissonance of not feeling Mexican enough or U.S. American enough, there is a unique strength in being culturally competent in both contexts. Bicultural theorists have described the ability to respond to social cues and demands by shifting cultural models as frame switching (Dalal Safa & Umaña-Taylor, 2021; Hong et al., 2000). Being at the intersection of both of these ethnic identities and internalizing values from both cultures may enable people to be more adept at juggling the cultures and connecting with people from both. Exploring Mexican American cultural values in context provides a nuanced approach to understanding patterns in culture. Integrating a bicultural identity and viewing both cultures as compatible and complementary has been associated with better physical and mental health outcomes, such as lower perceived stress and less pronounced cortisol reactivity (Dalal Safa & Umaña-Taylor, 2021; Yim et al., 2019). Scholars have suggested that cultural harmony between Mexican and U.S. American cultures contributes to resilience even in the context of discrimination (Yim et al., 2019).

Is it the best of both worlds? In this sample, being respectful, caring for and prioritizing family, and faith were the most important values, with self-reliance and personal achievement as secondary. This is aligned with one of the only other studies of values among Mexican-origin mothers in the U.S. that found they simultaneously value agency, conformity, and relatedness (Suizzo et al., 2019). On the other hand, a national survey from 2014 showed that two-thirds of

children in the U.S. reported that their parents would value achievement over caring (Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2014). The report from Harvard's Graduate School of Education (2014) states, "A healthy society depends on adults who are able to take responsibility for diverse members of their communities and to put, at pivotal times, the common good before their own" (pg.5). Thus, mothers who prioritize supporting their community, the quality of interpersonal relationships (i.e., respect), and religious beliefs above independence, competition, and personal achievement may be more likely to teach their children to care for others before themselves and this could contribute to a healthier society.

Strengths and Limitations

Questionnaires like the Mexican American Cultural Values (MACV) scale assess people's values by asking them how much they agree with value-based statements. In their work on personal and cultural values, D'Andrade (2008) efficiently summed up the limitations and strengths of this research method. Though "the same words mean different things to different people...the most efficient way to find out what people think is to ask them" (D'Andrade, 2008, p.13). The current study asked mothers about their alignment with important Mexican and dominant U.S. American values using a scale developed with Mexican American communities; however, it did not provide an exhaustive list of cultural values that are relevant for Mexican American mothers. For example, *simpatía* - the tendency to prefer warm positive reactions and avoid conflict - is an important value among Mexican American and Latinx communities that is reflected in their behavior throughout research studies (Acevedo et al., 2020). One element of *simpatía*, the warmth and positive expressivity, has been associated with Latino cultural orientation (Acevedo et al., 2020). Though a tool has been created to measure *simpatía* (Acevedo et al., 2020), it was not included in this study.

In the current study, the strength, or lack thereof, in the reliability of the specific value subscales sheds light on the mothers' beliefs systems. For example, familismo, respeto, and religion are all strongly reliable suggesting that these mothers are consistently and pervasively identifying these values. The values of traditional gender roles and independence, and to a lesser extent material success and competition, have lower reliability among the mothers in this study, despite the MACV scale being developed within a Mexican American community in the southwestern United States. The current study's results may indicate generational or regional shifts in culture and values (Cabrera, 2022). For example, there may be elements of traditionally held beliefs in gender roles that are being maintained, and others that are becoming obsolete. To illustrate, mothers in the current study agreed more with "Mothers are the main people responsible for raising children" ($M=2.59, SD=1.24$) than "It is important for the man to have more power in the family than the woman" ($M=1.54, SD=0.91$).

This descriptive, exploratory study highlights the values that this group of Mexican American women endorses and questions whether within-group variation in experiences based on cultural and minority status variables translates to differences in cultural values. Though discrimination, economic hardship, and generational status were linked to mothers' values, finding that there are no differences based on some of social positioning factors (e.g., education, enculturation, acculturation) is also informative. Emic, within-culture research stems from the belief that knowledge is socially constructed and rooted in a particular time and context (Else-Quest & Hyde, 2016a; Else-Quest & Hyde, 2016b). Thus, it is important to focus on an ecological niche in a particular context (Shweder, 2016). This data has been collected from one cultural sample of Mexican American mothers of infants and toddlers. The mothers are in emerging adulthood, primarily lower income, and living in Yolo and Sacramento counties with

their families. These findings may not generalize to the broader population of Mexican American mothers in the United States; however, this within-culture approach to research provides valuable information about the cultural values that are relevant for people who work to provide family and human services to this group (Calzada et al., 2010).

Implications

The current study's findings are specific to Mexican American mothers living in Northern California, where Latinx people make up the largest racial or ethnic group in the state (Krogstad & Noe-Bustamante, 2021). In California, Mexican culture is very prominent and represented by restaurants, radio stations, television, and cultural events. It might be easier to maintain Mexican cultural values in California, where there might not be as much pressure to assimilate as other contexts. Some demographics (i.e., generational status) in this sample mirror that of the U.S. Mexican American population. Nearly one-third of Mexicans in the U.S. are foreign-born, and in this sample, 34% of mothers were born in Mexico (Krogstad & Noe-Bustamante, 2021). This suggests that some aspects might be generalizable to the broader U.S. Mexican population. More research with other samples is needed to better understand the values of this cohort of Mexican American parents of infants and toddlers.

Being bicultural has the potential to promote wellbeing in Latinx families (Cabrera et al., 2021). Aligned with liberation psychology and social justice, this paper aims to uncover cultural values for the purposes of supporting families by adapting health programs to fit their values. For parenting policies and interventions to be equitably implemented, they must be adapted to fit the needs and culture of the communities they aim to serve (Domenech Rodríguez & Bernal, 2012; Metz et al., 2021). The process of learning from and listening to communities, addressing their strengths and stressors, and building trusting relationships can improve access and uptake of

services (Parra Cardona et al., 2021). This is especially important for Latinx families with low socioeconomic status, who are more likely to be excluded from services. Understanding mothers' cultural identity and values is a fundamental step to enhancing contextual relevance of theories, research, and services. Researchers and practitioners can tailor parenting programs to be aligned with Mexican American parents' most relevant cultural values. This research project was able to uncover cultural values that are most salient for bicultural Mexican American mothers living in Yolo and Sacramento counties.

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Table 1.	
<i>Overall Sample Demographics (N=111)</i>	
	Mean (SD; Range) or N (%)
Maternal Age	22.98 years (3.83; 18-38 years)
Partnered	95 (85.6%)
Primary Language Spanish	50 (45%)
Socioeconomic Status	
Received WIC Benefits	62 (55.9%)
Received Medicaid	54 (48.6%)
Child Age	10.39 months (6.00; 3.78-27.93 months)
Child Assigned Female at Birth	49 (44.1%)

Table 2.												
<i>Correlations Among Cultural Values</i>												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Support	-											
2. Obligations	.46 **	-										
3. Referent	.54 **	.42 **	-									

4. Respeto	.33 **	.26 **	.39 **	-								
5. Familismo	.75 **	.72 **	.79 **	.72 **	-							
6. Religion	.31 **	.26 **	.32 **	.26 **	.33 **	-						
7. Gender Roles	.27 **	.17	.39 **	.40 **	.38 **	.45 **	-					
8. Material Success	.11	.12	.11	.18	.17	.08	.33 **	-				
9. Independence	.21 *	.22 *	.09	.09	.20 *	-.05	.17	.09	-			
10. Competition	.14	.03	.26 **	.23 **	.27 **	.00	.29 **	.40 **	.28 **	-		
11. Mexican values	.66 **	.63 **	.76 **	.66 **	.88 **	.64 **	.70 **	.24 *	.19 *	.25 **	-	
12. U.S. values	.22 *	.18	.23 *	.22 *	.31 **	.01	.36 **	.65 **	.64 **	.83 **	.32 **	-

Note. Support, obligations, and referent are all elements of familismo that are included in the familismo subscale. Gender roles refers to traditional gender roles. The Mexican values scale is composed of familismo, respeto, religion, and gender roles subscales. The U.S. values scale is composed of material success, independence, and competition subscales.

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 3.

Predicting Mexican Heritage Values with Cultural and Minority Status Variables

	B	SE B	p
Intercept	1.76	0.49	0.0005***
Enculturation	0.10	0.05	0.06

Acculturation	0.07	0.06	0.27
Generational Status	.14	0.06	0.02*
Educational Status	0.01	0.05	0.83
Discrimination	0.19	0.09	0.04*
Economic Hardship - Unmet Needs	0.03	0.02	0.04*
Economic Hardship - Difficulties Making Ends Meet	-0.04	0.04	0.28
Adj. R ²	0.10		
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$			

Table 4.			
<i>Predicting U.S. Values with Cultural and Minority Status Variables</i>			
	B	SE B	p
Intercept	2.09	0.57	0.0005***
Enculturation	-0.09	0.06	0.15
Acculturation	-0.13	0.07	0.08
Generational Status	.05	0.07	0.43
Educational Status	0.07	0.05	0.17
Discrimination	0.31	0.10	0.004**
Economic Hardship - Unmet Needs	0.01	0.02	0.52
Economic Hardship - Difficulties Making Ends Meet	0.02	0.04	0.71
Adj. R ²	0.13		
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$			

Paper 2

Mexican American Mothers' Responses to Toddlers' Negative Emotions: Associations with
Cultural Values

Emotions are complex, dynamic, responsive to their social environments, and culturally adaptive (Jagers, Rivas-Drake, & Borowski, 2018; Repetti, Reynolds, & Sears, 2015; Shariff & Tracy, 2011; Shirtcliff et al., 2014; Sperling & Repetti, 2018; Trampe, Quoidbach, & Taquet, 2015). The way people learn to understand, experience, express, and regulate emotions is a process known as emotion socialization (Eisenberg, 2020; Eisenberg et al., 1998; Eisenberg, Zhou, Spinrad, Valiente, Fabes, & Liew, 2005). Emotions are partly socialized through caregivers' responses to children's emotions. These responses differ based on the child's characteristics, the caregiver's characteristics, and culture, which can be thought of as historically rooted and group-based values, attitudes, and behaviors that are passed on through social relationships (Campos et al., 2018; Eisenberg, 2020; Feldman, 2021; Lugo-Candelas, Harvey, & Breaux, 2015; Okagaki & Frensch, 1998). A cross-cultural study found that people with Latinx heritage rated "negative emotions," like anger, fear, and sadness, as more undesirable compared to people of Asian heritage and more inappropriate to experience compared to people of European heritage (Senft et al., 2021). Latinx people also generally prioritize warmth and positive emotion in interpersonal relationships over negative emotions (Acevedo et al., 2020). Toddlerhood is a period of intense expressions of negative emotions that provides important opportunities for emotion socialization, since toddlers require support from their primary caregivers to externally regulate their arousal and distress (Brownell & Kopp, 2010; Spinrad et al., 2007). The current study illuminates ways that a group of Mexican American mothers living in Northern California respond to their toddler's negative emotions. Mexican American mothers are socialized into both Mexican and U.S. American culture and develop particular beliefs and parenting behaviors within this bicultural context. Thus, the current study explores how cultural values influence emotion socialization behaviors.

Understanding how Mexican American families manage toddlers' negative emotions and links between cultural beliefs and parenting behaviors can inform culturally competent interventions that have the potential to promote emotional wellbeing in Mexican American families and child flourishing (Brophy-Herb et al., 2016; OSG, 2021).

Emotion Socialization: Responses to Toddlers' Negative Emotions

Toddlerhood is a developmental stage marked by frequent high intensity outbursts of negative emotion (Cole et al., 2011). During toddlerhood, caregivers externally regulate their children's emotions through their behavioral responses to children's arousal (Buhler-Wassmann & Hibel, 2021). When caregivers appropriately and sensitively attend to their children's distress, they create a supportive environment for their children's safety and growth (Feldman, 2021). Comforting and soothing the child, helping the child to resolve the situation that led to the emotion, and encouraging emotional expression are considered to be supportive emotion socialization behaviors that increase children's emotion and physiological regulatory capacities (Eisenberg et al., 1998; Raval & Walker, 2019). Young children who can rely on their caregivers to help them manage difficult emotions may be better equipped to cope with stress (Eisenberg et al., 1998). For example, mothers who are more likely to engage in supportive emotion socialization behaviors have toddlers with higher social and emotional competencies and lower levels of separation distress and externalizing problems (Spinrad et al., 2007; Ornaghi et al., 2019). Children internalize these supportive strategies and draw on them when coping with stressful moments (Hibel et al., 2018).

In contrast, nonsupportive responses such as punishing, minimizing, and reacting to children's emotional experiences with caregivers' own distress might interfere with a toddler's ability to regulate emotions, resulting in children's physiological over-arousal and the expression

of more negative emotion in certain contexts (Buhler-Wassmann, Hibel, Fondren, & Valentino, 2021; Eisenberg et al., 1998; Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996; Ornaghi et al., 2019; Sperling & Repetti, 2018). Not being able to regulate their own emotions and experiencing higher levels of negative emotion may place children at risk for psychopathology (Cole, Llera, & Pemberton, 2009). Caregivers' use of dismissing and punishing reactions to children's negative emotions are associated with conduct problems (Garner et al., 1994; Garner & Spears, 2000; Johnson et al., 2017; Labella, 2018; Smith & Walden, 2001). The frequency and intensity of children's expression of negative affect and emotions likely has a reciprocal or transactional association with emotion socialization (Sameroff, 1975). Specifically, toddlers' expression of negative affect has predicted increases in nonsupportive maternal behaviors (Ravindran et al., 2019). Since emotion socialization behaviors powerfully influence children's wellbeing, both in the moment and as a foundation for later development, it is important to understand the forces that shape parental responses to children's emotions (Feldman, 2021; Raval & Walker, 2019).

Emotion Socialization in a Cultural Context

In his bioecological framework, Bronfenbrenner (1977) illustrates how child development and the caregiver-child relationship are located within the home and family context, which exists within broader systems, such as the neighborhood, country, sociopolitical, and global contexts. Vélez-Agosto and colleagues (2017) adapt the bioecological model and explain that culture influences caregiver-child interactions on a proximal, micro level. Thus, emotion socialization between caregivers and toddlers can be thought of as a cultural practice, and these interactions create the social environments that young children's emotions and physiology adapt to and develop within (Belsky, 1984; Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Vélez-Agosto et al., 2017). Theories of emotion socialization demonstrate how culture plays an important role in guiding

caregivers' responses to children's emotions in alignment with prevailing family and cultural norms (Barber, Maughan, & Olsen, 2005; Raval & Walker, 2019). Sociocultural contexts influence the extent to which caregivers would see children's emotions as appropriate and the types of responses they would engage in (Eisenberg et al., 1998; Friedlmeier, Corapci, & Cole, 2011; Raval & Walker, 2019). For example, caregivers' cultural frameworks will shape how they process social information, how they attend to and interpret children's behavior, and their parenting goals (Halgunseth et al., 2006; Harwood, 1992). During caregiver-child interactions, the caregiver will evaluate children's emotion and behavior, construct or access possible responses to the situation from their memories, select their response based on how aligned they are with their goals, and enact these emotion socialization behaviors (Halgunseth et al., 2006). Together, a cultural-ecological perspective suggests that culture informs caregivers' beliefs and values, as well as their parenting behaviors in response to their children's emotions (García Coll et al., 1996; Harkness & Super, 2020; Li-Grining, 2012).

How culture influences emotion socialization behaviors is not well-understood in the early childhood years and not much has been documented about how Mexican American mothers respond to their toddlers' difficult emotions. Research that has been done with Mexican American mothers of preschool aged children found that they were more likely to support children, help solve their problems, and coach them through difficult emotions than ignore, distract, or punish them for their negative emotions (Gamble et al., 2007). A study of Latina mothers more broadly found that their supportive emotion socialization strategies toward their four-year-old children promoted lower internalizing behaviors when their children were eight (Rodas, Chavira, & Baker, 2017). When Latina mothers engaged in helpful emotion and problem focused responses to their preschool aged children, their children demonstrated greater emotion

knowledge (Pintar Breen et al., 2018). Even though European American children were more likely to have externalizing problems when their mothers engaged in nonsupportive behaviors like punishing and minimizing, nonsupportive emotion socialization behaviors were not associated with preschool-aged Latinx children's emotion knowledge or externalizing problems (Lugo-Candelas et al., 2015; Pintar Breen et al., 2018). Altogether, these findings suggest that Mexican American mothers are likely to engage in supportive responses to children's negative emotions, and that maternal emotion socialization behaviors and their outcomes on children might vary depending on cultural context (García Coll et al., 1996; Perez Rivera & Dunsmore, 2011). However, less has been documented about within-culture differences in emotion socialization behaviors among Mexican American mothers and which cultural characteristics shape emotion socialization behaviors.

Cultural Values Influencing Emotion Socialization

Cultural values affect the ways people think, feel, and behave; thus, it is likely that they inform emotion socialization behaviors (Knight et al., 2011; White, Nair, & Bradley, 2018). Socialization practices are reflective of culturally specific parenting norms (Harkness & Super, 2005; Whiting & Edwards, 1988) and evolving beliefs, attitudes, goals, and behaviors (White et al., 2018). Mexican American parents create a cultural system of socialization that integrates their heritage cultural values as they adapt to the U.S. environment (White et al., 2018). Important values for Mexican Americans include prioritizing family relationships (i.e., familismo), treating one and other with respect (i.e., respeto), believing in a higher power (i.e., religion), maintaining traditional gender roles, and being independent and relying on oneself (Knight et al., 2010). Of course, not all bicultural Mexican American caregivers place the same level of importance on each of these values (Buhler-Wassmann, Paper 1). However, the extent to

which caregivers endorse these values may influence their behaviors and the ways they respond to their children.

Mexican American mothers could be motivated to respond to their children in ways that are aligned with their values (White et al., 2014). For example, if mothers value familismo, which encompasses providing emotional and instrumental support to their family, they might be more likely to emotionally support their children through moments of distress. Family support has been associated with less punitive spanking behaviors (Barajas-Gonzalez et al., 2018). Valuing familismo and respeto has been associated with a greater likelihood of being more responsive and more demanding (i.e., more “no-nonsense” parenting) toward their adolescents (White et al., 2013). Additionally, caregivers might control their children’s behavior in an effort to teach them to uphold respeto (Carlson & Harwood, 2003; Livas-Dlott et al., 2010). For example, some Mexican American parents might value children’s obedience (Arcia & Johnson, 1998), which is one aspect of valuing respeto, and respond to children’s difficult emotions in ways that might be considered nonsupportive (i.e., punishing or minimizing) if parents feel that their children’s displays of emotion are disrespectful or inappropriate (Durik et al., 2006). On the other hand, maternal reports of respeto have also been associated with greater maternal sensitivity, suggesting that mothers may treat their distressed children with more sensitivity and respect if this is an important value for them (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2020). The role of religious values has not been extensively explored in relation to Mexican American parenting, though it has been connected to both supportive (e.g., effective parenting, warmth) and nonsupportive parenting practices (e.g., corporal punishment, control) among other ethnic groups (Bornstein et al., 2017; Mahoney & Tarakeshwar, 2005). The level to which parents value independence and self-reliance in their children might influence their caregiving behaviors by promoting more

autonomy and providing less support (Domenech-Rodriguez et al., 2009). In one study, Mexican American parents were observed to grant significantly more autonomy to boys and demand more of girls, suggesting that beliefs about traditional gender roles may be linked to parenting behaviors (Domenech-Rodriguez et al., 2009). Overall, mothers' cultural values underlie the use of parenting behaviors (Campos & Kim, 2017; Eisenberg et al., 1998; Hajal & Paley, 2020; Halgunseth et al., 2006).

The Current Study

The current study explicitly explored connections between cultural values and emotion socialization in Mexican American families. The following questions focus on emotion socialization behaviors toward toddlers, because this developmental stage is a heightened period of frequent and intense negative emotions (Cole et al., 2007). Therefore, this paper will use an age-appropriate adaptation of the gold standard questionnaire assessing caregiver emotion socialization behaviors (Coping with Children's Negative Emotions scale; Fabes et al., 2002). This scale has previously been used with Mexican American mothers of preschool-aged children (Pintar Breen et al., 2018; Rodas et al., 2017). Understanding the experiences of Mexican American mothers and toddlers has the potential to help families through the development of culturally informed educational practices, prevention and intervention programs, and policies to support children's positive social, emotional, and physiological development (Parra Cardona et al., 2012). Comprehensively, culturally grounded, strength-based research is needed to accurately represent and understand Latinx, especially Mexican American, family experiences and child development (Cabrera, 2013; Cabrera et al., 2021). Therefore, this paper will address the following questions while adopting an emic, within culture, framework:

- a) What are the predominant emotion socialization behaviors in this sample of Mexican American mothers?
- b) How do Mexican American cultural values predict mothers' emotion socialization responses to their toddlers?

Methods

Participants

This study includes 96 Mexican American mothers ($M=23.88$ years, $SD=4.24$, range 18-38 years) of toddlers ($M=18.56$ months, $SD=2.23$; range 12.85-27.93) recruited as part of the California Babies Project, an ongoing longitudinal study on stress and resilience in Mexican American families. The current study only includes mothers who identify as Latina, Hispanic, and/or Mexican.

Measures

Demographic Characteristics

Mothers responded to a set of questions regarding their birthdate, relationship status (i.e., single or partnered), educational attainment, generational status, child's birthdate, and child's sex assigned at birth. We calculated toddler age in months by subtracting their birthdate from the date of data collection of the emotion socialization behaviors. See Table 1 for a summary of socio-demographic characteristics.

Toddler Temperament

Mothers completed the Early Childhood Behavior Questionnaire - Very Short Form (Putnam et al., 2006; Putnam et al., 2010). Mothers indicated how often in the last two weeks their toddlers reacted negatively to environmental changes and experienced difficulty being

soothed using a 7-point Likert scale where 1= “Never,” 2= “Very rarely,” 3= “Less than half the time,” 4= “About half the time,” 5= “More than half the time,” 6= “Almost always,” and 7 = “Always.” This negative affectivity subscale was used to assess toddler temperament ($M=2.88$, $SD=0.65$, range= 1-4.58, $\alpha=0.62$, 12 items).

Cultural Values

Mothers reported their cultural values with the Mexican American Cultural Values scale (MACV; Knight et al., 2010) during their first visit with the California Babies Project. Examples of the value-based statements in the MACV scale include, “It is important for family members to show their love and affection to one another,” and, “Religion should be an important part of one's life.” Mothers answered how much they agree with each value statement on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 = “Not at all,” 2 = “A little,” 3 = “Somewhat,” 4 = “Very much,” and 5 = “Completely.” The current study included the subscales for familismo ($M=3.32$, $SD=0.47$, range= 2-4, $\alpha=0.88$, 16 items), respeto ($M=3.28$, $SD=0.68$, range= 1-4, $\alpha=0.84$, 8 items), religion ($M=3.31$, $SD=0.59$, range= 2-4, $\alpha=0.87$, 7 items), traditional gender roles ($M=2.02$, $SD=0.67$, range= 1-4, $\alpha=0.56$, 5 items), and independence and self reliance ($M=2.85$, $SD=0.64$, range= 1-4, $\alpha=0.56$, 5 items). The familismo subscale included aspects of familial support, familial obligations, and referring to family when making important decisions. The MACV scale was created with and for Mexican American communities (Knight et al., 2010).

Emotion Socialization Behaviors

The Coping with Children's Negative Emotions Scale (Fabes et al., 2002) describes hypothetical scenarios about children's anger, nervousness, sadness, embarrassment, and fear. It asks caregivers to respond with the likelihood that they would respond to their children with their own distress, punishment, minimization, expressive encouragement, problem-focused, and

emotion-focused reactions using a 7-point Likert scale from 1 “Very Unlikely” to 7 “Very Likely.” The original questionnaire was developed for preschool-aged children and the scenarios reflect that developmental period (e.g., “If my child falls off his/her bike and breaks it, and then gets upset and cries, I would...”). In the current study, mothers were administered an adaptation for toddlers where the scenarios were changed to reflect age-appropriate situations (e.g., “If my child breaks a toy of his/hers and gets upset and cries, I would...”). In accordance with previous research on emotion socialization behaviors in response to toddlers (Spinrad et al., 2007), supportive emotion socialization behaviors responses were measured by combining expressive encouragement, problem-focused, and emotion-focused reactions (Blair et al., 2014; Denham & Kochanoff, 2002; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1994). Nonsupportive emotion socialization responses were measured using distress, punishment, and minimization reactions. The subscales of supportive and nonsupportive responses were sufficiently reliable (i.e., $\alpha > 0.70$; see Table 2).

Procedures

The study was reviewed by the University Institutional Review Board. Data were collected from the California Babies Project, a longitudinal study on Mexican American family stress and resilience throughout infancy, toddlerhood, and preschool developmental stages. Recruitment for the California Babies Project initially stemmed from a large, in-depth longitudinal study called the California Families Project, which began in 2006 with a group of fifth graders and their families in Northern California. California Families Project youth who became parents were invited to participate in the California Babies Project. Employing a snowball recruitment strategy, the California Babies Project staff encouraged participants to invite their families and friends to join the project. Lastly, participants were also recruited from posters at community establishments (i.e., restaurants, libraries, and grocery stores). Eligibility

was determined by age of child and Mexican heritage. Families were invited to participate in the infant visit when their children were between three and nine months and were invited to participate in the toddler visit when their children were between fifteen and twenty months.

Bilingual Spanish/English project staff called eligible parents to ask them if they were interested in participating in the project. Families consented at their first visit, which took place in person in their homes or, after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, over the phone. For the current study, 36 families began their participation in the project with an infant visit and 58 families began with the toddler visit. Data about Mexican American cultural values were collected from the mothers during their first visit. All of the mothers answered questions about their emotion socialization behaviors, toddler temperament, and demographics at their toddler visit. They were interviewed in the language of their choice and were compensated \$100 for their time.

Data analysis

I used SPSS to report descriptive analysis for emotion socialization behaviors, including the predominant mothers' emotion socialization behaviors in response to their toddlers. I combined the supportive scales (e.g., emotion focused, problem focused, expression encouragement) and nonsupportive scales (e.g., distress, punitive, and minimizing reactions). I reported bivariate correlations with Mexican American cultural values (e.g., familismo, respeto, religion, traditional gender roles and independence/self-reliance).

Statistical tests were conducted using R. To determine which covariates to include in the models, I used a formal model fitting approach (Chambers, 1992; King et al., 2021). I started with an intercept-only model and iteratively added covariates to base multivariate regression models in which supportive and nonsupportive emotion socialization behaviors were the

dependent variables. To maintain parsimony, I only included the covariates that significantly improved the model as determined by the analysis of variance (ANOVA; $p < 0.05$). The covariates tested included children's temperament, children's age, children's sex assigned at birth, mothers' age, and dichotomous variables for whether there was a time difference between data collection of cultural values and emotion socialization behaviors and if the data was collected after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This process resulted in children's temperament being included as a covariate for nonsupportive emotion socialization and mothers' age being included as a covariate for supportive emotion socialization.

I fit a path analysis using the lavaan package in R to test Mexican American cultural values (e.g., familismo, respeto, religion, traditional gender roles, and independence and self-reliance) as predictors of supportive and nonsupportive emotion socialization behaviors. Given the sample size, I used maximum likelihood with robust corrections to fit the models (Lai et al., 2018). Full information maximum likelihood was used to estimate missing data values (Kline, 2011). To evaluate model fit, I tested the following fit statistics: model chi-square statistics (nonsignificant chi-square value represents strong fit to the data), comparative fit index (CFI; > 0.90 acceptable, > 0.95 excellent), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA; < 0.08 acceptable, < 0.05 excellent), and the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR; < 0.08 acceptable, < 0.05 excellent; Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Results

Preliminary analyses

Overall, mothers were significantly more likely to say they would respond with supportive reactions ($M=5.95$, $SD=.72$) than nonsupportive reactions ($M=2.55$, $SD=.77$; $t(90)=30.38$, $p<.001$). See Table 2 for descriptives of the emotion socialization behaviors.

Bivariate correlations did not uncover a significant association between supportive and nonsupportive emotion socialization behaviors ($r=-.03$, $p=.75$). There were significant positive associations between nonsupportive emotion socialization behaviors and familismo ($r=.35$, $p<.001$), respeto ($r=.32$, $p=.003$), and traditional gender roles ($r=.40$, $p<.001$). There was also a significant positive association between nonsupportive behaviors and a child temperament marked by negative affectivity ($r=.28$, $p=.02$). Nonsupportive emotion socialization behaviors were negatively associated with mothers' age ($r=-.25$, $p=.02$).

There were significant positive associations between familismo and respeto ($r=.76$, $p<.001$), religion ($r=.24$, $p=.03$), and traditional gender roles ($r=.41$, $p<.001$). There were also significant positive associations between traditional gender roles and respeto ($r=.42$, $p<.001$) and religion ($r=.34$, $p=.001$). Traditional gender roles was also significantly correlated with toddler sex assigned at birth, with mothers reporting lower traditional gender role values when their toddlers were boys ($r=-.22$, $p=.03$). Bivariate correlations show that boys have temperaments marked by more negative affect ($r=.24$, $p=.04$). There was also a significant positive association between temperament and respeto ($r=.26$, $p=.03$). See Table 3 for correlations among the emotion socialization behaviors, cultural values, and covariates.

Emotion socialization behaviors and Mexican American cultural values

Mexican American cultural values were tested as predictors of supportive and nonsupportive emotion socialization behaviors using a path analysis displayed in Figure 1. The model chi-square statistics ($p=0.73$), comparative fit index ($CFI>0.95$), root mean square error of

approximation (RMSEA= <0.05), and the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR <0.08) indicate a good fit. Mothers' age was included as a covariate with supportive emotion socialization behaviors. Mothers who reported higher familismo values were significantly more likely to engage in supportive behaviors ($\beta=.63, p=.02$). Mothers who reported higher respeto were significantly less likely to engage in supportive behaviors ($\beta=-.39, p=.04$). Mothers who reported higher independence and self reliance values were less likely to engage in supportive emotion socialization behaviors ($\beta=-.24, p=.005$). No other cultural values were significantly associated with supportive emotion socialization behaviors.

Mothers who reported higher traditional gender role values were significantly more likely to engage in nonsupportive behaviors ($\beta=.43, p=.007$). Toddler temperament was included as a covariate with nonsupportive emotion socialization behaviors. Mothers with toddlers whose temperaments were marked by greater negative affect were also significantly more likely to engage in nonsupportive behaviors ($\beta=.33, p=.004$). No other cultural values were significantly associated with nonsupportive emotion socialization behaviors. Results are presented in Table 4.

Discussion

This paper aimed to describe how Mexican American mothers respond to their toddlers' negative emotions and examine associations between Mexican American cultural values (e.g., familismo, respeto, religion, traditional gender roles, and independence/self-reliance) and mothers' emotion socialization behaviors to elucidate which cultural values may reinforce mothers' supportive and nonsupportive caregiving. The results illuminated that mothers endorsed supportive emotion socialization behaviors more than nonsupportive emotion socialization behaviors. The findings were aligned with previous research suggesting Mexican American

mothers of preschool-age children are more likely to use supportive emotion socialization strategies, such as emotion-focused responses, problem-focused responses, and expressive encouragement, than nonsupportive (i.e., more punitive and dismissive) reactions (Gamble et al., 2007; Lugo-Candelas et al., 2015). To advance the literature on how cultural context shapes emotion socialization behaviors, the second aim of the study was to test Mexican American cultural values as predictors of supportive and nonsupportive responses to toddlers' negative emotions. Given the relative dearth of research about cultural-level predictors of emotion socialization, there were no predetermined hypotheses for how cultural values would shape the expression of specific emotion socialization behaviors. Instead, the study aimed to explore which values were associated with supportive and nonsupportive emotion socialization behaviors to identify cultural strengths that promote positive parenting and raise awareness of the values linked with nonsupportive parenting behaviors. These results may provide researchers, practitioners, and parents with information that can help support children and families. The cultural values of familismo, respeto, independence, and traditional gender roles were found to influence mothers' supportive and nonsupportive responses to their children.

Young children learn to manage their emotional reactions and expression in appropriate ways based on their contexts (Buhler-Wassmann & Hibel, 2021; Denham, Bassett, & Wyatt, 2015; Lozada et al., 2022). Caregivers' socialization behaviors are similarly context-dependent and influenced by cultural values (Calzada et al., 2010; Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2020). Mexican American cultural values are hypothesized to moderate the association between parenting behaviors and pre-school children's regulation (Li-Grining, 2012). Though they did not examine cultural values directly, Pintar Breen and colleagues (2018) interpreted the differential effects of nonsupportive emotion socialization in Mexican American and European American child

outcomes as stemming from the cultural values of respeto and familismo. Though there have been demonstrated cross-cultural differences in emotion values, the role of cultural values in maternal emotion socialization behaviors remains empirically unexplored (Parker et al., 2012; Senft et al., 2021). This study aimed to explore how within-group variations in Mexican American cultural values were associated with differences in supportive and nonsupportive emotion socialization behaviors. Results uncovered how individual differences in cultural values were systematically linked to parenting.

The current study illuminated how increases in the endorsement of familismo were associated with increases in supportive emotion socialization responses, and that valuing independence was associated with decreases in supportive emotion socialization responses. Familismo is the belief in prioritizing family above the self, supporting family in emotional and financial ways, and reference to the family (Knight et al., 2010). The current findings suggest that mothers who value supporting their family are also showing the same support to their toddlers in times of emotional distress by encouraging toddlers to express their emotions, helping them solve their problems, and soothing them. Valuing independence and self-reliance, however, is linked to fewer supportive responses. By showing less support, mothers may be motivating their toddlers to learn how to regulate their emotions independently. Independence and familismo are values that reflect individualistic and collectivistic cultural models, respectively (Raval & Walker, 2019). The current study demonstrates differences in supportive emotion socialization behaviors based on the belief that individuals should be autonomous and self-reliant and the belief that individuals should be deeply connected to their family system.

Overall, familismo plays a protective role in the emotional lives of Mexican American and other Latinx families (Montoro et al., 2021; Wheeler et al. 2021). In addition to supporting

toddlers through negative emotions, previous research found that Mexican American mothers who value familismo had higher levels of shared positive emotion with their toddlers during a semistructured play task (Lindsey, 2022). Valuing familismo has been linked with positive prosocial development for Mexican American adolescents (Knight et al., 2018). Endorsing familismo may signify that mothers have a strong family network that is supportive and encouraging and a greater perception of social support, which can contribute to Latinx parents' strengths and resilience (Cabrera et al., 2021; Campos et al., 2014).

Valuing respeto was associated with less supportive emotion socialization behaviors in the current study. Respeto refers to the belief that children should be obedient and defer to their parents' and elders' decisions (Calzada et al., 2010; Knight et al., 2010). In their efforts to integrate respeto into a framework of Latino parenting, Calzada and colleagues (2010) explain, "At least in the context of parenting young children, *respeto* appears to delineate the boundaries of appropriate and inappropriate child behavior and to be an important determinant of parenting practices" (Calzada et al., 2010, pg. 78). Latinx culture is characterized by warmth and positive expressivity in interpersonal relationships, which has been associated with a disposition to express positive emotions and to shy away from negativity and avoid conflict in favor of being polite and respectful (Acevedo et al., 2020). Mothers' lack of support to their toddlers in negative emotion-laden moments could be part of their efforts to guide their children's behavior away from negative emotions and toward more positive ones. In contrast, previous research has linked respeto to greater maternal sensitivity, which promotes toddlers' positive mood and protects against toddlers' negative mood (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2020). Altogether, it seems that the influence of respeto on parenting may be more nuanced and complex than aligning fully with supportive or nonsupportive behaviors.

The results of this study also demonstrated a significant association between traditional gender role values and nonsupportive emotion socialization responses. Traditional Mexican gender roles reflect beliefs in machismo and marianismo, which are the sets of values, attitudes, and beliefs about masculinity and femininity, respectively (Nuñez et al., 2016). The construct of machismo includes the importance of male dominance, strength, honor, aggression, and, importantly, reserved emotions as a way to mask vulnerability (Nuñez et al., 2016). Traditional gender norms of marianismo refer to ideas of Mexican women as humble, nurturing, passive, pleasing, submissive, silencing self to maintain harmony, and self-sacrificing for the good of her children (Lara, 1993; Kulis et al., 2003). Overall, traditional gender roles reflect respect for patriarchal values and are socialized in people of all genders, including women (Nuñez et al., 2016). The importance of traditional gender roles for Mexican American mothers may be changing over time with societal cultural shifts (Cabrera, 2022).

The current study expands the literature by showing that mothers who held more traditional gender roles also engaged in more nonsupportive responses to their children's emotions. The effect of traditional gender-related beliefs on Mexican American mothers' emotion socialization behaviors was significant regardless of the child's sex assigned at birth. A post-hoc test examining the interaction between traditional gender roles and child sex assigned at birth showed that there was also no significant interaction between traditional gender roles and child sex assigned at birth ($b=-.07, p=.77$). Mothers who endorse more traditional gender roles may place a higher value on reserved emotional expression for both males and females, because patriarchal values expect males to mask their vulnerability and females to silence themselves to maintain harmony. Mothers might be more likely to believe that toddlers' overt emotional displays are either a sign of weakness or too loud and should be dismissed or punished. On the

other hand, mothers with more egalitarian gender roles were less likely to react to their toddler's negative emotions with nonsupportive behaviors. However, the current study was not able to capture the nuances in gender-related differences in maternal reactions to emotions, because punitive, minimizing, and distress reactions were all included in the same nonsupportive subscale and negative emotions like fear, sadness, and anger were also aggregated. The absence of a significant association between children's sex assigned at birth and maternal emotion socialization behaviors could be masking subtle differences in gendered emotion socialization, such as whether mothers encourage boys' anger and punish girls' anger (Chaplin et al., 2010). Future research should continue to investigate the influence of patriarchal, traditional gender role values on parental responses to children's negative emotion.

Mothers were more likely to engage in nonsupportive emotion socialization behaviors on average when they had toddlers with temperaments marked by higher negative affect. This is aligned with previous research by Eisenberg et al. (1996) that showed mothers' reports of preschool-aged children's negative affect were associated with more minimizing in response to negative emotions. Higher negative affectivity refers to greater negative reactions to environmental changes and more difficulty being soothed (Rothbart & Bates, 2006). When infants and toddlers show more negativity during mother-child interactions, mothers experience less positive emotion and it diminishes their capacity to engage in sensitive parenting behaviors (Hibel et al., 2018; Martin et al., 2002; Ravindran et al., 2019). Thus, toddler temperaments characterized by greater negative affect could be causing mothers to respond with less sensitivity and more nonsupportive emotion socialization behaviors, which includes reacting with their own distress, punishment, and minimization.

Strengths and Limitations

The current study is centered on the emotion socialization behaviors of Mexican American mothers, who are often the main socializers for children (Hrdy, 2000). However, many Mexican American children also have close relationships with their fathers, grandparents, and other family members (Aldoney et al., 2015). By including other caregivers in the study of emotion socialization behaviors, research will be better equipped to understand child development within context. A strength of the current study is its within-culture approach to understanding Mexican American culture and parenting, rather than cross-cultural comparisons of parenting (Klinkebiel et al., 2015). In their exploration of maternal emotion socialization among Chinese and Indian mothers of adolescents, Trevethan et al. (2021) used emic research and qualitative work to add culturally-specific emotion socialization behaviors (e.g., explanation-oriented responses, scolding, training-oriented responses) to supplement the Coping with Children's Negative Emotion scale. Future work with Mexican American families can take a similar approach to explore culturally-relevant emotion socialization strategies that this current study was not able to account for (Raval & Walker, 2019).

Implications

The largest group of immigrants in the United States are of Mexican origin. The Mexican American community is composed of an estimated 37.2 million people, making up 62% of the United States's Latinx population (Krogstad & Noe-Bustamante, 2021). The science of parenting has been focused on white, western, middle-class motherhood in the United States, ignoring the diversity of children and families' experiences and leading to misguided conclusions about optimal and normal parenting (Cabrera, 2022). Especially within the context of systemic racism and discrimination, there is an immediate need to uncover best practices of offering care, love, support, and emotional guidance to children whose needs have been pushed to the margins

(Cabrera, 2022). Thus, it is important to look at patterns of parenting within Mexican American families.

The limited research in maternal emotion socialization among Mexican American families has found that supportive responses to children's emotions were associated with increases in children's emotion knowledge and lower internalizing behaviors (Pintar Breen et al., 2018; Rodas et al., 2017). This is aligned with the theory that emotionally supportive parenting behaviors foster young children's healthful development as co-regulation becomes self-regulation (Li-Grining, 2012). Though nonsupportive emotion socialization behaviors in response to children's negative emotions were linked with negative consequences in emotion knowledge and externalizing problems in European American families, nonsupportive responses to children's emotions were not associated with any deficits in emotion knowledge or externalizing problems in Mexican American families (Lugo-Candelas et al., 2015; Pintar Breen et al., 2018). That the parents' supportive reactions were beneficial to children's emotion knowledge, while the nonsupportive reactions were not associated with negative consequences, suggests that children's emotion regulation outcomes are culturally specific and that emotion socialization behaviors may have different effects depending on the context. Overall, the toddlers in this study are being supported by their mothers when experiencing negative emotions. Importantly, the lack of correlation between supportive and nonsupportive emotion socialization behaviors suggests that the same mother can be both supportive and nonsupportive of her toddlers' negative emotions in different contexts. Thus, research about emotion socialization behaviors in context should continue to explore these nuances.

The results of this study are aligned with theories of emotion socialization (Saarni, 1997; Eisenberg, 2020; Raval & Walker, 2019) and previous research with Latine/x families that posits

that parenting-level processes are influenced by culture (Melzi et al., 2021; Parra-Cardona et al., 2012). Research has connected cultural values to parenting behaviors, especially responsiveness and demandingness in Mexican American parents of adolescents (White et al., 2013). However, this is the first study that has explored associations between cultural values and emotion socialization in Mexican American mothers of toddlers, even though theory suggests that cultural values would inform emotion socialization parenting behaviors in early life (Eisenberg, 2020; Raval & Walker, 2019). Not every aspect of one's culture will directly affect parenting behaviors. For example, religion was not linked with supportive or nonsupportive emotion socialization behaviors in this study. This paper is a starting point to draw connections between cultural values and emotion socialization behaviors among Mexican American mothers and toddlers living in Northern California.

Mothers' responses to children's emotions in times of stress shape children's physiological and emotional regulatory systems. As young children react emotionally and physiologically to their daily experiences, their highly plastic brains and bodies adapt to their family contexts resulting in neural changes in early life that have enduring effects on lifelong wellbeing (Cox & Paley, 1997; Tottenham, 2018). Caregiver-infant interactions, as well as family culture and experiences, create the context for this co-regulatory process (Buhler-Wassmann & Hibel, 2021). Mothers play an important role in guiding children to manage their difficult emotional experiences and learn how to cope with these feelings in productive ways (Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2014; OSG, 2021). Toddlers' socioemotional development occurs within a developmental niche that is constructed in part by their mothers' cultural beliefs and behaviors (Cabrera, 2022). Exploring how Mexican American cultural beliefs impact parents' responses to their toddlers illuminates assets and strengths in early

environments that promote positive parenting and child functioning (Jagers et al., 2018). This study suggests that engaging with the value of familismo may encourage mothers to be more supportive in their responses to their toddlers' negative emotions. Therefore, interventions and programs that aim to build culturally competent ways of fostering positive parenting practices among Mexican American families can describe supportive emotion socialization responses as aligned with the cultural value of familismo.

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Table 1***Participant Demographics (n=96)***

	<i>M (SD; Range) or N(%)</i>
Maternal age	23.88 years (4.24; 18-38)
Partnered	75 (80.6%)
Maternal education High school diploma College degree (e.g., Associate, Bachelor's, Graduate)	87 (93.5%) 14 (15%)
Maternal generational status First generation (i.e., foreign born) Second generation (i.e., born in the U.S.) Third generation or more (i.e., parents born in the U.S.)	36 (39.1%) 46 (50%) 10 (10.7%)
Child age	18.56 months (2.23; 12.85-27.93)
Child assigned female at birth	40 (41.7%)

Table 2.***Emotion socialization behaviors***

	α	n	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
Distress	.65	91	2.12	.81	1.00-5.00
Punitive	.61	91	2.88	1.05	1.00-6.67
Encouragement of Expression	.75	91	5.42	1.03	2.43-7.00
Emotion focused Reactions	.75	91	6.24	.73	3.50-7.00

Problem focused Reactions	.75	91	6.19	.74	3.88-7.00
Minimization	.76	91	2.75	1.05	1.00-6.38
Supportive	.88	91	5.95	.72	3.44-7.00
Nonsupportive	.84	91	2.55	.77	1.29-5.04

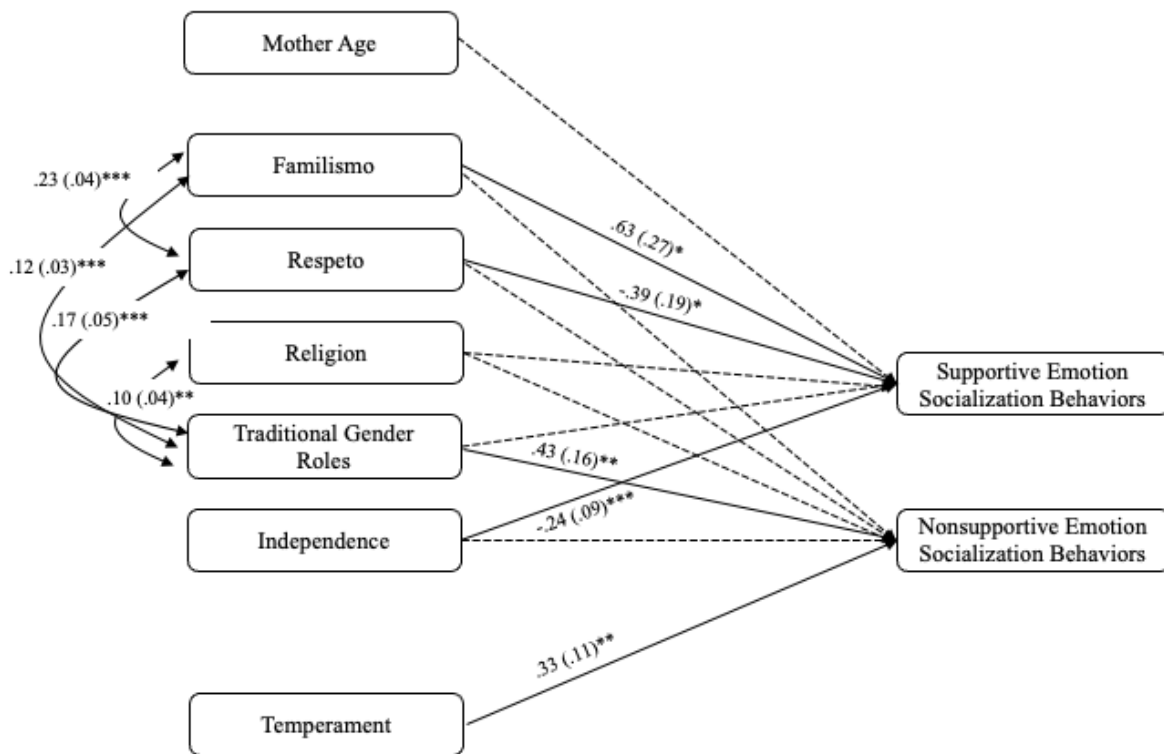
Table 3.

Correlations Among Study Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Supportive										
2. Nonsupportive	-.03									
3. Familismo	.04	.35***								
4. Respeto	-.13	.32**	.76***							
5. Religion	-.12	.07	.24*	.19						
6. Traditional Gender Roles	-.17	.40***	.41***	.42***	.34**					
7. Independence	-.17	.11	.07	-.04	-.13	.07				
8. Temperament	-.07	.28*	.08	.26*	-.03	-.14	-.12			
9. Child age	.03	-.14	.05	.09	-.01	-.04	-.20	.12		
10. Child sex	-.12	.00	-.08	.06	-.19	-.22*	-.02	.24*	.11	
11. Mother age	.18	-.25*	-.11	-.12	-.08	-.17	.00	-.15	.30**	.12

Figure 1

Cultural Values Predicting Emotion Socialization Behaviors



Note. Model predicting supportive and nonsupportive emotion socialization behaviors from cultural values (e.g., familismo, respeto, religion, traditional gender roles, and independence).

Mother age was included as a predictor of supportive emotion socialization and child

temperament was included as a predictor of nonsupportive emotion socialization. $*p < .05$,

$**p < .01$, $***p < .001$

Table 4***Path Analysis of Cultural Values Predicting Supportive and Nonsupportive Emotion Socialization***

	Estimate	SE	z-value	P(> z)	Std.lv	Std.all
Regressions						
Supportive						
Familismo	.63	.27	2.37	.02	.63	.41
Respeto	-.39	.19	-2.06	.04	-.39	-.37
Religion	-.16	.13	-1.21	.23	-.16	-.13
Gender roles	-.11	.15	-.73	.46	-.11	-.10
Independence	-.24	.09	-2.81	.005	-.24	-.21
Mother Age	.03	.01	1.93	.05	.03	.16
Nonsupportive						
Temperament	.33	.11	2.90	.004	.33	.28
Familismo	.34	.33	1.03	.30	.34	.21
Respeto	-.04	.21	-.19	.85	-.04	-.04
Religion	-.14	.11	-1.35	.18	-.14	-.11

Gender roles	.43	.16	2.71	.007	.43	.38
Independence	.13	.09	1.45	.15	.13	.11
Covariances						
Nonsupportive						
Mother age	-.44	.32	-1.39	.16	-.44	-.17
Familismo						
Respeto	.23	.04	5.66	.00	.23	.75
Religion	.03	.03	1.26	.21	.03	.13
Gender roles	.12	.03	3.88	.00	.12	.39
Respeto						
Temperament	.10	.05	1.93	.05	.10	.22
Gender roles	.17	.05	3.84	.00	.17	.38
Religion						
Gender roles	.10	.04	2.84	.005	.10	.26
Gender roles						
Temperament	-.05	.04	-1.20	.23	-.05	-.12
Supportive						
Non-supportive	.04	.05	.84	.40	.04	.09

Conclusion to the Dissertation

Through the process of socialization, mothers encourage their children's development in accordance with their values and the contexts in which they live. Caregivers' culture shapes their values and beliefs, which also inform their behaviors toward their children (Garcia Coll et al., 1996; Perez Brena et al., 2018). Mothers' supportive responses to their children's emotions, especially in times of stress, promote healthy and resilient development of infants' and toddlers' regulatory systems. Culturally informed research into caregivers' values as well as their behavioral responses to their children's emotions during infancy and toddlerhood may illuminate factors that contribute to supportive emotion socialization in ways that are aligned with the family's culture, as well as beliefs that may inhibit supportive responses and promote nonsupportive responses.

Altogether, the two papers of this dissertation offer insight into the cultural values that are most important for bicultural Mexican American mothers of infants living in Northern California and how these values influence their responses to their toddler's negative emotions. Mexican heritage values of familismo, respeto, and religion were most highly espoused by this group of mothers and the mothers were more likely to engage in supportive emotion socialization behaviors on average compared to nonsupportive behaviors. The present results suggest that valuing familismo promoted supportive responses, such as helping children solve problems and soothing their emotional distress. Valuing respeto and independence inhibited supportive emotion socialization behaviors. Traditional gender roles were not as highly valued by the mothers who were interviewed for these studies. However, mothers' higher endorsement of traditional gender roles was associated with more nonsupportive reactions to their toddlers'

negative emotions. Exploring differences in cultural values helped to explain the variation within Mexican American mothers' emotion socialization behaviors.

By including sociocultural factors to understand what may contribute to bicultural Mexican American mothers' endorsement of cultural values, this dissertation was able to illuminate that minority status experiences of discrimination and economic hardship are linked to stronger Mexican heritage values. Experiences of discrimination were also linked to stronger dominant U.S. values, suggesting that the bicultural mothers who have been discriminated against are strengthening dominant values, perhaps in an effort to protect themselves and their families against further discrimination. These findings are aligned with previous theorizing about how people in marginalized communities adapt to their historical and present-day circumstances by developing an adaptive culture (Garcia Coll et al., 1996, pg. 1896; Perez Brena et al., 2018).

By focusing on the experiences of Mexican American mothers and their toddlers, this dissertation contributes to a comprehensive understanding of emotion socialization and culturally informed theories of beliefs and parenting behaviors. Future research is necessary to uncover the implications of these differences in parental beliefs and behaviors on young children's emotional and physiological development. The results should encourage researchers to consider caregivers' culture in the study of emotion socialization, and practitioners to adapt parenting interventions and programs to align with cultural values.