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Sin Convivencia, Sin Confianza: Emotional Experiences of *Soledad* among Tijuanense Adolescents

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree Master of Arts

in

Anthropology

by

Giselle Sanchez

Committee in charge:

Professor Janis H. Jenkins, Chair
Professor Thomas J. Csordas
Professor Bronwyn N. Kaiser

2019

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Chair

University of California San Diego

2019

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Sin Convivencia, Sin Confianza: Emotional Experiences of *Soledad* among Tijuanense Adolescents

by

Giselle Sanchez

Master of Arts in Anthropology

University of California San Diego, 2019

Professor Janis H. Jenkins, Chair

Loneliness has garnered attention in recent years as a public health issue of "epidemic" proportions. From linkages between loneliness and increased heart attack risk and depression (Cacioppo et al 2006, Xia and Li 2018) to loneliness as a cause of contemporary political polarization in the U.S. (Brooks 2018), the lived experience of loneliness examined through an anthropological lens is limited. In this paper, I explore the subjective experience of "*soledad*" among Mexican adolescents living under conditions of socio-structural adversity. In an effort to respond to "what really matters" (Kleinman 2006) in the context of daily life for adolescents who participated in the study, this paper identifies *soledad* as shaped by and grounded in morally-laden cultural conceptions of familial and interpersonal *convivencia* (living with, being with). Through feelings of "*depresión* (depression)," having "nobody to talk to," and the absence of "*confianza* (trust)," this paper examines what it means to "to be with" or "live with" others

in relation to *soledad*. I argue for an increased attention to the primacy of lived experience in the context of global mental health research on the topic of loneliness and its intersections with mental health and wellbeing.

INTRODUCTION

Loneliness has most popularly been defined as "subjective distress...it is the discrepancy between the social relationships you want and the social relationships you have" (Scutti 2018, Cacioppo et al 2006, Peplau and Perlman 1982). Indeed, common conceptions of loneliness involve a dissonance between desired social relationships and those which form a part of one's everyday life. Research on the causes and prevalence of loneliness have been conducted on the relationship between loneliness and specific personality traits, gender, age, and modernity (Teppers et al 2013, Borys and Perlman 1985, Nicolaisen 2014, Putnam 2000). Media calls for an attempt to "improve" connections between people in the hopes of avoiding the numerous negative health risks associated with loneliness (Halvorson 2010, Voce 2016). While examinations of loneliness proliferate in medical, psychological, and public health fields, anthropological inquiry into how cultural, structural, and ecological forces might foster and shape subjective experiences of loneliness continues to be limited, particularly within the domain of experience of emotion.

Though explicit anthropological examination concerning loneliness remains limited, some works are of relevance. Biehl demonstrates how political, social, and economic forces desolate, exclude, and ultimately abandon "social outcasts" in urban locales of Brazil (Biehl 2005). Coleman theorizes solitude not as an "anomic" state, but as a kind of sociality in itself (Coleman 2009). O'Nell conceives of loneliness as an embodied expression of historical displacement (O'Nell 1998) and Ozawa-de Silva examines loneliness as existential suffering among Japanese youth (Ozawa De-Silva 2008). This thesis contributes to ethnographic approaches to subjective experiences of loneliness, attending to the cultural grounding of loneliness among youth in relation to emotional experience- emotion linking feeling, cognition, person, body, and action (Rosaldo 1984, Desjarlais 1992, Csordas 1994) shaping and shaped by ecological, historical, cultural, and sociological contexts. In line with previous literature on the cross-cultural variation of expression and experience of emotion (Kitayama and Markus 1994, Shweder et al

1984, Lutz 1988, Geertz 1973), so too can feelings of loneliness vary according to historical and geographic contexts.

Drawing from phenomenological methodology (Desjarlais and Throop 2011, Csordas 2002, Jackson 1996), this article attends to body and emotion in relation to interaction and mutual influence within interpersonal relationships among youth. I argue that culturally-constituted *convivencias*, spaces and forms of interaction, situate feelings of *soledad* that emerge in the daily lives of adolescents in our study. Culturally-elaborated possibilities for interaction and being with one another are shaped by broader socio-structural forces, such as economy and structural violence that not only foster feelings of *soledad*, but also reveal how subjectivities are shaped by time and space. With a dedication to the primacy of lived experience as a focal point of examination, this paper calls for an increased attention to the cultural, sociological, historical, and political contexts for global mental health research on the topic of loneliness and its intersections with mental health and wellbeing of youth across the globe.

CONVIVENCIA: **LIVING AND BEING WITH OTHERS**

In Spanish, *convivir* translates literally to "live with." However, it can also mean "interaction with," "get together with," "do things with," or simply "be with" in everyday discourse. Historically, *convivencia* has been used in a variety of religious and political contexts in Latin American and Hispanic communities. It has been used to describe desired relations of religious tolerance and ethnic coexistence and plurality in multicultural spaces (Chak 2009, Erickson 2011, Suarez-Navaz 2004). In Mexico, *convivencia* has been used by political parties as a discourse for desired social relations. For instance, the current Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (AMLO) presidential administration in Mexico aims for a "regeneration of the societal ethics" of Mexico to improve a "social *convivencia*." In their eight points for establishing national peace and safety in Mexico, the AMLO administration cites marginalization and poverty as the factors shaping the "crisis of values and *convivencia* rampant in Mexican society," which they argue have further contributed to violence in Mexico (El Universal, 2018).

In fact, the moral call for a restitution of improved *convivencia* in Mexico has gained traction in recent years particularly with regards to the familial sphere. Increased funding for community activities and infrastructure such as "family runs" and cycling rinks stress the importance of familial *convivencia* for healthy familial and social relationships. Increased news media opinion pieces link a lack of *convivencia* with increased violent behavior citing an improvement of familial *convivencia* as a necessary step for mitigating such social concerns. Taken together, the media surrounding the importance of familial *convivencia* form the social consciousness and atmosphere of Mexico (El Universal 2018, Miranda 2018, Zavala 2018, Lopez Estrada 2009).

Convivencia in the day to day lives of Mexican people refers to the time during which relatives and friends may get together. In this space, they can be *conviviendo* (doing things together and being with one another). It is also possible for someone to say "*la convivencia no es tan buena entre nosotros*" (The way we get along is not so good). Thus, the *convivencia* between people, be it couples, families, or neighborhoods, is something that can be assessed as a matter of gauging how one's relationship is with another. In this way, spaces of *convivencia* tie to possibilities for interaction and being with another as influenced and shaped by the broader social, cultural, and economic environment. Therefore, *convivencia* not only refers to being physically with another, but it can also refer to forms of interaction in coexistence.

EMOTION AND EXPERIENCE

Theories of emotion situated within webs of interpersonal relationships have long been a part of anthropological literature (Rosaldo 1984, Lutz 1988, Shweder et al 1984). Rosaldo argues that "emotions are about the ways in which the social world is one in which we are involved...feelings are not substances to be discovered in our blood, but social practices organized by stories that we both enact and tell. They are structured by our own form of understanding" (1984:143). Similarly, Lutz argues that emotions refer to situations rather than internal, personal feelings (Lutz 1988). For Ratcliffe, "emotional experience is inextricable from a wider disturbance of the experiential world within which that event or situation is

encountered." (Ratcliffe 2017:156). In the case of adolescent participants, feelings of *soledad* are situated within moral interpretations and expectations of familial interactions that are experienced as distressing, distant, and blocked. *Experience* here refers to "meaningful sensory perception in temporal context and within particular cultural, social, and interpersonal settings" (Csordas and Jenkins 2018:208). Thus, *soledad* as articulated through feelings of *depresión* (depression), having nobody to talk to, and as lacking *confianza* (trust) point to interpretations and evaluations of how their relationship is with kin (*convivencia*) and how it should be.

According to Edgerton, a rule is "a shared understanding of how people ought to behave and of what should be done if someone behaves in a way that conflicts with that understanding. Rules then prescribe or proscribe behavior...and have a regulatory sense" (Edgerton 1985:24). In particular, the ethos surrounding familial *convivencia* in Mexico speaks to both explicit and implicit dispositions of particular ways of being and acting as a family including, but not limited to, the amount of time spent together, getting along with one another, and being there for one another (Lopez Estrada 2009, Cauce and Domenech-Rodriguez 2002). Although familial *convivencia* refers to physical co-presence, it also engages with intersubjective sensory processes such as speaking with one another, spending time together, touching or hugging one another, and emotional and attentional attunement with one another. The experience of such sensory processes in relationships with others inform us of the kinds of morally laden "rules," expectations, and "habitus" (Bourdieu 1977) that shape conceptualizations of "good" relationships.

FAMILIAL *CONVIVENCIA* AND FEELINGS OF *SOLEDAD*

Familial *convivencia* carries cultural purchase in terms of how interpersonal relationships between family relations influence emotional experience, mental health, and wellbeing. Jenkins has illuminated the way in which violations of cultural rules elicit criticism amongst family members afflicted with mental illness, as a way to compel behavioral changes (Jenkins 2015). Drawing from Sapir's assertion that the locus of culture is in interpersonal interactions, coupled with Sullivan's and Bateson's

attention to emotional spheres, Jenkins argues for the need to understand a person's positionality within their social networks to understand emotional experience. Thus, the familial context provides one setting in which her use of "expressed emotion" allows for the analysis of the impact of emotional experience on mental health and wellbeing. Although expressed emotion has traditionally been used as a matter of assessing familial relationships toward mentally ill persons, I argue that it encompasses a general familial emotional atmosphere that shapes how kin interact with each other and how members feel within that interpersonal sphere. Therefore, emotions and feelings that arise from such interpersonal spaces reveal the ways in which such relations are complexly mediated and shaped by cultural expectations, rules, and morals that shape what it means to feel and be well in one's social sphere.

ADOLESCENCE, CO-PRESENCE, AND EMPATHY

Previous anthropological work has demonstrated adolescence to represent a period during which individuals consolidate their identities and roles in their cultural spaces (Csordas and Jenkins 2018, Lowe 2000, Mead 1930). Recent works have also highlighted adolescents' active participation in their social lives (Csordas and Jenkins 2018, Panter-Brick 2002). Adolescent relationships with parents reveal adolescent understandings of self-identity in relation to others and morally-laden interpretations and evaluations of parental behavior and expression toward them. These interpretations and evaluations as embodied, lived, and felt, influence how they perceive their parents and also how parents perceive them. While these perceptions between parents and adolescents may not always align, such interpersonal interactions are infused with cultural understandings of age difference, kin hierarchies, and duties and responsibilities. It is in the space of familial *convivencia* that such forces interplay with broader socio-structural adversities. For instance, varying opinions, perceptions, and/or feelings clash in familial *convivencia*, and while this may be less distressing among certain families, those laden with more frequent familial tensions, hostility, and criticism contribute to adolescents' feelings of having nobody to talk to or trust.

The experience of familial presence both physical and affective reveals the significance of empathic processes of co-subjectivity (Hollan 2014, Throop 2008) in emotional experiences, especially in narratives of *soledad*. *Soledad* as grounded in interpersonal familial *convivencia* speaks to what it means to be and live with another person in Mexico, as well as how this relationship engages with understandings of the self, emotion, and environment. Adolescent feelings of *soledad* tied to feelings of an absence of trust, interaction, care, and support reveals what is desired in their relationships, yet what is nonetheless blocked or hindered in family life. On the one hand, there is a clear social and political impetus for an "improvement of familial *convivencia*," but on the other hand, structural forces, such as violence and poverty, preclude the possibility and ability for such familial relations to take place. Furthermore, parents' own life histories and pasts shape their own understandings and lifeworlds that may at times diverge from adolescents' points of view and feelings. The distances, connections, and/or tensions engendered between such divergences illuminate the fluidity of possibilities of being together, of feeling understood, and of feeling in the presence of another as a matter of culturally-constituted mutual influence.

METHODS

This discussion stems from ongoing research conducted by our research team[1] concerning adolescent mental health in Tijuana B.C., Mexico. A primary research goal is to understand the social, cultural, and economic contexts that shape mental health and wellbeing among adolescents in this region. Adolescents, 15-17 years old, were recruited from a high school near the U.S./Mexico border via snowball sampling. Our mixed-methods approach included person-centered interviews, ethnographic observation, and psychological assessments. We conducted 35 adolescent interviews (20 female, 15 male), 26 parent interviews (20 female and 6 male), 8 mental health provider interviews (7 psychologists,

[1] This study stems from the research study titled, "Cultural Perceptions of Bienestar Emocional (Emotional Well-being) and Patterns of Help-Seeking An Anthropological Study in Tijuana, Mexico." PI: Dr. Janis H. Jenkins UCSD IRB #160163

1 psychiatrist), and 2 school service provider interviews in Spanish. In addition to sociodemographic data, we also collected data from the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9) modified for teens (Johnson et al, 2002), and the Generalized Anxiety Disorder scale (GAD-7) modified for teens in Spanish for adolescent and parent participants.

We utilized the NVIVO coding software for collected interviews and SPSS for the PHQ-9 and GAD-7 scores for data analysis. We coded interviews based on emotional experiences such as anger, sadness, anxiety, nervousness, and loneliness. Significantly, our interview guides did not include loneliness, but rather it emerged as a salient experience for adolescents in our analysis of the ethnographic interviews.

FINDINGS

Based on our ethnographic observations and interviews, we learned that many of our adolescent participants live in the area surrounding the high school, comprised of primarily low to low-middle income households. In contrast to middle-income class neighborhoods in Tijuana, these lower-income class areas disproportionately witness increased criminal activity, reduced public resources, and deficient infrastructure (Arredondo et al 2018). Indeed, lived experiences of insecurity and economic precarity permeate the narratives of our participants. While we address the dynamics of wage labor in Mexico elsewhere (Jenkins et al, forthcoming), it is important to note that the current low wage labor dynamics in Mexico impacts the daily lives of our participants primarily through the long labor hours of both parents. Based on our sociodemographic data, 48% of parents in our study work in what is classified as full time (25-48 hours a week) and 36% percent of parents work overtime (more than 48 hours a week). This labor dynamic means that many of our adolescent participants come home from school and spend 4-7 hours alone or with younger siblings until parents arrive home from work while simultaneously being prohibited to leave their home for their safety.

Parental absences in the home inform adolescent accounts of their familial *convivencia*. For example, some adolescents state that their family doesn't *convivir* (spend time together) during the week because "everyone is doing their own thing" or because they are "too tired." While physical parental absence plays a role in adolescent accounts of a lack of familial *convivencia*, a more detailed account of adolescents' understandings of *convivencia* sheds light on what it means to live and be with each other at home, and how this ties with experiences of *soledad*. When adolescents in our study spoke about *convivencia*, they referred to shared activities, feelings, and possibilities within their interpersonal relationships. Common activities described in a space of *convivencia* included talking, playing, watching movies or TV, laughing, and going out places together. The inability or impossibility to engage in these activities related to accounts of not liking the *convivencia* at home and at school, or feeling like it was lacking in their daily lives. Most notably, "*poder hablar*" (being able to talk) stands out in accounts of *convivencia* in relation to relationships described as having *confianza* (trust). Adolescents describe "talking" in relation to the ability to "express themselves" while sharing, "without judgment," and with the expectation that the listener will be "understanding." While this ability to talk and share is important in their interpersonal relationships at school, it reigns supreme in accounts of familial interactions and bonds for our adolescents (Jenkins et al, forthcoming).

This description of what *convivencia* means to adolescents plays a pivotal role for accounts of *soledad* and its ties to the broader social, cultural, and economic environment. Long parental labor hours that require both parents to be out of the home for long stretches of time contribute to adolescent feelings of an absence of familial *convivencia*; that is, the lack of interaction with parents. Yet physical presence is but one factor in the relationship between soledad and *convivencia*. Familial interactions laden with frequent fights and tension can lead to feelings of a lack of *convivencia* despite the physical presence of parents. Thus, *convivenci*a, as a space of possibility to share feelings, opinions, actions, and thoughts with kin, mediates feelings of *soledad* within interpersonal relationships.

For adolescents who express feelings of *soledad*, *convivencia* with family is paradoxically experienced as both desired, yet avoided, due to frequent fights and tensions when relatives interact. Some spoke of a physical and affective lack of *convivencia* with parents that cause them to feel like they have no one to talk to or trust (*confianza*). Others spoke of an absence of a "*convivencia social* (social convivencia)" in their neighborhoods because of the inability to go outside and make friends due to insecurity. Thus, lived experiences of blocked or hindered possibilities for a *convivencia* that encompasses culturally-laden conceptions of kin roles and values such as support and care, foster emotional responses and feelings of *soledad*, depression, and anger among adolescents in their daily lives. The following case studies illustrate subjective experiences of *soledad* and their connection to familial *convivencia*.

NARRATIVES OF *SOLEDAD*

Marisol y Ernesto: "Viviendo juntos pero separados": Living together but separate

Marisol is a 15-year-old girl in second semester of 9th grade. She enjoys reading and drawing in her free time. She is the middle daughter among her family of three siblings. She spends about 7-8 hours alone at home after school since her parents work long daily shifts often returning home by 9-10pm. Marisol feels as though she lacks close friends and doesn't socialize much at school. She dislikes that her peers act "*llevados*" (impertinent) and often say coarse and offensive things. Nonetheless, she states that some of her peers have invited her to go out and when they have seen her sad at school they have sat with her and talked with her. However, she experiences a lack of *confianza* (trust) with her friends because of their offensive comments and thus laments her inability to share with them. In addition to her lack of closeness with friends, Marisol describes a difficult home life filled with tension and hostility.

Marisol feels a lack of "closeness" with her family causing her to feel *sola*, (lonely) *desanimada* (dispirited; down), *deprimida* (depressed), and *enojada* (angry). She describes her parents' relationship as one characterized by constant fighting and tension in her day to day life. She perceives her family to be

“so separated that sometimes they have can’t stand having to see each other.” According to Marisol, her parents have tried to ameliorate their relationship by trying to *convivir* (spend more time together):

> ST7: They have tried to *convivir* more...as a family, but that is what I also don't like sometimes. Because I know that if we get together as a family everything is going to end badly, because in the majority of my memories when we are together as a family it always ends badly.
>
> I: And how is it when everything ends up badly? What is it that happens?
>
> ST7: Sometimes consciously or unconsciously my mom says something that offends my dad, and then my dad keeps offending my mom...and from there a commotion happens. Sometimes, we as children don't like to see that scene, of having to see your parents fighting. So sometimes we try to stop them and then that is when they mess with us.

This kind of familial interaction has shaped Marisol’s articulations of feelings of depression which she defines as “absolute loneliness.” Although in moments of nostalgic contemplation, Marisol remembers a positive moment with her family describing it as a “moment of familial *convivio*, where [her] parents and siblings were all together without fighting and arguments.” She nonetheless fears familial interactions because of previous experiences of fights and tensions. This paradoxical desire to both avoid, yet experience moments of familial coexistence, points to the kind of *convivencia* Marisol wishes existed within her home. Moreover, her parents’ “offensive comments” coupled with their reticence to “see each other” informs her avoidance of a *convivencia*, revealing the familial emotional atmosphere of tension, distance, and hostility. Furthermore, according to Marisol, her parents have referred to her as *holgazana* (lazy), *sin verguenza* (shameless), and as not doing anything useful, interpreting these criticisms as contributors to her *soledad,* depression, and anger. Marisol feels as though she does not have any *confianza* [trust] with her parents to tell them about her experiences or how she is feeling when they are together. She laments that her once-close relationship with her sister, who has moved out, has transformed into a distant one because her sister also maintains that Marisol is “lazy and should do something useful.”

The criticisms that Marisol experiences at home result in feelings of sadness, distance, and anger in her *convivencia* with her parents. On the one hand, Marisol expresses anger and sadness because her

parents are often out working. Yet her experiences demonstrate that in addition to the limited amount of time spent as a family, the way in which they all relate to each other, perceive each other, and act with one another shape Marisol's feelings of a lack of familial *convivencia*, hindering her sense of trust and comfort within her own home. Disparaging comments about her feelings and frequent aggressive interactions, coupled with parental physical absence, shape Marisol's *soledad*: her feeling that "she doesn't fit into things," that no one listens to her, and that nobody cares.

Her father, Ernesto a 46-year-old man from Chihuahua, came to his interview exhausted and irritable, but ready for the interview to commence so that he could return to work. He works two jobs: as a tailor in his own home and as a homecare worker for two elderly neighbors. He generally only has a 3-hour break in between both jobs, and sometimes finishes working at around 2 a.m. His wife of 23 years is a saleswoman and though they are separated they currently live together. When asked how he thinks his daughter is doing he responded:

> E: [Exhales heavily] Well lately we have had a lot of problems in terms of the psychological with her because she has had depression. So... there have been a lot of ups and downs with her. But it's been...well since...the depression detonated …. it's been like 4 or 3 years, but in that moment, it was very hard. Now she's...more or less able to...or leaving her alone for some time so that she controls herself, and then all of a sudden, she'll be like happy. She has lapses. When things don't go her way, she gets depressed. But I mean ...we're...I'd say it's...now because her age, she's becoming more mature. The depression she gets now isn't as strong.

Throughout the interview, Ernesto expressed concern about his daughter's "lapses of depression," attributing these in large part to his wife's constant accusations of his infidelity, her "explosiveness," and "constant yelling" ever since Marisol was little. In addition to blaming Marisol's mother for her depression, Ernesto is certain that Marisol's depression began when a close family friend and neighbor was killed. He's convinced that this triggered her current state primarily because this event "affected him greatly." He feels as though when this occurred he "closed [him]self off with [his] pain and failed to notice that it affected her so much that six months later she was talking about committing suicide." At around the same time that his neighbor was killed, Ernesto experienced an "*ataque de nervios*" (nervous

attack) because his truck was stolen and his wife accused him of giving it to his mistress. Additionally, his godson was murdered, and his father died. He considers [him]self "strong" and asserted that his therapy was distracting himself with his work. Significantly, in our conversations with Marisol, she never spoke about her neighbor's death. While it may be that the death may be too painful for Marisol to speak about, or she may not connect the death to her depression, it is important to note that Marisol's interpretation of her feelings of loneliness and depression at least while participating in our study, concern her parents' relationship and on that she and her father agree. Nonetheless, the death clearly impacted Ernesto's own wellbeing and his understanding of what afflicts her.

Ernesto tries to convey to his daughter that what has helped him deal with his problems is avoiding bringing shame to his mother. He tells Marisol, "if [you] don't want to embarrass [me], [you] need to behave." He expresses frustration that he feels as though he has to "constantly, remind her and hurry her to do things on time" because of her "inability and trouble with organizing her time." He describes her as not waking up on time, being easily distracted, and wasting her time reading on her phone instead of studying or doing school work. He admits these exchanges affect him because he fears for her future. He frequently says to Marisol:

> E: Marisol, remember that if you don't do well in school and don't finish, you won't have a good job, you're not going to have a good life, or you're going to struggle and end up in whatever job that will pay you low. You're going to suffer. I don't want to see you suffer. I'm struggling, I'm working all the time, all the time I've been with you, trying to motivate you.... I'm not trying to mistreat you, I'm trying to teach you something.

Ernesto's plea to Marisol to change her behavior and disposition reveals the intricacies and complexities of *convivencia* in Marisol's home. Though he admits to constantly "being on her" to do things and to change her behavior, he interprets his actions as moral lesson and concern for his daughter's ability to attain a "good life." Moreover, his constant labor appears to be in part an economic strategy as well as a therapeutic one in dealing with the adversities he has experienced. In an attempt to "let her calm

down" Ernesto leaves her alone also a means to compel behavioral change to ameliorate possibilities for more tension or altercation. It is evident that Ernesto also experiences distress due to the familial emotional atmosphere at home highlighting the ways in which members are mutually influenced in *convivencia*, simultaneously opening the doors for connection and/or distance between persons. Ernesto expresses concern over his daughter's future because of her current emotional state, while Marisol expresses concern over her parents' relationship with each other and their care and affection toward her. Ernesto has said to Marisol "the problems your mom and I have, that's another problem. Your life is your life, our life is another..." This attempt to convey to Marisol that his relationship with his mother should not influence her, reveals his own understandings of possibilities for resilience and wellbeing that tie to his own lived experience and that do not necessarily resonate with Marisol's understanding of her parent's behavior and their influence on her.

Diego y Sandra: "Soy muy diferente a mi familia": I'm very different from my family

Diego is a 15-year-old second semester freshman in high school. He enjoys reading Shakespeare, going online to watch funny videos on YouTube, and listens to rock n' roll. He is the youngest of 3 brothers and admits that his older brother bullied him while growing up. His mother, Sandra, works as a store clerk and salesperson, while his father, who recently lost his factory job, works as an Uber driver. Diego has moved 6 times in the past year due to economic troubles. He states that ever since he can remember, the maximum amount of time his family has been able to stay in a home has been a year and a half. For Diego, what makes the constant moving difficult is not the prospect of meeting new people and experiences, but rather "what you've left behind."

In describing his daily routine, Diego states that there's usually nobody home when he returns from school. Since his parents and brothers have varying schedules, everyone returns home at different hours of the day and days off fail to coincide for everyone. His mother is usually the first to return home around 7 p.m., after which point the rest start trickling in. He feels as though the people he mostly *convive* (spends time with) are his peers at school. Although he admits that he has friends, he feels as though he

does not express himself freely with them nor does he seek to establish closer bonds with them because of his fear of losing them if his family moves again. He admits that his family interacts with each other sometimes in the evenings, though he notices that everyone is tired and more interested in eating their dinner than in engaging in "interesting conversation." When asked with whom he would identify a closer relationship, Diego responded:

> D: Well I don't have anyone to tell my things to because I'm not very open, and since I haven't had many friends...and I'm also not very open with my family. In fact…I think I am way too serious with my family and more active here at school, because...I feel like [my family] are scared of me (small laugh) they see me and it's like...well they don't have anything to talk with me about because they aren't like me.

Diego feels different from his family in terms of shared interests, behavior, and ways of being. He feels as though his parents "don't really have anything to talk with him about," "fight a lot," and don't really have shared interests. He considers himself "weird or special" and that his family evaluate his tastes "as weird and different." Diego notices that he doesn't smile often at home, and multiple times throughout his interview he shared that he tends to avoid expressing how he feels. He believes that he hasn't always received the attention of his parents and thus has gotten used to nobody being there to help him or for him to talk to. He often experiences tensions with his family because he feels as though he experiences the brunt of the housework. Since nobody is home, he is in charge of cleaning, taking care of the family dog, doing everybody's laundry and finishing all household chores. It bothers him that he does all of these chores and he doesn't receive 'a thank you' or 'anything special' in return, though he admits sometimes his mother does thank him. He feels as though his mother is the one that more actively asks him about things such as any potential girls in school he may be interested in, or about his grades, but he feels that since she has been working long hours she comes home late, tired, and often forgets things that he has shared with her. He says he experiences frequent "*ataques de tristeza*" (sadness attacks), adding that he feels "tired, and without hope, as though nobody would listen to him and nobody would care." Diego

feels that ever since his family started working he doesn't share as much with his family and that there is not much to talk about anymore.

Sandra is Diego's 35-year-old mother who works 72-hour work weeks to help put food on the table for her husband and 3 sons. She started working 5 years ago when she noticed that her husband's salary was not enough to make ends meet. She had to beg her husband to let her work as he was hesitant about their sons' welfare without her at home. She and her husband have been married since she was 15 years old, though there was a short period of time when they separated. In describing her three sons, Sandra states that she worries the most about her middle son because he's imperative and *despapayoso* (roudy, mischievous). With regards to Diego, she says that it is almost as though "she didn't have another son" because of his calm and quiet demeanor. She says that Diego is in charge of taking care of the house, and that she often feels like she has to interrogate him about how his day went. She feels like she has to be "on him" asking him what he did, what he ate, and what his girlfriend is like. In fact, she expresses a few times throughout the interview her attempts to *convivir* (spend time) with him on her day off. However, she feels as though he is always on his phone and that she sometimes has to take it away when he's with her so that they can be together. Sandra describes Diego as "always having been different from the rest of the family." She says he went through a phase when he really liked anime (a style of Japanese film and animation) which she and the rest of the family found strange. She said he has gone through phases during which he has dressed "weirdly" and acted in a way that caught the attention of the rest of the family.

> S: He wanted me to buy him the...the sweaters...stamped with [anime] and all those things and [my middle son] would tell him 'I am embarrassed he's my brother' [I would tell him] 'you don't have to be embarrassed... His arms were up to here [points to elbow] with bracelets, and I was like 'oh dear lord'... but what could I do?
>
> I: So he had different tastes?
>
> S: Yes, there was a time...well not a time, but we did...well I didn't know what...when I saw that he started dressing kind of weird and all that...I would ask myself, 'is he gay?'...I was like that for some time. And then my sister would tell me, 'well he doesn't play soccer'... I have 3 [sons], my sister has three males, and my other sister has 2 girls and one guy. Well, all 7 of them, they go play soccer and [they ask] Diego, 'let's go play soccer"

> [he responds] 'oh no, what a bore' and he would stay there and he wouldn't go play. When they would take him to play soccer he would say, 'why should I go if I always get hit by the ball?' And we always go and [he says] 'oh no what a bore' and so [his cousins] would say "ay, you're acting like a gay"

For Sandra, Diego's way of dressing, interests, and behavior set him apart from the rest of his family. In particular, she expresses this with an inflection of worry and fear that his "different" and "strange" tastes could mean that he is homosexual. However, now that he dresses in a more "normal" manner, and has been dating a girl for a year, she feels more at ease. Curiously, when we asked Diego about any romantic relationships, he stated that he didn't have a girlfriend, and that "he doesn't have what it takes to be a good partner." Regardless of whether he has a girlfriend, it is clear that while growing up, Diego's family thought of him as different because of his tastes and behavior, which Diego reciprocally feels about himself. For Diego, openness with his family is mediated by the kinds of conversation he feels he can have with them due to the limited amount of time spent, the kinds of activities they share, and, as elucidated by Sandra, the negative opinions and perceptions they have of his "different" characteristics. It is in this space of familial *convivencia* that Diego experiences himself as other from his family and that fosters his feeling that there "really is no one to talk to."

In both of these case studies, expectations for familial *convivencia* and a lack thereof, foster feelings of having nobody to talk to, nobody caring or being there, and feeling that one is not particularly close with anybody. Such ties and bonds between families are imbued with morally-laden, culturally-constructed understandings of support and care. Moreover, the interactions between kin shed light on diverging understandings and interpretations between parents and adolescents that influence notions of being and feeling understood and listened to. Bodily presence as encompassing emotional and attentional attunement is hindered both by life histories and the social, cultural, and economic environment. It is clear how the ecology within which these adolescents and their parents live comes to the foreground in moments of co-subjectivity and presence. Ernesto's own experiences of structural violence and Sandra's own stigmatizing perceptions of homosexuality influence how they interact with their children highlighting their concern for their future and for their successful integration into society.

***SOLEDAD* AND GLOBAL MENTAL HEALTH**

As the increased attention to the negative impacts of loneliness on health continues, the primacy of lived experience is vital to conceptualizations and examinations of loneliness cross-culturally. Feelings of *soledad* interlinked with feelings of *depresión* (depression), sadness, and anger arise within the social networks one has and the cultural meanings bestowed upon them. While the loneliness scale (Russell 1996) appears to be the main source of identification and assessment of loneliness in the U.S. and U.K., the scale fails to consider such cultural, social, economic, and structural forces that shape and influence emotional experiences of loneliness. Moreover, the individualized approach of the UCLA loneliness scale falls short with respect to contexts wherein loneliness involves familial atmospheres of tension, hostility, and criticism. Thus, in response to the scaling up of global mental health interventions (Prince et al 2007), such assessments require an attention to cultural consideration, lived experience, and political, social, and economic ecologies (Jenkins and Kozelka 2017) which ground emotional experience. Feelings of *soledad* as influenced by these atmospheres concern the intricacies of care and kinship cross-culturally, and the structural forces that shape, permit, and/or block particular ways of being and living with one another.

An ethnographically informed approach to experiences of loneliness sheds light on the ways this feeling is shaped and informed by the cultural, structural, and historical forces that allow or foreclose particular ways of being and interacting with one another. Valued relationships and the forms of interactions within them, are themselves culturally, socially, and structurally elaborated according to the ethos and norms of everyday life in a given context. The connection between loneliness, depression, and anger among these Tijuanense adolescents highlights the salience of loneliness to mental health research and the conditions in which it arises. Thus, this study suggests that explorations of loneliness demand an attention to the lifeworlds of individuals as well as to the phenomenological dimensions of loneliness as feeling.

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