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Reconstructing Culture: A Latent Profile Analysis of Mexican-Heritage Young Women's Cultural Practices, Gender Values, and Ethnic Identity

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Objective: In the U.S., Mexican culture has been characterized as inherently traditional in its gender values. However, we aimed to highlight the heterogeneity of Mexican culture within the U.S. by testing whether Mexican-heritage women who reject traditional gender values necessarily disavow other cultural connections (i.e., practices, identity). **Method:** Mexican-heritage young women ($N = 322$; $M_{\text{age}} = 20.42$) attending a U.S. university completed a survey evaluating their cultural practices, gender values, and ethnic identity. **Results:** Latent profile analyses revealed five profiles based on cultural practices (either high [immersed] or moderate [participating] levels) and gender values (either traditional, moderate, or nontraditional): (a) immersed/nontraditional, (b) immersed/moderate, (c) immersed/traditional, (d) participating/nontraditional, and (e) participating/moderate. Regardless of gender values, the immersed profiles were generally stronger in Mexican ethnic identity than the participating profiles. **Conclusions:** Contrary to some prior views linking Mexican cultural practices with traditional gender values, many Mexican-heritage women rejected traditional gender values while maintaining strong immersion in cultural practices and strong ethnic identities.

Public Significance Statement

Mexican-heritage women attending a U.S. college engaged with their culture in different ways but maintained strong ethnic identities. Most Mexican-heritage women were strongly immersed in their culture's practices (e.g., attending cultural events, interacting with other Mexican-heritage peers) but tended to reject restrictive components of gender values. Discussions about Mexican-heritage women should highlight the potentially different ways women may engage with their culture's gender values while maintaining strong cultural ties.

Keywords: Mexican Americans, marianismo, ethnic identity, acculturation, sex-role attitudes

Supplemental materials: <https://doi.org/10.1037/cdp0000515.supp>

Mexican culture has been described by some scholars as more patriarchal than other cultures and as less gender-egalitarian compared to mainstream U.S.-American society (Cowan, 2017; Hurtado & Sinha, 2016; Roschelle, 1999). These narratives reflect a homogeneous view of Mexican culture as uniformly patriarchal.

Moreover, when Mexican culture is characterized as more gender traditional respective to the mainstream U.S. (e.g., Pelled & Xin, 2000), the perception of Mexican culture as inherently patriarchal may be reified—regardless of whether the comparison is accurate (and evidence does indicate it is inaccurate; World Economic Forum, 2021). Indeed, in both mainstream U.S. and Mexican cultures, traditional gender values rooted in patriarchal values exist (Hurtado & Sinha, 2016). However, many Mexican-heritage women in the U.S. navigate their Mexican cultural identities and gender status while encountering these U.S.-American messages about their Mexican culture's gender values. By investigating the heterogeneity among Mexican-heritage women in the U.S., we may find that many of them come to disentangle traditional gender values from their cultural frameworks (Anzaldúa, 1987; Hurtado, 2020; Pérez, 1991; Schwartz et al., 2010). The present study addressed this premise by using a person-centered analysis to explore different profiles of cultural engagement when considering cultural practices and traditional gender values among Mexican-heritage undergraduate women. We further examined whether profiles of varying engagement with cultural practices and traditional gender values related to differences in ethnic identity.

We specifically considered the experiences of Mexican-heritage women currently in college. Emerging adulthood has been described as a developmental period that is particularly important for identity

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development (Arnett, 2011). Negotiating new roles in college contexts can facilitate reflections on both the meaning of one's gender and ethnic identity (Azmitia et al., 2008; McLean et al., 2017). These reflections may spur challenges to perceived norms. For instance, U.S.-American college students who reported greater identity exploration also articulated more challenges to the gender status quo in personal narratives (e.g., desires for gender equality; McLean et al., 2017). Indeed, college is often a space where youth can learn more about critical gender and race studies (Bowen & Pérez, 2002; Hurtado, 2003; Nuñez, 2011), and they are exposed to progressive ideas about gender (Campbell & Horowitz, 2016). Longitudinal work has demonstrated college students more often discussed intersectional gender and ethnic experiences later in their college years than during their first year at college (Azmitia et al., 2008). Thus, the university context may facilitate Mexican-heritage young women's reflections on the meanings of their gender and cultural background.

Culture as Engagement With Practices and Values

Our research is informed by sociocultural and acculturation theories. According to the sociocultural perspective, culture is a constellation of practices and values that are shared among a community (Rogoff, 2003). Participation in a culture is determined by the extent to which one engages with their culture's various practices and values. These practices and values may be passed down by earlier generations or constructed by current generations (Rogoff, 2003; Rogoff & Angelillo, 2002). Furthermore, as cultural participants experience new contexts, new practices and values may be formed (Rogoff, 2003). In this manner, our sociocultural approach is complemented by acculturation theory (Lopez-Class et al., 2011; Schwartz et al., 2010). According to the latter approach, individuals experiencing new cultural contexts may undergo cultural changes that may vary across various domains (e.g., practices, values, identity). For example, Mexican-heritage women in the U.S. may incorporate new values into their cultural frameworks while maintaining many of their cultural practices (e.g., Hurtado, 2003).

From both sociocultural and acculturation perspectives, culture is not static or monolithic; rather, it is ever-evolving through cultural participation. Cultural participants are not assumed to be homogeneous. Instead, members of a cultural group may vary in how they engage with their heritage culture (Rogoff, 2003). Further, the same individual may even vary in how they engage with particular aspects of their culture. As they bridge values and practices across their heritage culture and mainstream U.S. society, Mexican-heritage women's engagement with one cultural domain may be congruent or incongruent to engagement with a different domain (Schwartz et al., 2010). Thus, different profiles may emerge when considering variations in Mexican-heritage women's cultural practices and gender values.

Cultural Practices

When developing measures of acculturation/enculturation, researchers have identified three types of cultural practices (Cuéllar et al., 1995; Wallace et al., 2010). First, cultural ties can be maintained through *language* (Cuéllar et al., 1995; Zea et al., 2003), such as speaking Spanish or Spanglish (interchanging

Spanish and English; Anzaldúa, 1987; Hurtado, 2003). Second, several *general behaviors* reflect one's connection with Mexican culture. These may include eating cultural foods, engaging with Mexican media, or celebrating cultural events (e.g., quinceañeras; Cuéllar et al., 1995; Dillon et al., 2009). Finally, *same-ethnic peer affiliations* are important opportunities for cultural engagement (Cuéllar et al., 1995; Phinney & Flores, 2002). In our person-oriented analyses, we considered possible ways these types of cultural practices may coincide Mexican-heritage women's endorsement of traditional gender values.

Traditional Cultural Gender Values

Some scholars have proposed machismo and marianismo as Mexican traditional gender values based on Mexican cultural values and history (e.g., Arciniega et al., 2008; Castillo et al., 2010). We focus on marianismo values as these most directly dictate expectations for women. Specifically, marianismo refers to traditional expectations modeled after La Virgen as the ideal woman (Castillo et al., 2010; Stevens, 1973). Researchers proposed five underlying components. First, the *familial pillar* value emphasizes that Mexican-heritage women should be central to the family and responsible for keeping the family together. Second, the *spiritual pillar* value stipulates women should be spiritually superior and responsible for the religiosity of their family. Third, the *virtuous and chaste* value emphasizes that women should be pure and sexual virgins until marriage. Fourth, the *subordinate-to-others* value stipulates women should defer to others, especially men. Finally, *self-silencing for harmony* specifies that women should downplay their needs to maintain harmony.

Marianismo is a helpful construct for identifying the ways that gender values relevant for women may occur in Mexican culture. At the same time, scholars have questioned the assumption that gender values are fundamental components of Mexican culture (see Cowan, 2017; Roschelle, 1999). That is, traditional gender values are aspects of culture but are not necessarily embraced by all cultural participants. Furthermore, the meaning and experiences of some values may not be negative among all individuals (Piña-Watson et al., 2016; Terrazas-Carrillo & Sabina, 2019). Notably, the familial pillar value reflects a strong orientation toward family closeness and leadership in the family, which can be an important source of strength (Piña-Watson et al., 2016). In contrast, other marianismo values are related to gender asymmetries in power and status. The virtuous-and-chaste value reflects the sexual double standard (e.g., Sagebin Bordini & Sperb, 2013), while the subordinate-to-others and self-silencing values reflect the maintenance of male dominance (e.g., Glick, 2006). Hence, women who reject traditional gender values may be especially likely to do so regarding the latter facets of marianismo.

Undergraduate Mexican-Heritage Women's Cultural Profiles and Ethnic Identity

We sought to test whether undergraduate Mexican-heritage women might vary in their engagement with various components of culture, including ethnic identity. According to Phinney's model (Phinney, 1992; Phinney & Ong, 2007), ethnic identity commitment is comprised of two components. First, *ethnic identity achievement* reflects one's secure commitment to their ethnic identity. Second, *ethnic affirmation and belonging* captures the extent that one feels

ethnic pride and as though one belongs in their ethnic group. To complement ethnic identity, we also evaluated *felt ethnic typicality* (Wilson & Leaper, 2016). Felt ethnic typicality refers to the extent that one feels similar to other members of their ethnic group (*in-group typicality*). In addition, we assessed their felt similarity to the White/European ethnic group (*out-group typicality*). Out-group typicality may be relevant given that Chicana feminists have documented the accusations of cultural abandonment (e.g., being White) experienced for criticizing sexism (Anzaldúa, 1987; Hurtado, 2003; Pérez, 1991). Thus, out-group typicality can provide insights into whether differences in cultural engagement are perceived by women as acculturative changes toward American culture or as occurring within one's Mexican culture.

As many traditional values restrict women and privilege men (Glick, 2006), we anticipated that some Mexican-heritage women's ethnic identity would be more strongly linked to their engagement with cultural practices over traditional gender values. Specifically, Mexican-heritage women who disavow traditional gender values but still engage with cultural practices may still develop a positive ethnic identity. Further, if traditional gender values are not viewed as key components of Mexican culture, they may still feel a strong sense of belonging to their Mexican ethnic group. Similarly, Mexican-heritage women may feel typical of other Mexican individuals and not necessarily feel more typical of White Americans, despite rejecting traditional gender values. Thus, many Mexican-heritage women may create cultural frameworks that are compatible with both their gender status and ethnic identity. Moreover, the process of creating these frameworks may even strengthen their ethnic identities (Phinney, 1992; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014).

Present Study

In the present study, we addressed the premise that undergraduate Mexican-heritage women may engage differently with their culture's practices and gender values but still maintain strong ethnic identities. We used latent profile analysis, a person-centered approach, to investigate different profiles of cultural engagement when considering cultural practices (language use/preference, general behaviors, same-ethnic peer affiliations) and traditional gender values (facets of *marianismo*). We examined whether Mexican-heritage young women's profiles differed on indicators of ethnic identity (achievement, affirmation/belonging, felt Mexican-typicality, felt White/European typicality) while controlling for their generational status in the U.S. Their generational status was covaried as cultural practices and gender values may be related to the extent one's family has been in the U.S. (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). Given the potential for diversity across cultural domains between and within individuals, we hypothesized:

1. Cultural profiles differing in levels of cultural practice engagement and traditional gender values would occur. We anticipated that some profiles could show incongruent levels of cultural practice engagement and traditional gender value endorsement (e.g., high practice engagement, low traditional gender value endorsement), whereas other profiles could show congruent levels (e.g., high practice engagement, high traditional gender value endorsement).
2. Regardless of women's gender values, we predicted cultural profiles with high engagement with cultural practices would demonstrate: (a) greater ethnic identity achievement, (b) greater ethnic affirmation/belonging, (c) greater-felt Mexican typicality, and (d) lower-felt White/European typicality.

Method

Participants

Women that self-identified as Mexican heritage were recruited from a Northern California university that has been designated a Hispanic Serving Institution. At this university, Latinx students comprise the third largest ethnic group (25.3%), following European American students (31.1%), and Asian-heritage students (27.6%). Additionally, 42% of undergraduate students at this university are first-generation college students.

The initial sample included 366 Mexican-heritage women. However, 44 participants were excluded due to failing attention checks (e.g., "If you are reading this, please select 'strongly agree'"). Thus, the final sample included 322 Mexican-heritage women ($M_{\text{age}} = 20.42$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 2.42$, range = 18–34 years old, 95.3% [$n = 307$] 25 years old or younger, one did not report age). Additional sample demographics are presented in Table 1. Our sample size is similar to prior person-centered analyses (e.g., Gonzales-Backen et al., 2017; Ren et al., 2020).

Table 1
Sample Characteristics

Demographic measure	<i>n</i>	%
U.S. generational status		
First-generation immigrants	48	14.9%
Second generation	210	65.2%
Third generation	53	16.5%
Fourth generation or more	11	3.4%
Self-identified sexual orientation		
Heterosexual or straight	231	71.7%
Bisexual	54	16.8%
Lesbian	10	3.1%
Queer	5	1.6%
Pansexual	4	1.2%
Asexual	2	0.6%
Questioning	1	0.3%
Pansexual/questioning	1	0.3%
Pansexual/queer	1	0.3%
Straight but bicurious	1	0.3%
Bi/pansexual	1	0.3%
Did not disclose	11	3.4%
Mother/primary female caregiver formal schooling		
Did not complete high school	128	39.8%
Graduated high school	52	16.1%
Attended some college	69	21.4%
Completed a bachelor's degree or more	52	16.2%
Did not report	21	6.5%
Father/primary male caregiver formal schooling		
Did not complete high school	106	32.9%
Graduated high school	38	11.8%
Attended some college	45	14.0%
Completed a bachelor's degree or more	40	12.5%
Did not report	93	28.9%

Procedure

Participants were screened as Mexican-heritage prior to viewing the study titled “Mexican-Heritage Ethnic Identity and Values Study” on an online Psychology participant pool. Participants were redirected to Qualtrics to complete the survey online. After providing consent, participants completed demographic measures and measures of interest. Items within each measure were randomized. In between the measures of interest were other measures not included in the current analyses. All study procedures were approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Measures

Descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations are presented in Table 2. See Supplemental Material for the items that comprised each scale.

Mexican Cultural Practices

Language Use, General Behaviors, and Same-Ethnic Peers. Participants completed a modified version of the Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans-II (ARSMA-II; Cuéllar et al., 1995). We modified items about language use and preference to separately ask about language preferences in specific contexts, in addition to adding two items about language use and preference. (e.g., “I use Spanish expressions or slang at [home/with friends] and [work/school].”) We also added seven items of general behaviors. (e.g., “I celebrate Mexican cultural holidays.”) Thus, the modified measure included scales of Mexican-heritage orientation through *language use and preference* (9 items, e.g., “I enjoy speaking Spanish,” $\alpha = .90$), *general behaviors* (9 items, e.g., “My family cooks Mexican foods,” $\alpha = .84$), and *same-ethnic peer affiliations* (3 items, e.g., “My friends now are of Mexican origin,” $\alpha = .74$). Responses were rated on a 5-item scale (1 = *not at all*, 2 = *very little or not very often*, 3 = *moderately*, 4 = *much or very often*, to 5 = *a lot or extremely often*).

Mexican Traditional Gender Values

Participants completed the Marianismo Beliefs Scale (MBS; Castillo et al., 2010). Similar to the adolescent MBS version (Piña-Watson et al., 2014), we added the preface “Mexican-heritage women should . . .” prior to the items. Participants completed subscales of *Familial Pillar* (5 items, e.g., “Mexican-heritage women should be a source of strength for her family,” $\alpha = .84$), *Spiritual Pillar* (3 items, e.g., “Mexican-heritage women should be the spiritual leader of the family,” $\alpha = .90$), *Virtuous/Chaste* (5 items, e.g., “Mexican-heritage women should be pure,” $\alpha = .82$), *Self-Silencing to Maintain Harmony* (6 items, e.g., “Mexican-heritage women should feel guilty about telling people what she needs,” $\alpha = .93$), and *Subordinate to Others* (5 items, e.g., “Mexican-heritage women should not speak out against men,” $\alpha = .86$). Responses were rated on a 6-item scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *somewhat disagree*, 3 = *slightly disagree*, 4 = *slightly agree*, 5 = *somewhat agree*, 6 = *strongly agree*).

Outcome and Covariate Measures

Ethnic Identity Achievement and Affirmation/Belonging. Participants completed items about Mexican or Mexican American identity from the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992). These included the *Ethnic Identity Achievement* subscale (7 items, e.g., “I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me,” $\alpha = .77$) and the *Ethnic Identity Affirmation and Belonging* subscale (5 items, e.g., “I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group,” $\alpha = .87$). Items were rated on a 5-item scale (1 = *not at all* to 5 = *a lot or extremely often*).

Mexican and White/European Typicality. Participants reported their *Felt Mexican Typicality* (4 items, e.g., “I feel like I’m just like other Mexican-heritage persons that I know,” $\alpha = .90$) and their *Felt White/European Typicality* (4 items, e.g., “I feel like I’m just like White or European-heritage persons that I know,” $\alpha = .91$) from the Multidimensional Model of Ethnic-Racial Identity (Wilson & Leaper, 2016). Responses were rated on a 5-item scale (1 = *not at all* to 5 = *a lot or extremely often*).

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and Zero-Order Bivariate Correlations Among Study Measures

Study measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Generation	—												
2. Language use	-.45***	—											
3. General behaviors	-.24***	.63***	—										
4. Same-ethnic peers	-.12*	.43***	.51***	—									
5. Familial pillar	.09	.03	.02	.05	—								
6. Spiritual pillar	.04	.08	.07	.02	.41***	—							
7. Virtuous and chaste	.02	.08	-.00	.01	.46***	.59***	—						
8. Self-silencing	-.04	.09	-.02	-.01	.24***	.56***	.58***	—					
9. Subordinate to others	-.01	.05	-.07	-.06	.24***	.51***	.56***	.87***	—				
10. Felt Mexican typicality	-.11	.43***	.48***	.50***	.14*	.09	.16**	.12*	.03	—			
11. Felt White typicality	.23***	-.36***	-.34***	-.42***	-.07	-.09	-.12*	-.03	-.05	-.29***	—		
12. Identity achievement	-.12*	.42***	.59***	.39***	.05	.11*	-.04	-.02	-.05	.43***	-.27***	—	
13. Affirmation/belonging	-.13*	.46***	.60***	.47***	.03	.06	-.03	-.11	-.14*	.54***	-.32***	.70***	—
Range	1–4	1–5	1–5	1–5	1–6	1–6	1–6	1–6	1–6	1–5	1–5	1–5	1–5
<i>M</i>	2.08	2.99	3.77	3.97	4.30	2.11	2.77	1.33	1.41	2.99	2.30	3.49	4.15
<i>SD</i>	0.67	0.92	0.68	0.78	1.04	1.28	1.10	0.79	0.80	0.94	0.94	0.76	0.77

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Generational Status. Participants reported their generational status in the U.S. using an item adapted from the ARSMA-II (Cuéllar et al., 1995). Response options ranged from: 1 = “You were born in a country outside the USA” to 6 = “You and your parents were born in the USA. And all grandparents were born in the USA.” Responses were recoded into four generational groups ranging from 1 = *first-generation immigrant* to 4 = *fourth generation or greater*.

Results

Planned Analyses

Latent profile analysis (LPA) was used to identify profiles of engagement with cultural practices and traditional gender values. Specifically, LPA models were tested using tidyLPA R software (R Core Team, 2020; Rosenberg et al., 2018). The models included eight indicators: language use, general behaviors, same-ethnic peers, familial pillar, spiritual pillar, subordination to others, self-silencing, and virtue/chastity. Maximum likelihood estimation accounted for missing data. We tested models beginning at a one-profile solution where the inclusion of an additional profile was compared to a model with $k - 1$ profiles using the bootstrapped-VLMR likelihood ratio test. Profiles were tested until the bootstrapped-VLMR became nonsignificant and the additional profile did not improve fit (Lo et al., 2001). Profiles were also evaluated using decreasing AIC, BIC, and sample-size-adjusted BIC (aBIC) values and entropy (distinction between classes) greater than .80 (Ferguson et al., 2020; Kline, 2010). Finally, interpretations of the profiles were evaluated based on indicator means as high to low (Ferguson et al., 2020).

We then tested whether the profiles differed on ethnic identity by testing four ANCOVAs with the profiles as the predictor, generational status as a covariate, and the respective ethnic identity variable (ethnic identity achievement, ethnic affirmation/belonging, felt Mexican typicality, and felt White/European typicality) as the outcome.

Cultural Framework Profiles

The tested series of models indicated that the bootstrapped-VLMR became nonsignificant ($p = .406$) after the addition of a 10th profile (see Table 3). The AIC, BIC, and aBIC indicated decreasing values at the fifth-profile solution. Of the fifth-profile to ninth-profile solution, entropy was greater among the fifth- and sixth-profile solutions. Of these two solutions, fit indices and profile interpretability supported the five-profile solution. Thus, the five-profile solution demonstrated the best fit, which was supported by an entropy value of .91. See Figures 1 and 2; also see Table 4 for profile-descriptive statistics.

Profile 1: Immersed/Nontraditional

The most common profile of Mexican-heritage women (60.6%) was generally characterized by high cultural practices (CP) and mostly low traditional gender values (TGV). Specifically, they reported moderate Spanish use and high engagement with general behaviors and same-ethnic peers. Additionally, they reported generally low agreement with nearly all TGV. The one exception was the familial pillar value to which they reported high agreement. As

Table 3

Model Fit for Latent Profile Solutions of Cultural Practices and Traditional Gender Values Profiles

k profiles	AIC	BIC	aBIC	Bootstrapped VLMR p value	Entropy
1	6,828	6,888	6,838	—	—
2	6,140	6,234	6,155	.010	1.00
3	5,772	5,900	5,792	.010	.98
4	5,622	5,784	5,648	.010	.89
5	5,398	5,594	5,429	.010	.91
6	5,399	5,630	5,436	.010	.87
7	5,282	5,546	5,324	.010	.84
8	5,278	5,577	5,312	.010	.80
9	5,221	5,553	5,274	.010	.84
10	5,175	5,541	5,234	.406	.83

Note. AIC = Akaike information criterion; BIC = Bayesian information criterion; aBIC = sample-size adjusted BIC; VLMR = Vuong-Lo-Mendell-Rubin likelihood ratio test. Selected model for best fit is indicated in bold.

noted earlier, this particular TGV may least reflect gender asymmetries in power. Hence, we considered this profile immersed in cultural practices and nontraditional in gender values and labeled this profile: *immersed/nontraditional*.

Profile 2: Immersed/Moderate

The second profile of Mexican-heritage women (15.5%) was also generally characterized by high CP but moderate TGV. Specifically, they reported moderate Spanish use and high engagement with general behaviors and same-ethnic peers. Additionally, they reported moderately nontraditional gender values. On the one hand, they indicated high agreement with the familial pillar and virtuous/chaste values as well as modest agreement with the spiritual pillar value. On the other hand, they reported low agreement with the subordinate and the self-silencing values, which each are the TGV mostly explicitly reflecting gender asymmetries in power. Therefore, we called this profile *immersed/moderate* to reflect their strong immersion in cultural practices and moderate gender values.

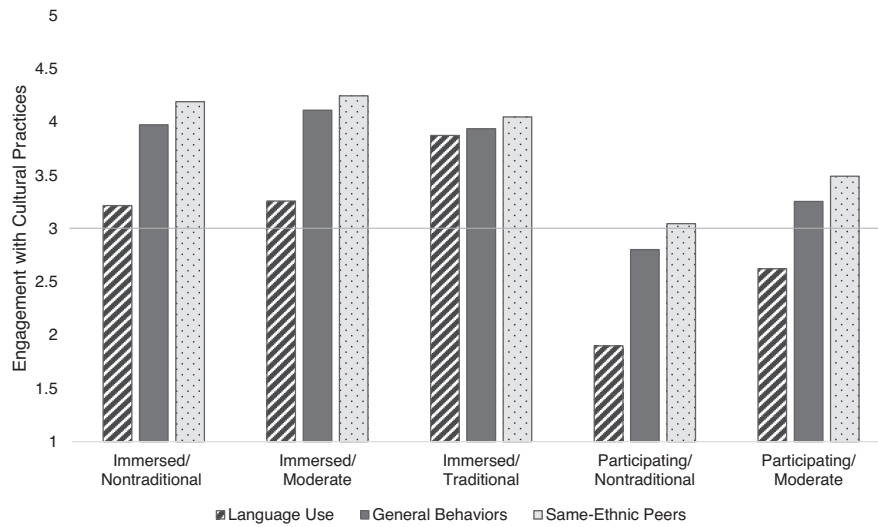
Profile 3: Immersed/Traditional

The third profile comprised the smallest group of women (2.2%) and was generally characterized by high CP and high TGV. They reported high engagement with Spanish, general behaviors, and same-ethnic peers. This group also reported high agreement with all TGV. Hence, we labeled this profile *immersed/traditional* to reflect their strong immersion in practices and their traditional gender values. Despite being a small proportion of our sample, this profile consistently emerged in each potential profile solution. Therefore, we report this profile as part of the solutions; however, we omitted this profile from subsequent analyses, given that its small sample size limits the ability to draw meaningful comparisons.

Profile 4: Participating/Nontraditional

The fourth profile of Mexican-heritage women (16.1%) was generally characterized by moderate CP and mostly low TGV. Specifically, they reported low Spanish use and moderate engagement with general behaviors and same-ethnic peers. They also

Figure 1
Estimated Means of Latent Profiles on Cultural Practices Indicators



Note. The measures were rated on a 5-point scale (1 = not at all to 5 = a lot or extremely often).

reported low agreement with all TGV except for the familial pillar value (which was generally endorsed). Based on these indicators, we interpreted this group as participating (but not immersed) in CP and nontraditional in TGV. Accordingly, we labeled this group: *participating/nontraditional*.

Immersed/Moderate group, this profile also reported high agreement with the familial pillar and virtue/chaste values, modest agreement with the spiritual pillar value, and low agreement with subordination and self-silencing. We labeled this profile *participating/moderate* to reflect their moderate practices participation and traditional gender value endorsement.

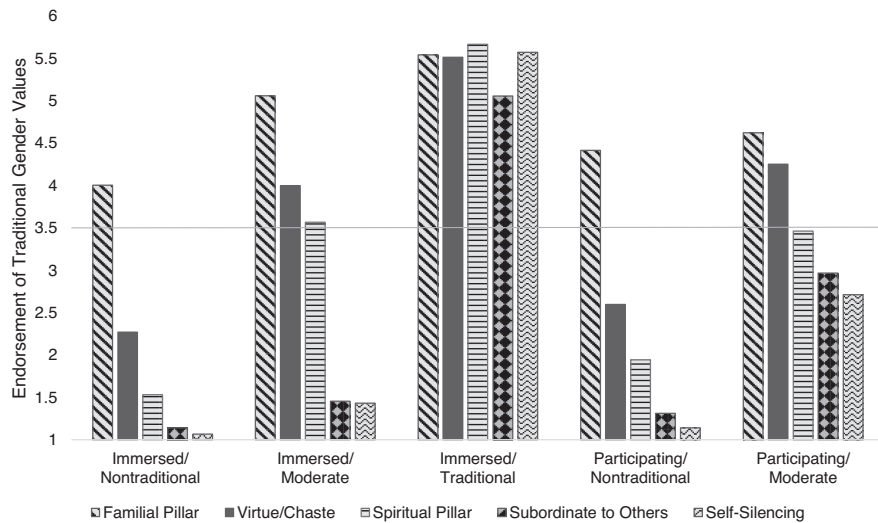
Profile 5: Participating/Moderate

The fourth profile of Mexican-heritage women (16.1%) was generally characterized by moderate CP and moderate TGV. Specifically, they reported moderate Spanish use and moderate engagement with general behaviors and same-ethnic peers. Similar to the

Comparisons of Latent Profiles on Ethnic Identity Outcomes

Four ANCOVAs tested the profiles as the predictor, generational status as a covariate, and ethnic identity dimensions as the outcomes.

Figure 2
Estimated Means of Latent Profiles on Traditional Gender Values Indicators



Note. The measures were rated on a 6-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree).

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics of Indicators by Latent Profiles of Cultural Frameworks

Indicators	Immersed/ Nontraditional		Immersed/ Moderate		Immersed/ Traditional		Participating/ Nontraditional		Participating/ Moderate	
	<i>n</i> = 195 (60.6%)		<i>n</i> = 50 (15.5%)		<i>n</i> = 7 (2.2%)		<i>n</i> = 52 (16.1%)		<i>n</i> = 18 (5.6%)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Cultural practices										
Language use	3.22	0.76	3.26	0.86	3.87	0.72	1.90	0.61	2.62	0.99
General behaviors	3.97	0.47	4.11	0.54	3.94	0.61	2.80	0.51	3.25	0.70
Same-ethnic peers	4.19	0.64	4.24	0.60	4.05	0.97	3.04	0.58	3.49	0.96
Traditional gender values										
Familial pillar	4.00	1.04	5.06	0.70	5.54	0.57	4.42	0.88	4.62	0.94
Spiritual pillar	1.53	0.75	3.57	0.90	5.67	0.38	1.94	1.16	3.46	0.90
Virtue and chaste	2.27	0.62	4.00	0.91	5.51	0.88	2.60	0.80	4.25	1.03
Self-silencing	1.07	0.15	1.43	0.43	5.57	0.53	1.14	0.21	2.71	0.69
Subordinate to others	1.14	0.26	1.46	0.45	5.06	1.53	1.31	0.41	2.97	0.61
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Generational status										
First-generation immigrant	34	17.4	3	6.0%	3	42.9%	5	9.6%	3	16.7%
Second generation	137	70.3%	37	74.0%	4	57.1%	22	42.3%	10	55.6%
Third generation	22	11.3%	8	16.0%	0	0.0%	18	34.6%	5	27.8%
Fourth generation or more	2	1.0%	2	4.0%	0	0.0%	7	13.5%	0	0.0%

Note. Measures of cultural practices were rated on a 5-point scale (1 = not at all to 5 = a lot or extremely often). Measures of traditional gender values were rated on a 6-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree).

In these analyses, the Immersed/Traditional profile was omitted due to the small sample size. As described next, the ANCOVAs indicated main effects for each of the outcomes (see Table 5 and Figure 3). Independent pairwise comparisons for estimated means covarying generational status were conducted using the Bonferroni adjustment on SPSS.

Ethnic Identity Achievement

As expected, the Immersed/Nontraditional and Immersed/Moderate profiles reported significantly greater ethnic identity achievement than the Participating/Nontraditional and Participating/Moderate profiles. No additional differences between profiles emerged. Additionally, generational status was not a significant covariate, $F(1, 310) = 0.02, p = .882$.

Ethnic Affirmation/Belonging

Confirming expectations, the Immersed/Nontraditional and Immersed/Moderate profiles reported significantly greater ethnic affirmation/belonging than the Participating/Nontraditional and Participating/Moderate profiles. Similarly, no additional differences emerged. Covarying generational status was also not significant, $F(1, 310) = 0.08, p = .775$.

Mexican Typicality

Partially consistent with hypotheses, the Participating/Nontraditional profile reported significantly lower-felt Mexican typicality compared to the Immersed/Nontraditional and Immersed/Moderate profiles. However, the Participating/Moderate profile only reported significantly lower-felt Mexican typicality compared to the Immersed/Moderate

Table 5
Marginal Means and Univariate Results of Cultural Profiles and Ethnic Identity Dimensions Covarying Generational Status

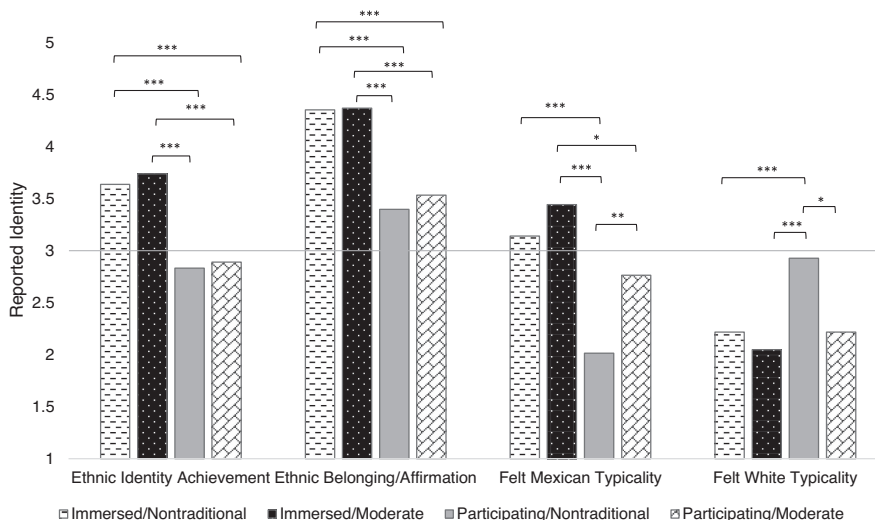
Outcome measures	Immersed/ Nontraditional		Immersed/ Moderate		Participating/ Nontraditional		Participating/ Moderate		<i>F</i>	η^2
	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>		
Ethnic identity achievement	3.64 _a	.05	3.74 _a	.10	2.83 _b	.10	2.89 _b	.16	24.78***	.19
Ethnic affirmation/belonging	4.35 _a	.05	4.37 _a	.10	3.40 _b	.10	3.53 _b	.16	32.42***	.24
Felt Mexican typicality	3.14 _{a,c}	.06	3.44 _a	.12	2.02 _b	.12	2.76 _c	.19	29.63***	.22
Felt White typicality	2.22 _a	.06	2.05 _a	.13	2.93 _b	.13	2.22 _a	.21	9.94***	.09

Note. Different subscripts within rows indicates significant differences ($p < .05$) between latent profiles. All outcome measures were rated on a 5-point scale (1 = not at all to 5 = a lot or extremely often). Marginal means were estimated with generational status set at 2.10. The Immersed/Traditional profile was not included in analyses due to the profile's small sample size ($n = 7$).

*** $p < .001$.

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Figure 3
Estimated Marginal Means of Ethnic Identity Dimension Outcomes Among the Latent Cultural Profiles Covarying Generational Status (Set at Generation = 2.10)



Note. The immersed/traditional profile was not included in analyses due to the profile's small sample size ($n = 7$). The measures were rated on a 5-point scale (1 = not at all to 5 = a lot or extremely often).

profile, but not the Immersed/Nontraditional profile. The Participating/Nontraditional profile also reported significantly lower-felt Mexican typicality than the Participating/Moderate profile reported. No other differences emerged. Generational status was not a significant covariate, $F(1, 309) = 0.05, p = .822$.

White/European Typicality

Partially confirming expectations, only the Participating/Nontraditional profile reported significantly greater-felt White/European typicality compared to the Immersed/Nontraditional and Immersed/Moderate profiles as well as compared to the Participating/Nontraditional profile. No additional effects of the profiles emerged.

However, covarying generational status was significant, $F(1, 310) = 7.66, p = .006; \eta^2 = .09$. Pairwise comparisons indicated that first-generation ($M = 2.26, SD = .87$) and second-generation women ($M = 2.16, SD = .87$) reported lower-felt White/European typicality than fourth-generation or greater women ($M = 3.32, SD = 1.31$), $p < .01$. Second-generation women (but not first-generation women) also reported lower felt White/European typicality than third-generation women ($M = 2.70, SD = .1.01$), $p < .001$. First- and second-generation women did not significantly differ from each other, $p = 1.000$. Third- and fourth-generation or greater women also did not differ from each other, $p = .252$.

Discussion

According to the World Economic Forum (2021) Global Gender Gap Index, the USA and Mexico are closely ranked at #30 and #34, respectively, in overall equality—with Mexico outranking the USA in political empowerment. In contrast, within some academic literature and media, a narrative has emerged of Mexican culture being inherently patriarchal in comparison to mainstream U.S. culture (for

critiques, see Cowan, 2017; Hurtado & Sinha, 2016). However, scholars have challenged this restrictive, monolithic representation of Mexican culture (e.g., Hurtado, 2003; Piña-Watson et al., 2016). Informed by these works, our study revealed five cultural profiles among Mexican-heritage young women at a U.S. university that disentangle the assumed connections.

Patterns of Cultural Profiles

Highlighting the diversity among Mexican-heritage young women, our results identified five profiles of Mexican cultural engagement. Three of the five profiles demonstrated high levels of engagement with general cultural behaviors (e.g., celebrating cultural holidays) and same-ethnic peer affiliations. These cultural practices have been identified as strong indicators of enculturation (Cuéllar et al., 1995; Dillon et al., 2009). Among the women in the *immersed-n-practices* profiles, most reported generally moderate Spanish use. As the majority of participants were born in the U.S., it may be expected that Spanish use was lower than the other cultural practices. In many instances in the U.S., parents have opted against teaching their children Spanish as protection from discrimination (Murillo & Smith, 2011).

Despite three of the five profiles demonstrating similar immersion in cultural practices, they were unique from one another in their traditional gender values. These profiles demonstrated the different ways that cultural frameworks might reject certain gender values, particularly those perceived as incompatible with their experience as women. For instance, women's self-silencing to maintain harmony and subordination to others were generally rejected. These traditional gender values may have been viewed less favorably by most of the Mexican-heritage women as they most clearly disadvantage women (Castillo et al., 2010). Thus, Mexican-heritage women may be more motivated to reject these gender values.

Experiences with gender inequality may prompt some women to reject the gender values that limit them. However, other women may engage in system justification (Jost & Kay, 2005; McLean et al., 2017). Mexican-heritage women that come to accept the gender status quo may endorse restrictive gender values believed to be necessary for society (Jost & Kay, 2005). Women may also distance themselves from the implications of these values (McLean et al., 2017). For example, women are more likely to endorse restrictive gender attitudes when they have other women in mind as opposed to themselves (Becker, 2010). Although it was a small group, we saw evidence of this pattern in the *immersed/traditional* profile. We suspect that obtaining a large sample of women fitting the *immersed/traditional* profile may be difficult with college samples, given that colleges often facilitate more progressive ideals about gender (Campbell & Horowitz, 2016; Hurtado, 2003). Accordingly, most Mexican-heritage women in our college sample tended to reject these values. Future research can explore if and why some women may endorse restrictive gender beliefs in college contexts.

Notably, the *participating/moderate* profile reported more favorable endorsement of restrictive gender values than the two other *immersed* profiles we identified. This pattern further challenges the narrative linking strong cultural ties with traditional gender values as this group engaged in cultural practices less often than these other profiles. The generally low endorsement of these values and the disconnection of these values to cultural practices is more notable considering these ideologies are those most often discussed as representing Mexican traditional gender values (see Cowan, 2017; Roschelle, 1999).

Women in our sample appeared to vary in their endorsement of the spiritual pillar and virtuous/chaste values. These values may be linked through religious ideals about moral virtue (Castillo et al., 2010). The variation in endorsement of these values may be due to some women perceiving strength in being the spiritual-moral leaders of their families, whereas other women may perceive these values as restrictive. Most of the women in our sample tended to disagree with spiritual pillar and virtuous/chaste values. Emerging adulthood is a critical period for shifts in religious beliefs (Dillon & Wink, 2007) and sexuality explorations (Halpern & Kaestle, 2014). Thus, young women in college may be more likely to perceive these values as limiting. The *immersed/nontraditional* profile reported the lowest endorsement of these values—even compared to the *participating/nontraditional* profile. Thus, the rejection of traditional gender values does not necessarily correspond to a wholesale rejection of other aspects of culture.

Finally, the familial pillar value was favorably endorsed across the profiles. Familial pillar incorporates *familismo* values of the importance of family (Knight et al., 2010), which may have contributed to this more favorable view. Additionally, familial pillar characterizes women in seemingly positive terms. Prior work has attributed links between familial pillar endorsement and positive academic outcomes to a sense of strength and leadership derived from being central in the family (Piña-Watson et al., 2016). However, it is important to note that women may find themselves restricted if their strength is limited to domestic domains (Glick, 2006; Jost & Kay, 2005). More research is needed to disentangle these potentially empowering and restrictive components of familial pillar values. Nonetheless, the potential empowerment derived from being revered in the family may have resulted in Mexican-heritage women viewing these values as compatible with their identity.

Ethnic Identity of Cultural Profiles

Mexican-heritage women living in the U.S. must balance their Mexican identities within dominant U.S.-American culture. Regarding gender values, some Mexican-heritage women could negotiate this landscape by acculturating to U.S.-American culture (Wheeler et al., 2010). However, other Mexican-heritage women may construct their own frameworks of what their culture means to them without rejecting their ethnic-cultural identity. Indeed, Chicana feminist scholars have documented this process (e.g., Anzaldúa, 1987; Hurtado, 2003; Pérez, 1991). This premise is also supported by a multidimensional acculturation approach and the sociocultural perspective that emphasize culture as participation with practices and values that can be uniquely changed through participation (Rogoff, 2003; Schwartz et al., 2010).

The potential disentanglement of traditional gender values from cultural frameworks may be even more likely among college-going emerging adults. Emerging adults often reflect more deeply on their gender (McLean et al., 2017) and ethnic identities (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). Furthermore, college students may be reflecting on their identities in more critical contexts such as race or gender courses (Bowen & Pérez, 2002; Hurtado, 2003; Nuñez, 2011). Indeed, our findings supported these notions.

Specifically, Mexican-heritage women in the two *immersed-in-practices* profiles, regardless of gender values, reported greater ethnic identity commitment than the *participating-in-practices* profiles. Notably, both the *participating-in-practices* profiles reported moderate ethnic identity commitment despite the *participating/nontraditional* profile reporting greater engagement with traditional gender values. This demonstrates that for some Mexican-heritage women, traditional gender values were not the key components of their cultural frameworks. Instead, it appeared as though immersion with practices was most linked to a secure Mexican/Mexican-American identity and sense of belongingness. Indeed, cultural practices are often the most concrete ways in which Mexican-heritage individuals engage with their culture (Cuéllar et al., 1995; Dillon et al., 2009). For example, many Latinx individuals have reported engaging with cultural foods and holidays as their primary connection to culture (Weller & Turkon, 2015).

The two *immersed* profiles also generally reported feeling typical of Mexican-heritage individuals and felt more typical than the *participating* profiles. Notably, the *participating/nontraditional* profile reported the lowest feelings of Mexican typicality, even compared to the *participating/moderate* profile. The *participating/moderate* profile may have reported greater feelings of ethnic typicality given they maintained some engagement with cultural gender values. Additionally, the *participating/nontraditional* profile also reported the lowest Spanish use among all the profiles. This lack of Spanish use may also have contributed to their lower feelings of Mexican typicality compared to the *participating/moderate* profile. Among Latinx youth, less felt in-group typicality has been linked to an inability to speak Spanish (Sanchez et al., 2012).

Our findings regarding out-group typicality further demonstrate that the disentanglement of gender values from culture does not necessarily correspond to an abandonment of one's cultural orientation in favor of another culture. Specifically, the two *immersed* profiles, regardless of gender values, did not feel as though they were typical of White/European-heritage individuals. In contrast, the *participating/nontraditional* profile of women reported

generally feeling moderately typical of White/European-heritage individuals. This problematizes the notion of using egalitarian gender values as indicators of U.S.-American acculturation (e.g., Su et al., 2010) as these Mexican-heritage women did not generally feel typical of White Americans. Instead, they maintained their ethnic identities quite strongly.

Altogether, our findings support previous Chicana feminist narratives about diverse cultural participation (e.g., Anzaldúa, 1987; Hurtado, 2020; Pérez, 1991). Many Mexican-heritage women appeared to maintain engagement with cultural practices. They were also most likely to reject the subordinate and self-silencing marianismo values that most explicitly emphasize men's dominant status relative to women. In contrast, they were very likely to agree with the familial pillar value, which upholds many *familismo* values (Knight et al., 2010). What remains unclear from the present study is whether Mexican-heritage women who endorse the familial pillar believe that men should similarly adhere to this value—reflecting *familismo*. If so, then their endorsement could reflect how egalitarian beliefs are evident in Mexican cultural values. Future research should clarify this by assessing these values about women and men separately (see Muehlenhard & McCoy, 1991; Paynter & Leaper, 2016).

Limitations and Future Directions

In the present study, we focused on undergraduate Mexican-heritage young women as the university context may facilitate reflections on culture. However, we caution against generalizing to the experiences of all—or possibly even most—Mexican-heritage women. Universities may raise social consciousness about inequalities in society (Azmitia et al., 2008; Bowen & Pérez, 2002; Nuñez, 2011). Women in our sample may have also had greater opportunities to experience new cultural practices and values given the ethnically diverse student population. Thus, women in college may be more likely to disentangle restrictive gender roles from their cultural frameworks. Indeed, only a small group of women in our sample strongly favored each marianismo value. Therefore, we encourage researchers to advance a representative view of experiences rooted in acknowledging differences within a cultural group. For example, many learn to navigate their ethnic identity and gender status through experiences with coworkers, peers, or relatives (Gallegos-Castillo, 2006; Hurtado, 2003). Also, many youths, especially youth of Color, need to fulfill adult-like roles earlier in development and may not experience a formal emerging adulthood stage (Nelson, 2020).

Future research should also consider men and persons with nonbinary gender identities. As Hurtado and Sinha (2016) demonstrated, many Mexican-heritage men reject hegemonic masculinity and endorse feminist ideals. Additionally, Mexican-heritage individuals with nonbinary gender identities (e.g., nonbinary, agender) may have to navigate particularly difficult narratives about their culture that emphasize binary gender roles. Similar to Chicana feminist accounts of lesbian sexuality (e.g., Anzaldúa, 1987; Pérez, 1991), we may come to find that many nonbinary Mexican-heritage persons find ways to create and extend their cultural frameworks to capture their experiences.

In addition, we used an existing construct of marianismo. The development and application of marianismo has been thoughtfully based on a cultural approach to understanding the lives of Mexican-

heritage youth (e.g., Castillo et al., 2010; Piña-Watson et al., 2016; Sanchez et al., 2018). In future research, we recommend further exploring traditional gender values (e.g., marianismo, machismo) and the extent to which individuals endorse particular gender-related values for one gender more than another.

Finally, we hope that more work will explore how the specific forms of traditional gender values investigated in our study may relate to Mexican cultural practices, ethnic identity, and other cultural values. For instance, familial pillar incorporates facets of *familismo*, which is strongly linked to Mexican culture and ethnic identity (Stein et al., 2017). Future work can also consider other cultural values to determine whether different cultural values (e.g., *familismo*, *respeto*) are maintained despite a disavowal of some traditional gender values.

Conclusion

The present study demonstrated the different ways that Mexican-heritage women engage with their Mexican culture. Guided by contemporary acculturation approaches (Schwartz et al., 2010) and a sociocultural perspective (Rogoff, 2003), we highlighted multidimensional components of culture that included practices, gender values, and identity. Specifically, we employed a person-centered method of analysis to identify profiles of cultural engagement and approached ethnic identity multidimensionally. Through these approaches, we have sought to paint a more representative portrait of Mexican culture as experienced by Mexican-heritage young women. In line with Chicana feminist theories, many Mexican-heritage women create their own ways of engaging with Mexican culture (Anzaldúa, 1987; Gallegos-Castillo, 2006; Hurtado, 2003; Pérez, 1991). Importantly, we have highlighted that many Mexican-heritage young women disavow many of the traditional gender values that are often assumed by others to be the key components of their culture and that they do so while maintaining strong ethnic identities.

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