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How Transnational Couples Deal with Teen Substance Use: A Socio-Contextual View

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How Transnational Couples Deal with Teen Substance Use: A Socio-Contextual View

by

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Each person whose signature appears below certifies that this dissertation in his/her opinion is adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree Doctor of Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Dr. Carmen Knudson-Martin, Chairperson

Using the lenses of social constructionism and critical feminist theory, this
dissertation examines how transnational Mexican couples in the agricultural town of
Mecca, Southern California, respond to the crisis created by their adolescent children
using illegal substances.

As part of the Contemporary Couples' Study of Loma Linda University, sixteen
families were interviewed about how this problem affected their lives. The rich stories
collected were analyzed using the Strauss and Corbin (1998) guidelines for qualitative
research, in order to identify grounded theory that would inform services to this
population.

Results suggest that these couples' relationships are organized around the world
of male work. Hard working husbands bring respect to themselves and to the wives who
care for them. Female work is appreciated but deemed secondary. Contrary to the
literature, female earnings in this study did not appear to promote more egalitarian
relationships. During the crisis the couples continued to deal with each other under the
same cultural values that guided their lives before: the men in charge of providing for the

home and making the important decisions, and the women accepting responsibility for supporting their husbands and raising the children.

However, though hard work, outside and inside the home, is essential for these parents' idea of respect, it is not a value shared by their more acculturated children. In trying to find the cause of disrespectful children who do not obey their parents, men accuse mothers of lacking discipline and overindulging children; women point to uninvolved fathers whose work take them away from home too long. Parents also blame their children's "risky" friends, and several social contextual factors. Nonetheless, the desire to maintain a united family prompts the couples to revise their understanding of the construct of "respect" and find for it a new meaning, not based on obedience.

Findings of this study will help therapists to become more efficient in working with Latino couples, better equipped to identify their strengths, and able to help clients redefine their cultural values --instead of abandoning them-- when their unique migration experience challenges them.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation study explored the relational processes and cultural values and beliefs of low income rural transnational Mexican couples living in the town of Mecca, in Southern California, and the diverse ways in which they dealt with their adolescents who used illegal substances.

Transnational is a term applied to groups of immigrants who keep ties very close to their countries of origin (visiting often, calling daily, and able to reproduce the native environments) and have a different experience regarding acculturation than other immigrants (Falicov, 2007). This study takes a socio-contextual framework that includes a focus on gender and hierarchy issues related to the experience of immigration and the interactions with disobedient offspring.

Latino parents sometimes don't understand that adolescent acculturation may become a painful process that can lead to the use of illegal substances (Falicov, 1998). Adolescent substance use is a multidimensional phenomenon for young people regardless of ethnicity or migratory status (Liddle, Rodriguez, Dakof, Kanzki, & Marvel, 2005), that becomes more complicated for transnational youth who are working with their own identity challenges and are affected by their parent's acculturation stress (Umaña-Taylor & Guimond, 2010). Part of the parent's acculturation stress derives from the changing gendered discourses that challenge couples' traditional values while they become exposed to the more liberal and egalitarian system of the new country (Falicov, 1998; Hirsch, 2003; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994). Other sources of stress are the result of ineffective interactions with social institutions; discourses of discrimination,

racism, poverty, governmental rules, and religiosity impact seriously in the ability of Latino parents to monitor and guide their children (Akers-Chacon, 2006; Gonzalez & Portillo, 2007; Inclan, 2003; Kondrat, 2002).

This dissertation adds to the growing body of research on farmworkers Mexican families and gives tools to mental health workers to better understand their struggles and support them through intergenerational conflicts.

My Personal Journey

A variety of circumstances came together to develop this dissertation. My clinical work placed me in the small town of Mecca, in Southern California, a little piece of Mexico in the United States, where I immediately felt in love with the people. My internship was done in an agency specialized in substance abuse where I became familiar with the pain that alcohol and drugs bring to individuals and families. That same agency gave me the opportunity to become certified in the Multidimensional Family Therapy model created by Howard Liddle in the University of Florida, an approach to work with adolescents with substance abuse problems that emphasizes the importance of parents and the environment on the treatment. A minority fellowship funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and received through the American Association for Marital and Family Therapy (AAMFT) inspired the desire to help enrich research in the field of addictions in the Hispanic population.

Being Latina, bilingual and bicultural, an immigrant who knew the stress of spending the first five years of my stay in the United States as an undocumented alien,

the daughter of a life-long alcoholic who succumbed young to the disease, a mother of two and grandmother of four, and a dedicated Christian woman, helped me to join well with my clients. However, being a White-Latina, a United States citizen, and being a doctoral student were signs of privilege that had the potential of creating some degree of separation.

For the last four years I have felt very fortunate; interacting with my clients in Mecca has enriched my life in a powerful way. Their stories of resilience are numerous: confronting extreme poverty, forced separation from loved ones, not being able to see sick or dying relatives in their country of origin due to lack of proper immigration papers, feeling unable to leave abusive relationships, fleeing into hiding at the appearance of border patrol vehicles, harvesting fruits and vegetables under extreme temperatures, feeling torn for not knowing what to do when their rebellious children fail in school and in life, and accepting the unavoidable reality that they may have to live with two hearts, one for each country they love (Falicov, 2005) for the rest of their lives.

In what may be seem as a paradoxical experience, the poor Mecca residents are some of the more positive people I have met, telling me stories filled with gratitude, hope, generosity and love. I was originally surprised by their apparent happiness and resilience, and wanted to understand better the source of their optimism. I also became curious about how these outside appearances may or may not translate to dealing with a stressful situation such as a child using substances. I also wondered how gender dynamics came into play during a crisis like that. In trying to understand the living experience of these transnational couples I ended up increasing my own happiness and resilience.

Objective

The overall research question that initiated this qualitative study was: How do cultural ideas and social contextual factors impact the parent's ability to deal with adolescent's substance use? Two additional sub-questions focused on the specific chosen population: (1) How do transnational couples construct their relationship ideals and expectations within changing gender, cultural and social contexts? and (2) What relational processes inhibit or promote creative responses in dealing with their children's substance use?

The purpose of this study was to identify grounded theory that would inform services to Mexican transnational families stressed with adolescent substance.

Background

According to reports from the 2010 U.S. census, the Hispanic population in California increased by 27.8 percent in the previous decade, reaching a 37.6 percent of the total of the state residents (White is 57.6 percent). Numbers for Mecca and North Shore, the two districts under the zip code 92254, have the total population at 15,193 Latinos and 274 non- Latinos, which means that only 1.8 percent of the inhabitants are non- Hispanics, a much larger proportion than the state at large (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

Other details for the zip code have not been released yet, but the 2000 census showed that comparing with the U.S. population, Mecca residents were younger (23.3% versus 35.3%), had larger families (4.81 versus 3.14) had less High School graduates (22.9 versus 80.4), had a lower per capita income ($6,804 versus $21,587), had more

individuals below poverty level (44.4% versus 12.4%), and a larger number spoke a language other than English at home (89.5% versus 17.9%) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

My personal assumption is that the numbers have not changed much. I also believe they don't include the large number of undocumented immigrants who live in the area but prefer to remain invisible to authorities. As a young and growing group, Latinos will have an impact in the developing of this nation; transnational Mexican adolescents are part of the youngsters that Marotta and Garcia (2003) say "are both hope and challenge" for the country.

In the process of making meaning of the experience of living within two cultures, all immigrants, young and old, are constantly challenged by the prevailing discourses of the host environment (Inclan, 2003). To experience acculturation distress is part of the migration process. The way couples deal with the challenges of this distinct way of life impacts on their relationship, and tests the important cultural values responsible for shaping their lives together, especially in relation to issues of gender and hierarchy (Falicov, 1998).

One of the areas of conflict that was a topic of interest in this dissertation involved how socio-contextual factors such as involvement in the community, connections with schools, work environment, and so on, affected the couples' relationships. Another interest was to study how these processes may have been different depending on gender. The way all parents renegotiate the hierarchal power affects their ability to protect their adolescent children against the risk of substance abuse (McLoyd, Cauce, Takeuchi, & Wilson, 2000).

Adolescent substance use is a multidimentional phenomenon in which the larger

social context is crucial. The emotional commitment of the parents in becoming

protective factors is paramount (Rowe, Liddle, McClintic, & Quille, 2002). Because

parenting together is such an advantage in rescuing adolescents from drugs and alcohol

(Liddle et al., 2005), the meaning that couples give to substance abuse, the impact of

their children's addictions on their own lives, and the social and relational factors

involved in their response, are important research issues.

Rationale

The majority of the published articles treat Hispanics as one large, homogeneous

body, ignoring their incredible subgroups differences (Bermudez & Bermudez, 2002).

Because of those important differences, marital and family therapists and other service

providers would benefit from learning about the experience of specific subgroups. The

focus in this study on Mexican low income immigrants in an agricultural setting

provides a basic platform to help clinicians better understand critical social and

relational processes that ultimately could be key to therapeutic success in this large

population.

Many articles regarding couples relationship are based on comparisons with

Anglos or African Americans, and are too often based on stereotypes and gender roles

emphasizing machismo and marianismo (McLoyd et al., 2000), practices that change

enormously when moving to an individualistic society (Falicov, 2010).

More rich testimonies of the meaning and experience of transnationals in their

relationship with drugs and alcohol can help therapists move away from stereotyping

and be able to understand and empathize with their Latino clients more effectively. The present study, being a reflection from the voices of the participants, aims to enrich the literature and help create more culturally competent mental health providers, able to use creative, ethnically specific interventions to help their clients (Bermudez & Bermudez, 2002).

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is embedded within a social constructionist framework that utilizes symbolic interaction theory to help explain the construction of meaning, and feminist critical theory to make visible the influence of structured social inequality in personal lives. The multicultural ecosystemic comparative approach (MECA) devised by Celia Falicov (1998) is used to analyze specific issues impacting the lives of transnational Latino couples working in the rural areas of Southern California while they deal with substance use/abuse of their adolescent children and the new way of relating to each other in the midst of acculturation challenges.

Social Constructionism and Symbolic Interactionism

Social construction is a dynamic, creative and social view of people. It is the view that reality is understood and created through social interaction, as opposed to the idea that reality is the essential and discoverable nature of the world; the way we *know* the world is "a product not of objective observation but of social processes and interactions in which people are constantly engaged with each other" (Burr, 1995, p. 15).

Social constructionist researchers open their minds to questions that help them identify the discourses on which Hispanics base their decisions regarding their families, their health, their work, and all aspects of their lives; they explore the experience of people affected with alcoholism and they are interested in seeking the social discourses that influence meaning making, and in learning about what people do with those discourses (Crooks, 2001; Jeon, 2004).

Blumer (1971), in line with social constructionist thought, asserted that similar social conditions don't always produce social conflicts but the popular definition of the condition as a problem is what constructs it as a social problem. For example, Gonzalez and Portillos (2007) explored the Anglo perception that the Latino population in the United States has grown "too large, too fast, and too illegal." According to these researchers, the response has created, in a very systemic way, educational policies and criminal laws that ended up influencing negatively the Latino perceptions of American society. As illustrated here, the creation of "personal" meaning is a social process (Gergen, 1999, 2009).

In trying to understand the ways in which people make meaning, symbolic interactionism guidelines are helpful. Meaning is the experience of the participants at one particular time, in one specific context, since individual acts only occur inside social acts (Blumer, 2004)**.** Based on the philosophical arguments of George Herbert Mead (1934), the "Self" is formed by the constant conversations of the "I" and the "Me", in which the "I" is the spontaneous and free part of self, and the "Me" is the observed self always understood in relation to others. According to Mead, the social self is fluid and developed and refined through on-going interaction with others. People react to things according to the meaning given to them, which is affected by the meaning that others give to them. There is no one truth; there are many understandings of reality, many inner conversations. Symbolic interactionism forces the researcher to try to understand the meaning that participants give to a process (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 2008, 2004)**.**

It is through social interaction that people are able to create the symbols needed to communicate. Those symbols are the result of examining the consequences of

different courses of action and choosing one (Mead, 1934). Interpretation of actions helps modify meaning and symbols (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 2004). We need to open conversations to try to understand what Latinos know, what they see, and their points of view. We need to try to learn what they think is important, how they resolve problems, how they define their situation, what past experiences influenced their present situation, and what they expect from the future. It is also important to consider the many different ways in which immigrants may be positioned in terms of their relationship to others (e.g., laborers to employers; subjects to researchers).

Social location determines what one person knows and how he or she knows it (Kondrat, 2002). Symbolic interaction theories are essential, partly because they deal with family member's disagreements about what is real, true, or important in life and the ways in which they reach common understanding. They emphasize the importance of social processes in creating, maintaining, and changing viewpoints so that families can work out agreements about the situations they face (McBride, Rosenblatt, & Wieling, 2005). This part of the process is integral to transnational couples re-creating their lives in an environment in which what is now real, true, or important may conflict with their previous way of life.

McAdoo, Martinez, and Hughes (2005) suggest using the symbolic interactionism perspective to understand the many worlds in which families of color live and the many fluid roles --both constructed by the language we use in conversations-- which define and regulate social life. Interactions within families provide meaning and define the self, but there are also outside forces influencing verbal exchange, creating labels, identities, and discourses. *Illegal alien* is an example. Of course, the meaning

given to any label is subjective. For an Anglo housewife in suburbia, illegal alien may

mean something like a delinquent; for her entrepreneur husband may mean cheap labor;

for the undocumented immigrant may mean the need to hide from authorities. Meaning

and understanding are created with others in social interactions (Gergen, 1999; 2009).

Social Constructionism and Alcoholism

The meaning that diverse cultures give to alcohol can be quite different. Perez

(2006) mentions the daily get together after work of Latino men outdoors, listening to

music, and drinking in a festive social way. This picture contrasts with drinking alone,

indoors, and feeling guilty, as is common practice in some other groups. These

gatherings in Latino neighborhoods also allow men and youth to socialize and share

experiences and news in ways that could be beneficial for the families (like networking

for jobs, housing, etc.).

Culturally, reaching drinking age is an important developmental marker for

many Hispanic males**.** Mexicans living in the U.S. do not follow the same pattern

regarding alcohol consumption across age as Anglos (who drink more heavily as young

adults) and they continue to consume large amounts until middle age (Gilbert &

Cervantes, 1986; Prado, Szapocznik, Maldonado-Molina, Schwartz, & Pantin 2008).

Adult approval of the age of initiation may be one area of conflict between parents, and,

of course, with American law enforcement, if the youngster is allowed to start drinking

before he or she turns 21 (as I am told by my clients it is common practice in Mexico).

As Gergen (2009) explains, all values are generated "from within a tradition" (p.

12). To try to see different framings of reality and to try to imagine unfamiliar outcomes

is usually a difficult process. For transnational families, this course of action gets to be more complicated since it usually involves clashing cultures. Social constructionism theory helps to understand how immigrant Latino couples sustain traditions on the continuous process of generating meaning together, challenging the present, and looking for new possibilities of action for the future.

Critical Feminist Theory

While social constructionism helps the researcher in identifying the processes through which transnational families create meaning, critical feminist theory extends the focus to the socio-cultural arena. This lens can be used with most theories "for examining the multiplicity, fluidity and intersectionality of social phenomena in individuals' and families' lives" (De Reuss, Few, & Blume, 2005, p. 447). A feminist frame highlights the social structures and processes that inform relational patterns and the meaning people ascribe to them, analyzing the dynamic concepts not only of gender, but race, class, age, religion, and others, which co-construct each other.

Hierarchy is a key concept in critical feminist thought (De Reuss et al., 2005). Thus, a feminist critical approach is interested in power issues such as dominance, authority and influence, both within the couple relationship and in their position within the larger social context. It would also identify the socially constructed self-definitions or labels applied by others (e. g., illegal alien, wetback, addicted) as language can easily lead to oppression, restricting social categories, and imposing identities on people. Critical theory argues that it is not enough to try to *understand* the problems created by

society, economic or political powers; there is a need to work toward *changing* them (McDowell & Jeris, 2004)**.**

Walters, Carter, Papp, & Silverstein, 1988), in showing that inequities embedded in culture, unless they are confronted, will continue to feed the problematic imbalance between men and women or between White privilege and the rest of the population**.** The meaning that people of color give to their experience is important, unique, and should be understood and used to create social justice (Gergen, 2009).

How minority groups have been treated in the United States at various times has depended on changes in economics (Delgado & Stefancic, 2004). For example, Rappleye (2007), in his historical review of failed race-based programs--from the Braceros program (to attract rural workers in times of prosperity) to recent proposed legislations to penalize employers of undocumented employees in times of increased national unemployment--suggests that "taking a longer view of the migration north (from Mexico) might lead to some different conclusions about how the migrants should be perceived, and how they should be treated." Understanding the impact of initiatives such as NAFTA, not only at the macro level of big business but at the micro level of individual workers may change the opinions of many. For example, field workers who lost their ability to make a living in Mexico after NAFTA introduced inexpensive wheat, felt forced to migrate to the U.S. in order to avoid starvation (Lopez, 2007).

Feminism and Transnational Couples

One important part of this study focuses on the influence of the marital relationship in the supervision of adolescents who use illicit substances. Culturally, the

overall authority over the Mexican family has traditionally been the responsibility of the father; with the daily education and disciplining of the children delegated to the mother (Falicov, 1998). These general ethnic norms follow the mystiques (or stereotypes) of machismo and marianismo, the two powerful discourses that guide gender and roles in many Latino families.

Machismo and marianismo are the **"**culturally sanctioned expectations that blend ideals and virtues attributed to the gender" (Miranda, Bilot, Peluso, Berman, & Van Meek, 2006, p. 271). They influence the development of identity in individuals. The expectations for men (machismo) include for them to be in charge of the important decisions in the family and to provide financially; for women (marianismo) to be honorable and dedicated to the family (Falicov, 1998; Miranda et al., 2006). Following these lines of thinking, children's misbehaviors may be considered exclusively the wives' fault. However, for immigrant rural couples, cultural gender discourses are challenged by the host country, especially when Hispanic mothers join the labor force, are obligated to hire babysitters, or expect unemployed fathers to care of the offspring while they work outside the home.

Transnational couples' acculturation often creates problems when the husbands' experiences are dissimilar (often slower) to the wives' (Miranda et al., 2006). Making those differences visible is a byproduct of applying a feminist lens to relationships, and a way to challenge stereotypes, such as lack of egalitarian relationships in Latino couples, where marital equality can easily be found (Falicov, 1998). Feminist theories, in addition to help in deconstructing ethnic discourses, are invaluable in analyzing how

age, class, race, and location, among others, are important variables in the process of change in which transnational couples are involved (Miranda et al., 2006).

Studying couples, Mahoney & Knudson-Martin (2009) observed that even though both parties may assume themselves as being "equal," their behavior shows that very often cultural beliefs and norms become obstacles to equality, usually benefiting men. According to their feminist views, these researchers have developed a framework that addresses gender egalitarianism in a relationship and makes visible those hidden transactions. This study uses this feminist approach to include circumstances in which some women may prefer to give men the leadership of the relationship--as it is the case of many Latinas--but still have expectations to be heard, valued and respected (Rusovick & Knudson-Martin, 2009).

Critical Theory and Substance Abuse Treatment

Several studies show the advantages of offering prevention and intervention programs to Latino adolescents, especially males, who are at risk of early substance use/abuse (Liddle et al., 2005; Vega, Alderete, Kolody, & Aguilar-Gaxiola, 2000). Failure to develop culturally appropriate programs increases lifelong possibilities of alcoholism, drug abuse, socioeconomic problems, and even criminal conduct (Vega et al.). Because disproportionately high numbers of Mexican immigrants do not have regular access to health care, and children have high rates of high schools drop out, instead of substance abuse problems been diagnosed by medical professionals or by school personnel, their problems are left to the often unreliable detection of friends or relatives (Vega et al.).

Lack of health insurance and insufficient financial resources to pay for health services make prevention and treatment of alcoholism or drug abuse, among many other diseases, difficult for Latino families (Kullgren, 2003; Miranda et al., 2006). That health care has been considered an incentive for illegal immigration is one of those public "truths" not found in the research literature but believed by many (Kullgren). The federal government Personal Responsibility Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 reacted to this belief restricting several public services to illegal immigrants, free primary and preventive health among them. Under possible penalties of losing federal funds, only emergency care, immunizations and treatment for communicable diseases could be provided free of charge to undocumented immigrants. This decision had serious consequences for Latino families (Kullgren) and increased the tendency for Latinos to exclusively use home remedies (Comas-Diaz, 2006; Falicov, 1998).

Latinos who migrate to the United States are not usually sick; their mostly good dietary habits and their positive connections with family and friends help to maintain them healthy, at least for a while; that is, until the emotional shock produced by the harsh challenges of the new environment, such as poverty, discrimination, dangerous work conditions, living in higher crime areas, or becoming homesick, start deteriorating their health (Worby & Organista, 2007). Other studies (e.g.: Gil, Wagner, & Vega, 2004; Rodriguez, Henderson, Rowe, Burnett, Dakof & Liddle, 2007) report that less acculturated adolescents have more severe drug problems. Some researchers explain that the effect of distress created by traumatic immigration experiences (Falicov, 1998, 2007) or by lacking coping skills to deal with a dominant culture where drug use is the norm (Worby & Organista) can explain the different results.

Lacking federal help, to find solutions to the problem of adolescents who use substances among the Hispanic immigrating population, more community-based strategies for prevention and treatment are needed (Bowman & Vinicor, 2005). For this to happen, somebody has to speak up for the ones who can't. In the case of undocumented workers, for example, their illegal status prohibits them for participating actively in lobbying or negotiating. Their stories, coming from their own voice, should be found more often in the literature of the social sciences. Making their experiences known may help turn negative public opinion around and open the mind of authority figures to new and novel possibilities.

Multicultural Ecosystemic Comparative Approach

MECA (Falicov, 2005, 2007) is an excellent framework to help understand the experience of people living in what Falicov calls "a plurality of cultural subgroups" that produces a "multiplicity of influences," according to the level of fluidity created by the several contexts in which immigrants live. MECA's four areas of emphasis are: migration, ecological context, family organization, and family life cycle. Most immigrants live in the multidimensional "cultural borderlands," where similarities and differences between the culture of origin and the culture of the host country create ambivalences that sometimes make it difficult to figure out what is "correct" behavior and to develop the family values of the new personal culture (Falicov, 1998).

The last two decades have seen increasing interest in developing new acculturation theories. This was not an easy task, mostly due to the lack of clear terminology and consistency, which is demonstrated even in the several different ways

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to define the word "acculturation" (Valencia & Johnson, 2008). Original acculturation theories have emphasized a linear process beginning with immigrants being more involved with their original cultures and ending with assimilation to the dominant culture. Bilinear models have acknowledged the systemic perspective that immigration not only changes the newcomers but the host culture is also changed. Most recent researchers (Abraido-Lanz, Armbrister, Florez, & Aguirre 2006; Valencia & Johnson, 2008, among several others) agree on a multidimensional and comprehensive model of acculturation which even includes the changes produced in the sending communities. This is the base on which MECA has been developed (Falicov 1998).

In understanding the experience of transnational families, Falicov (1998) highlights the importance of what she defines as the *psychology of migration* (when, why, and how the family members arrived and the consequences of the transplant), the *psychology of marginalization* (racial discrimination, poverty, persecution due to undocumented status, underemployment, lack of services, and/or difficulty to access resources), and the *psychology of coping and healing* (folk medicine, religious rituals, peer support). The *psychology of cultural organizational transition* explains hierarchy related to collectivistic versus individualistic values (e.g., monolingual parents relegating control to acculturated children). Experiences related to challenges to the life cycle values (like mature children living with parents) are part of the *psychology of cultural developmental transition* (Falicov, 1998). Missing any of these aspects in our study would leave a void in our understanding of the Mecca population.

MECA and Intergenerational Relationships

Migration produces scars in those who leave and in those who stay (Falicov, 1998). Those scars may impact the lives of children for the rest of their lives. The age of immigrating is important, as adolescents arriving into the United States without knowing the language may suffer more than younger children who tend to learn English quickly (Falicov, 1998). Sometimes children who have been left in the care of grandparents or other relatives in the country of origin (while their parents work hard in the host country in order to save enough money to bring them to the new land) rebel when they are reunified with their progenitors (Adams, 2000; Sciarra, 1999). This rebellion may lead them to substance use.

Acculturating quicker than adults, frequently adolescents become parentified mediators who translate for their parents, make phone calls, deal with authorities, etc. This change in the hierarchy of the family often facilitates loss of respect for paternal authority and increases intergenerational conflict (Falicov, 1998; Leidy, Guerra, & Toro, 2010). Understanding couple processes cannot be separate from intergenerational process of immigration and acculturation.

Summary

Following Gergen's (2009) thought, there are several questions that should be considered. How would immigrants choose what is better? The old or the new? The traditional or the modern? Or a combination of both? Whatever the reasons, evidence and values they select as "good," they will be choosing from within their own tradition, and some alternatives will simply not be within the available frame of options.

The receiving community goes through the same process, pondering the values of the "invader" who also has the potential of being an "asset." It is not until a dialog is initiated that the moral and political implications can be criticized and the new ideas can emerge. "My" world and "your" world are different but our honest conversations will create "our" world; an alternate space that "offers a bold invitation to transform social life and to build new futures for all." In doing so we will be participating in "creating the future" and "must be ready to confront the challenge of generating new meaning" (Gergen, 1999, p. 49).

In studying the relational processes and the cultural values and beliefs of low income Mexican farmworkers living in the town of Mecca, in Southern California, and the different strategies they use in interacting with their children who use illegal substances, this research highlights the social contextual framework that includes a focus on gender and hierarchy, as well as social justice issues related to the experience of this population

Most Mexican immigrants came to the United States with the intent of surviving and the desire of providing a better life to their children. In the process they undergo several major challenges to their traditional way of life. How those inevitable changes develop, especially in issues related to gender and hierarchy, can be studied from different perspectives. Analyzing the stories of transnational couples through the MECA approach, under the umbrella of social constructionism, while being enlightened by critical theory and feministic views, helps produce a profound understanding of the experience of the Latino families of the rural area of Southern California.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

Approaching the literature with a social constructionist frame of mind means knowing that instead of uncovering truths, what will be found can be called simple "invitations to a way of understanding" (Gergen, 2009, p. 29) and that the information gathered needs to be handled to reflect and to create new possibilities of dialog. Instead of searching for a "truth," the articles reviewed help readers appreciate multiple perspectives.

In this literature review I have attempted to cover the gendered discourses of the lives of Mexican farmworkers before and after migrating to the United States, providing information on the changing views over gender roles that include the conflict between the modern versus the traditional, the innovations regarding romance and sexuality, and the renegotiated meaning of respect within the couple, the family and the community. The theme of Latino substance abuse is also cited, as well as ways that Hispanic families use to monitor children. The last section presents the impact of larger systems, with information about religion, poverty, racism and discrimination in the lives of immigrant laborers.

Three major ethnographic studies of Mexicans living in the United States provide excellent information that helps in understanding the experience of couples living in two cultures. The three are widely referred in the current Latino literature and will be quoted extensively in this paper. Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) immersed herself in the lives of 44 individuals in an immigrant Mexican barrio in the San Francisco area. Oakview was at that time one of the poorest areas in a very affluent county of

California. In this way, it was very similar to Mecca, which is the poorest town of the Coachella Valley, located just a few miles from Indian Wells, one of the cities with the highest income in the United States (Du Bri, 2006). Even though the Oakview study is almost twenty year old, the stories its participants told then are very similar to the stories told by the Mecca residents today.

Hirsch (2003) studied three transnational communities, one in the United States and two in Mexico. The thirteen women she interviewed in Atlanta and the thirteen she visited with in Degollado and El Fuerte, for three months, were related by blood or by close friendships. Some of their husbands also participated in the interviews. Even though how the sending communities are being transformed by immigration is not directly relevant to the research questions guiding this study, understanding the fascinating systemic view of interconnection between the rural life in Mexico and the immigrant urban life in America explains part of the changes happening to transnational families in the new land (Hirsch). The author's emphasis on the emotional connections between couples is a helpful backdrop for understanding or comparing the Mecca stories.

Gonzalez-Lopez (2005) analyzed the views about intimacy and sexuality of forty women and twenty men (half from Mexico City and half from Jalisco) who had lived a minimum of five years in the United States. She found those discourses, in the context of emigration, to be "flexible, alternatively reinforced, reproduced, and contested" by both women and men (Gonzalez-Lopez, p. 19) during the process of giving new meaning to their relationships in the new country.

Each of the above studies agrees that the gender cultural values that immigrants bring from the motherland form the main paradigm in the literature on transnational Mexican couples. Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) defines patriarchy as "a fluid and shifting set of social relations where men oppress women" (p. 2). Definitions of femininity and masculinity--in relation to patriarchy--are challenged in immigration (Falicov, 2010; Torres, Solberg & Carlstom, 2002).

Even though traditional gender relations are being constantly changed and redeveloped--in the public as well as in the private arenas--all over the world; the main impetus in Mexico started when females began to enter the workforce in significant numbers, years ago (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Lopez, 2007). It is thus important that popular ideological and exaggerated discourses of machismo and marianismo not be used to stereotype Mexicans, as those constructs are constantly evolving (Falicov, 2010; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Torres, 2002) and may have few similarities to the real lived experiences of Mexican couples (Hirsch, 2003; Falicov, 1998). For example, contrary to the literature that presents Latinas as submissive and Latinos as dominant, Bermudez, Reyes and Wampler (2006), found no gender differences in the way Hispanics resolve conflicts. Stereotyping negates the fact that men and women are constantly reshaping ideas about gender; in doing so they produce social change, exactly as it happens with issues of race and class (Hirsch).

Gendered Migration to the North

Global processes influence highly the ways in which the men and women exercise power and handle subordination. That political and macro-level economic crisis

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in the sending societies are the main reasons of mass migration is a view shared by most

studies of transnationalism (i.e., Akers-Chacon & Davis, 2006; Smith, 2006). Reading

about the extreme poverty of the rural inhabitants of some Mexican territories, their

inability to find work, and their desire to provide for their families, helps to understand

the incredible attraction of the "North," the extreme sacrifices they make to avoid

starvation and the related consequences of lack of resources; and the great risks they

confront in order to arrive to the United States (Lopez, 2007; Urrea, 1993). A look at

the literature on how men and women decide to initiate such a dangerous quest is

important in trying to understand their present experience (Falicov, 1998).

Gendered Discourses before Migration

Gender relations influence migration patterns which, reciprocally, also modify

gender relations (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994). In specific parts of Mexico, for many

families, the question is not "if" they should migrate, but "when" and "how," as moving

to the United States seems to be a predestinated part of their life cycle (Lopez, 2007).

The "how" would indicate if the family travels together or not. It has been common for

Mexican men to emigrate alone (Akers-Chacon & Davis, 2006), many times not

informing their wives about their decision until the last moment (Hirsch, 2003). Most

women, accustomed to following orders from fathers, brothers or husbands, accept their

husbands' decisions (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Hirsch, 2003).

Studying thirty-three Mexican farmworkers and their family members in Central

California, Lopez (2007) describes networks of relatives and friends who regularly assist

the males to emigrate first and then the women to follow, in what looks like an

unavoidable way of life. Some men would prefer to travel with their families, but gendered migration for males, in addition to be fueled by the patriarchal duty of providing for their families it is at times spiced up by the enticement of adventure (or rite of passage) fueled by the enthusiasm of friends and relatives in the "North" (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Lopez, 2002).

Men travelling alone usually find a bed or a place to sleep on the floor of the home of friends or relatives in the United States, and very often are forced to learn how to fend for themselves in regards to cooking, washing clothes and ironing; chores that had always been done by their wives (Falicov, 1998; Hirsh, 2003; Lopez, 2007). Most of them stop doing housework as soon as they were reunited with their wives. It would be interesting to find out if that sudden change is initiated by the men, not wanting to do female work anymore, or by the wives who--at least at the time of their arrival--want to reclaim what they consider their domain.

Migrating in Stages

There are important reasons that make it difficult for the family to travel together. Finances is number one, as travelling with children may involve a considerable expense that may require serious preparation (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994). The new security at the border has made the fees of the "coyotes" (experts in guiding illegal aliens through the frontier) to skyrocket (Akers-Chacon & Davis, 2006; Du Bri, 2006; Lopez, 2007). There are also the dangers associated with crossing illegally, especially for women and children. These include the variable extreme temperatures of the desert,

the lack of water, the wild animals, and different groups of vigilantes (Akers-Chacon & Davis, 2006; Lopez, 2007; Urrea, 1993).

In addition to financial and security concerns, breaking the strong bonds resulting from the cultural value of familism makes it very difficult for Mexican extended families to separate from parents or other close relatives (Falicov, 1998). Migration affects the ones who leave and the ones who stay, for a minimum of three generations, (Falicov, 2007). Grandparents, parents and children live with "broken hearts" (Falicov, 2005) after becoming separated. This is especially seen in cases where couples leave their children under the care of grandparents until they save enough money to bring them to the new country. Falicov (2007) describes the effects of what she calls the "transnational relational stress" caused by separations and reunions. Children who were first attached to their parents become later on more attached to their grandparents until (after months or years of absence) they finally reunite with the parents. There is always somebody, at least one part of this triangle, suffering with the scars left by the process of migration.

However, the negative effects of these "trigenerational systems of care" are reduced when the immigrant progenitors remain an active part of the lives of their children through regular phone calls, remittances and long-distance rituals (Falicov, 2007), some of the advantages of transnationalism. Parents who may feel that the effect of the years separated from their children, and the difficulties in adjusting after being reunited, may have caused that the youngster now use illegal substances may not be able to use proper discipline –especially if the child complains to the grandparents in a regular basis.

Migrating Together

The families that migrate together may do so with different levels of agreement, with women usually yielding to men's desires (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994) but many women have their own practical reasons for insisting in joining their husbands. Wives who remain in Mexico confront an uncertain fate, forced to take upon themselves--at least temporarily-- many "masculine" responsibilities (Hirsch, 2003; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Lopez, 2007). Being afraid that an extended separation could result in abandonment (husband leaving them for another woman) and poverty in the native country (termination of remittances) is a frequent incentive for wives' migration (Hirsch, 2003; Lopez, 2007).

There are more important reasons. Many of the women in the Atlanta study (Hirsch, 2003) decided to travel with their children because their own fathers had been migrant workers who spent long periods away from home and they didn't want that same experience for their sons and daughters. Lopez (2007) refers to a "generation" of Mexican children being raised without fathers. Most families mention the opportunities for their children to obtain a better education to be one of the main motivations to migrate (Falicov, 1998; Lopez, 2007).

Gendered Discourses after Migration

Awareness of one's own culture becomes more salient when confronted by a different culture (Falicov, 1998), as it happens during the immigration process, producing inevitable changes--sometimes in a voluntary basis and other times in an automatic way. Maciel and Van Putten (2009) interviewed twelve immigrant couples

whose stories of power transformation in the new context showed the evolving of new gender structures in which women gradually gained relational power in such a way that men didn't feel threatened by their wives changes. Those participants were able to create a "new *personal* gender culture through conscious choice and forced adaptations " (p. 259). The authors suggested that this path to more egalitarian relationships may be slower for populations less affluent and educated, such as the Mecca farmworkers.

Even though women's gradual improved power in marriage may be attained without major conflict (Maciel & Van Putten, 2009), challenges produced by criticism to traditional ideas may be difficult to be accepted by Mexican men who are living in an environment that presses them to conform to the "White middle class version of the modern, egalitarian man" (Falicov, 2010). Its presence through television and movies is a big part of the forces transforming the social construction of gender roles (Falicov).

The New Machismo

Current multidimensional realities should expand the traditional definition of machismo, to include positive traits such as familism, dignity, honor and family pride (Falicov, 2010; Neff, 2001). Becoming a "successful migrant" is important for Latino men (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994). Under patriarchal rule this may mainly take the significance of making money, being respected by family members, and being recognized in the old country as a man of means.

The original plan of most migrating Mexican men includes returning to their native country after saving enough money to pay off debts or to buy land and build a house. Failure in attaining this goal would be considered an attack to their ideal of

masculinity (Hondagneu-Sotelo). For most Mexican immigrants --sometimes due to the

low paying jobs and the little opportunity of advancement available to them-- permanent

return to their homeland eventually becomes only a dream of which they keep talking

but seldom attain.

It is interesting that Mexican women, on the contrary, don't feel less feminine for

being poor; it seems that just being more autonomous makes them feel successful

(Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Hirsch, 2003). The way women support or not their

husbands' struggles with unemployment or underemployment may influence upon the

men's self-esteem and impact on their ideas of egalitarism.

More Egalitarian Views

Couples who arrive in the U.S. together usually share more egalitarian views

about decision making, household division of labor, and women's spatial mobility

(Gonzalez-Lopez, 2005; Hirsch, 2003; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Lopez, 2007; Maciel &

Van Putten, 2009). Even when family members migrate in stages, the women report

more egalitarian relationships in the United States than in Mexico. This is primarily

because immigrant women make greater economic contributions to the household in the

new country than in Mexico (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Hirsch, 2003; Lopez, 2007).

Another reason may be that the men who first migrated alone have been forced

to learn how to cook, wash their clothes, and fetch for themselves (Hondagneu-Sotelo).

Nevertheless, most men who help their wives in household tasks do it as a favor, not as

fulfilling what should be a shared responsibility (Hirsh). At the same time that men do

more housework, they have less monopoly over the household income and less authority

over the family members (Hirsh). They also lose power and status in their social lives, especially if they are undocumented migrants who, in addition to the common acculturation stressors, fear persecution and deportation (Hondagneu-Sotelo).

Modern versus Traditional

Research is unclear about to what extent Mexican immigrants hold onto the values of their original culture when confronted by the attraction of the new environment. Hirsch (2003) believes her subjects in Atlanta wanted to be "modern" by changing the ways of their parents and by imitating the Anglo culture. In contrast, Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994), found that most Mexicans in the United States live in fairly segregated communities, with limited contact with the host society, making it easier for them to maintain the "old" culture. The women interviewed by Gonzalez-Lopez (2005) experienced sexuality transformations which the researcher believed were more associated with the immigrant communities that they belonged to than with the acculturation process.

The ambivalence between giving preference to the values of the receiving or of the sending culture is complicated in transnational families. Immigrants arriving before today's technological advances weren't able to maintain the close ties with their places of origin that present immigrants have. The lively interaction they maintain today includes the possibility of religious guilt (if going against traditional values) and family of origin control (if going against extended family wishes), both helping to reinforce the traditional values of their original culture (Gonzalez-Lopez, 2005; Falicov, 2007).

Gendered Discourses of Romance and Respect

The "old" idea that a successful marriage was finding a man who was a good provider, did not drink much, and respected his wife in public is been replaced by the "modern" goal of women choosing a man who fulfills his obligations as a husband but is also a good companion (Hirsch, 2003). Friendship, trust and love were identified as the basis of strong Latino marriages by the 25 couples -with a medium income of about $40,000- interviewed by Harris, Skogrand and Hatch (2008). These researchers studied love as emotion, behavior and commitment, and found that the interrelationships of the three were the basis of successful unions. Communication was important for both men and women, and seen as the best way to obtain trust and respect (Harris et al.). Research is needed to explore whether these premises are also true for couples such as those in Mecca who live below the poverty level and, whose communication skills frequently match their scarce financial means.

Individual compatibility and good personality are some of the new words in the vocabulary of romance of the Mexican immigrant women (Hirsch, 2003) and men (Falicov, 2010) as well as a redefinition of *respect.* The expectations of the two partners, the acculturation levels of their extended family, and their immediate support system are the three important forces remodeling the immigrant Latino experience (Negy & Snyder, 1997).

Respect within the Couple

"Respect is a code for marking and acknowledging hierarchy" (Hirsch, 2003, p. 98) and it is one of the first concepts that I find has to be discussed when working with

Latino couples. In America, transnational Mexican couples are trying to understand

love as a commitment that gives couples a path to keep balance in the relationship by

adopting various levels of sacrifice and selfishness (Harris et al., 2008). This idea of

mutual changes challenges stereotypes about the unilateral female tendency to suffer and

sacrifice for the wellbeing and the good name of the family, idea that seems to lose

popularity during migration (Falicov, 1998, 2007; Hirsch, 2003; Gonzalez-Lopez, 2005).

The women in the Maciel and Van Putten (2009) study experienced "a sense of

empowerment within their established marital hierarchy" at the same time that they

"gave primacy to their families and husbands" (p. 250). The women in Atlanta learned

different ways to negotiate with their husbands, trying to avoid confrontation, and

bargaining mainly for the wellbeing of their children (Hirsch, 2003). Wanting to have

more egalitarian marriages--different from their parents--implies the risk of increasing

the gap of the share of power between transnational couples, instead of reducing it.

"Equal access to intimate companionship is not the same as equal access to power"

(Hirsch, p. 153). Initial observations in Mecca seems to indicate that the respect for the

authority of the husband is a valuable commodity that women appreciate highly and

make great efforts to maintain.

Respect in the Family of Origin

Falicov (2010) explains the profound sense of shame and humiliation that

Latinos may experience when the community --which includes the family of origin--find

them rejecting cultural expectations. Trying to create a marriage of trust may reward a

Mexican husband with emotional benefits but it also makes him vulnerable to losing the

respect that his own father and grandfather guarded dearly by maintaining an appropriate

distance from the rest of the family. Even though Mexican men are aware of the

messages that modern society sends through the media--that machismo is out and

emotional closeness is in-- change includes the risk of failure and ridicule (Hirsch, 2003;

Falicov, 2010; Torres et al., 2002).

On the other hand, strengthening emotional bonds within the couple may imply

more vulnerability for wives. A woman *pushing the gender line* too hard can arise

conflict in the relationship (Maciel & Van Putten, 2009) that may end up in an

unexpected and unwanted separation, a terrible source of shame and humiliation for a

Latina and her parents (Hirsch, 2003). One of the reasons why women who suffer abuses

may not complain to relatives is to avoid the community to know her problem, because

this would be seen as her own parents' failure in raising a "good wife" (Hirsch, 2003;

Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994).

Respect in the Community

In addition to feeling respected by the spouse, transnational immigrants value

being respected in their communities. Mexican women want men to respect them by not

engaging in flagrant adultery, not yelling at them in public, avoiding domestic violence,

and not talking with other males about their sexual lives (Gonzalez-Lopez, 2005). Men

who value the opinion of relatives and friends and who want to keep their good standard

in the community will comply with these norms; making it known that it is their

individual benevolent choice (Hirsch. 2003). Men only allow their wives to participate

in important decisions when they feel sure that the female autonomy is not been

perceived as an attack to their masculinity (Hirsch).

Often Latinas remain in abusive marriages because they fear their children would

be looked down by the community if they leave (since they would be seen as children of

disrespected men). The complexity of power dynamics indicates that when a Mexican

woman prefers to be married to a respected man, she will chose to appear submissive in

public in order to give high status to her husband; this behavior will, in turn, may help

her in negotiating with him in private (Hirsh, 2003).

It is interesting that the women in Oakview complained more about their class,

ethnic and legal status that about being oppressed by their husbands (Hondagneu-Sotelo,

1994). One explanation could be that they considered the researcher as part of the

community, and feeling overpowered by forces from outside the family (that were

equally overpowering most of their neighbors) was more acceptable that accepting that

they were being threatened by their husbands.

Gendered Discourses of Sexuality

Sexuality is one of the issues more challenged by the new culture and it affects

couples not only in their bedroom but also in church, in the neighborhood, at work, etc.

(Hirsch, 2003). Obtaining the sexual intimacy identified with being "modern" may

clash with the Latino emphasis on maternity and the importance of being recognized as a

"good woman" by the community (Hirsch). In areas of intimacy and sexuality, the

stereotypes seem to often hold true and power relations are frequently gendered.

In older Mexican women, showing respect required hiding their sexuality, and not doing so would be an attack on the male hierarchy (Hirsch, 2003). The new idea of respect developed by immigrants may include some physical intimacy before marriage – like saying "yes" after having said "no" enough times (Gonzalez-Lopez, 2005; Hirsch, 2003). Still, for many Latinas, saying "yes" during courtship means fewer options to end the relationship if they change their minds, and less respect from the husbands after marriage (Hirsh). In a sense, men decide what it is acceptable erotic behavior, and through jealousy, lack of knowledge of the female physiology, or adultery, can manipulate relationships (Gonzalez-Lopez, 2005).

Double standards based in the traditional idea of machismo are indicated by the stigma of male chastity and the extreme value of female virginity (Gonzalez-Lopez, 2005). Virginity is considered very valuable in societies where marriage is seen as the ultimate accomplishment for females (Falicov, 1995; Gonzalez-Lopez, 2005; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994). It is interesting to note that, in spite of the emphasis on the benefits of virginity, 70% of the women participating in Gonzalez-Lopez' focus groups have had premarital sex. Interviewing 839 sexually active Latinos, ages 16-22, Deardorff, Tschann, Flores & Ozer, (2010) found that cultural values of virginity influence Latino youth sexual behavior (in areas like indicating fewer sexual partners), even when reported that they didn't believe those norms were influential.

The women who participated in Gonzalez-Lopez (2005) focus groups recognized they were having more satisfying sexual lives in the new country. But more than a change in the male view of egalitarism, the wives felt that their financial contributions to the family budget were the reason that provide them with the right to say "no" in the

bedroom (Gonzalez-Lopez). The older women in Hirsch's (2003) study would have never considered the possibility of rejecting the sexual approaches of their husbands.

The issue of having participated in premarital sexual activity has come up in Mecca's clinical consultations several times, either as female guilt, as male recrimination, or both. This is another way in which gender socialization supports the perpetuation of male dominance. In the Mexican culture "the woman's access to power depends primarily on the male's magnanimity" (Hirsch, p. 131), as the husband "forgiving her for having been weak" (having sex) before marriage would demonstrate.

Even though the women's experience of marriage in the new country may depend on their husband's ideal of masculine superiority, women have to decide to respond either by agreeing or disagreeing with male authority, or by trying to gain advantages just by being nice (Hirsch, 2003). Either way, they choose to act. Once the couples arrive in the new location, the women are the ones who start focusing on how to improve the wellbeing of the family in relation to the environment. No matter how things are at home, they start making outside connections. "If men are the community pioneers, it is women who are the community builders" (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994, p. 174).

Gendered Discourses of Community through Separated Networks

Most Latinas quickly find their ways to immigrant social networks where they obtain important information regarding housing, work, emergency loans, available help from private or public institutions (very limited to undocumented individuals), and even how to obtain credit (which would confirm the idea of remaining permanently or at least

for a long term in the receiving country) (Du Bri, 2006; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994).

While making these connections they help build the community; in turn, a stronger

community serves them better. Through these contacts, Latinas also become better

informed about their own bodies, birth control, and the laws protecting them from abuse

(Gonzalez-Lopez, 2005).

Participating in community activities assists women in obtaining resources for

their families—including help for their addicted children-- and it widens social support,

a very important issue to immigrants. Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) commented that in all

the homes she did her interviews she met visiting relatives, boarders, neighbors,

houseguests, friends or coworkers of her subjects. Lopez (2007) had a similar experience

with her sample in Central California. These connections make women less dependent

on their spouses (Hirsch, 2003) and help them feel supported in case they need to contest

domestic patriarchal authority (Hondagneu-Sotelo).

More than other groups, Mexican immigrant community networks are gendered

(Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994). The street, in general, belongs to the men and they can go as

they wish without having to check with their wives. The male networks may be around

the plaza (Worby & Organista, 2007; Du Bri, 2006) and may be misunderstood as

meetings reflecting laziness instead of opportunities for social transactions, information

and so on (Perez, 2006).

In contrast to the freedom for coming and going of Mexican husbands, wives

must "ask permission" to male authority in order to avoid being seen as a "woman of the

street" (Hirsch, 2003). The most fulfilled women in the Atlanta study were the ones

able to enjoy the thrill of dominating the streets because they had jobs, had learned to

drive, owed a vehicle and were capable to move around without having to ask

permission (Hirsch).

Gendered Discourses of Parenting

Having children is very important for Hispanic couples and migration challenges

gender roles in parenthood (Falicov, 2007). Even though Mexican culture places

motherhood at an elevated level that deserves high respect (Falicov, 1998) modern

mothers want to have fewer children and be able to dedicate more time to them (Hirsch,

2003). For many immigrant women with limited resources, to have children right after

marriage is a way to contribute positively to the union, to solidify the relationship, to

stop being concerned about their fertility, and to "complete" the family (Hirsch). Latinas

residing in the United States, who are seeking more companionate marriages, expect

their husbands to be co-parents, in addition to just be providers (Hirsch). Today's

broader discourses on masculinity allow Latino fathers to be affectionate and involved in

the lives of their children; with less acculturated fathers even willing to babysit regularly

(Falicov, 2010).

To raise well behaved children is an important goal of Latino parents, and

reflects on their standing in the community (Falicov, 1998). When children are known

for deviance from societal rules—as it is the case with adolescents who use illegal

substances—grand grief comes over the family. Sarmiento and Cardemi (2009) studied

forty low income Latino couples and found high levels of depression in women who

reported both poor family functioning and high acculturative stress. Some mothers

experience lack of support from husbands in regards to maternal parenting authority,

especially when it involves sons (Gonzalez-Lopez, 2005). Transnational couples complain about having limited power in controlling their children (Falicov, 1998; Hirsch, 2003) as most couples are used to discipline that includes corporal punishment measures outlawed in the United States but popular in Mexico.

Latino children seem to acculturate quicker than their parents, causing an unbalance of power that reflects in most areas of influence (Fuller & Garcia Coll, 2010). Parents' perception of disrespectful behavior in the adolescent--like adopting Americanized behaviors-- may bring upon more parental control over the children in order to regain authority; which in turn, may cause the adolescent to rebel against paternal authority (Prado et al., 2008). Dehlendort, Marchi, Vittinghoff, & Braveman (2010) highlighted intergenerational cooperation during times of economic distress, with parents being open and children, in turn, impacting their own environment in a positive way, enhancing family functioning. Proof of this is bilingual youngsters who help overworked parents to comply with the laws and requirements of the new land by translating for them, filling out documents, etc. (Leidy, Guerra & Toro, 2010).

Some cultural ideas of respect, like teaching children to be polite, to believe in God and to obey elders appear less changed by immigration (Hirsch, 2003) but the new socioeconomic context in which their children grow, often entices parents to change their views on some issues, such as premarital sex (Gonzalez-Lopez, 2005). This can create conflict in the couple. For example, a father may consider it more important to keep his daughter protected from a sexual relationship with a gang member than that she be a virgin at marriage; even though sexual abstinence for single daughters reflects on family honor and the mother's success in raising good candidates for marriage

(Gonzalez-Lopez). Nichols-Anderson (2001) found that Latino adolescents with low levels of acculturation didn't indulge in sexual risk tasking when both their mothers and fathers demonstrated high levels of parental attachments, confirming once more that united, dedicated parents become protective factors in the lives of their children.

Familism has been defined as high family unity, and it has been associated with lower youth substance abuse and increased parental monitoring (Romero & Ruiz, 2007). Schwartz (2007) found that measures of familism are present in most cultures but there may be stronger with less acculturated Latinos. This value, like many others, is challenged in the negotiation of two cultures. For example, Mexican children are welcome to live in their parent's homes even after they become adults and married (Falicov, 1998); this may be interpreted as a sign of negative codependency in individualistic societies. Even though familism is a subject widely researched in the Latino literature, its importance in relation to protecting immigrant teenagers from substance abuse needs more study (Romero & Ruiz, 2007).

Filial piety, described by Unger, Ritt-Olson, Teran, Huang, Hoffman and Palmer (2002), as the respect and obligation to parents may help support family networks able to develop coping strategies to replace substance use. According to the researchers -- who used a multiethnic sample of 211 California adolescents to study the association between substance use and cultural values-- immigrant teens who are more individualistic may experiment with substances to assert their autonomy, and teens who are more collectivistic may do it just to please their peers. Perhaps adolescents can learn to choose the positive values of both cultures and use them to their advantage. In the

Unger's study, familism and filial piety were associated with less risk of substance use, showing that the respect and obligation to parents is a protective factor for adolescents.

The Social Construction of Substance Abuse

Following social constructionist thought, cultural traditions are forms of life of a specific group of individuals who have developed ideas of what is acceptable or not (Gergen, 2009). Maintaining those ideas requires a continuous conversation that regenerates meaning. In a world that is moving so quickly and getting so small, meaning can't be maintained static but should be open to innovation (Gergen). The study of substance abuse is a colorful area in which controversy abounds.

Worby and Organista (2007) selected thirty of the over 200 articles they found about the use of alcohol by migrant workers for their review. Gender issues mentioned by the reviewers included the effects on the women when the men migrate first; how the hardships of immigration affect each spouse; the female disapproval of male and/or community drinking; how men fail their families because of drinking; and the incidence of domestic violence and other problems for the vulnerable women in rural areas. Few of the articles were qualitative, including one about the experience and changes produced in the couple by the process of acculturation. None of the studies referred to children's substance abuse and the way the parents readjust their view on authority to deal with this subject in the new environment.

Cabrera Strait's (1999) review of the literature on Latino drug abuse identified intergenerational conflicts due to acculturation differences. Other articles in this review addressed traditional cultural gender norms involving the concepts of machismo and marianismo, in which men are expected to drink (just like they are expected to provide

for their families) and women are expected not to comment on their husband's alcoholism and live with the negative consequences of the addiction.

In an early study comparing patterns of alcohol consumption among different cultures, Kaufman and Borders (1988) emphasized the importance of a strong executive system in the family: "The healthier and more intimate the spousal relationship becomes, the more likely the entire family will be able to sustain higher functioning including maintenance of sobriety of each family member (p. 114). In the 22 years since their article was published, more emphasis has been given to the influence of environmental forces upon substance abuse in the family (e.g. Liddle et al., 2005; Rowe et al., 2002, Hogue, Liddle, Becker & Johnson-Leckrone, 2002; Henderson, Dakof, Schwartz & Liddle, 2006).

Alcohol and Domestic Violence

That domestic violence is exacerbated by the use of alcohol is a well known fact, but the relationship between male control and violence is complicated. Some Latino men believe that hitting their partners helps to solidify hierarchy; others find that a threat to leave works better that using force (Hirsch, 2003). But not all males demonstrate this negative aspects of machismo (Falicov, 2010; Neff, 2001), and many Latinas accept certain level of violence as normal masculine behavior (Hirsch). Immigrants in rural areas suffer high incidences of intimate partner violence, affecting both sexes, which it is usually related to alcohol consumption (Kim-Godwin & Fox, 2009; Van Hightower, Gorton, & De Moss, 2000).

Acts of violence, fueled by alcohol abuse, may be culturally tolerated as a way to deal with the stress and frustration caused by extreme poverty and low educational levels (Kim-Godwin & Fox, 2009; Mattson & Ruiz, 2005). Correia (2010) found that the progress from alcohol use to alcohol problems in Latinos is accelerated by economic hardships.

Adolescent Substance Use

Based on her own clinical experience, as well as on research, Falicov's work (e.g. Falicov, 1998, 2005, 2007) notes that changes in the hierarchy of the family, due to the challenges all the members are forced to confront by migration, often increase intergenerational conflicts that may lead to children's substance abuse. Numerous studies about adolescent's substance abuse that empirically affirm the importance of parental unity as a protective factor in preventing addiction and in promoting rehabilitation, have been published by two different teams from the University of Miami. Howard A. Liddle (e.g. Liddle et al., 2005; Rowe et al., 2002, Hogue et al., 2002, Henderson et al., 2006) created the Multidimensional Family Therapy model two decades ago and he and his colleagues continue publishing about their ongoing research; Daniel A. Santisteban and his team (e.g. Mena, Mitrani, Mui, & Santisteban, 2008; Santisteban, Mena, & Suarez-Morales, 2006) share the same idea that interventions for adolescents need to target the family. Many of the important articles on the subject have been written or guided by Jose Szapocznik (e.g. Prado et al., 2008; Robbins, Szapocznik, Dillon, Turner, Mitrani, & Feaster, 2008). However, most of the studies

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done by these researchers specifically on Hispanics have been on the Latino population

of Florida which includes a minority of Mexicans, and hardly any rural families.

Mexican American young men believe they have the right to ingest alcohol,

especially with coworkers and relatives, as soon as they start working (Kaufman &

Borders, 1988). Gil and Warner (2000) found a difference between U.S. born Latino

adolescents compared with recent immigrants: the former drank more than the latter.

Traditional cultural values seem to protect newcomers, but as the youngsters acculturate,

it is believed that those values erode, especially when they are devaluated by the host

culture, and when the immigrants begin to recognize the disadvantages produced by

their minority status. Lesser, Tello, Koniah-Griffin, Kppos, and Rhys (2001) found that

in working with young Latinos, becoming a father was a positive influence on the lives

of the subjects whose substance abuse was related to experiences of poverty, oppression

and violence. These are some of the examples (others are presented through the narrative

of this chapter) that confirm that adolescent substance abuse is a multidimensional

phenomenon for young people in general. This becomes even more complicated for

transnational youth who, in addition to be working with their own identity, are being

affected by their parent's acculturation stress.

Parental Monitoring

Wagner et al. (2010), adds to the body of research previously mentioned that

refers to parental monitoring as an important protective factor in predicting substance

use in Latino adolescents. The researchers also recognize the obstacles that some parents

have to effectively monitor their children's activities (e.g., language barriers, different

levels of acculturation) and the desire that parents have to find cultural adapted

programs that could enhance their parenting skills (Calzada, Fernandez & Cortes, 2010;

Muir, Schwartz & Szapocznik, 2004).

Parents who are able to have clear rules concerning the use of substances and

apply consequences for breaking them, provide additional protection to their children

(Parsai, Misiglia & Kulis, 2010). Protecting the children through monitoring their

activities means that teenagers' independence and autonomy become limited

(Halgunseth, Ispa & Rudy, 2006), challenging the youngster's desires to be as modern as

their friends. In cases where the family migrated in a stepwise pattern, the disrupted

parent practices may need extra time to recover effectiveness and acceptance (Mena et

al., 2008).

If the parents, by any given reason, give up in supervising their children, the

adolescents will become more vulnerable to risky peer influences, which may include

substance abuse. Peers are the main instructors from whom Latino immigrants learn the

new environment and may become a formidable challenge for Hispanic parents

(Halgunseth et al., 2006). In cases of use of substances, the main purpose of parental

monitoring should be to offset any negative effects of the peers influence (Prado et al.,

2008). Family time and peer time were found to be the most important predictors of

adolescent problem behaviors in a study done with a representative household sample of

606 teens. Family time was found to be a protective factor against heavy alcohol use,

cigarette smoking, drug use, delinquency, and premarital sex. In contrast, time with

peers was found to be a highly significant risk factor (Barnes, Hoffman, Welte, Farrell,

& Dintcheff, 2007).

Brown, Herman, Hamm and Heck (2008), worked with 2465 African American, Asian American, Latino and multiethnic high school students assessing whether crowd affiliation promoted stereotyping and discrimination or fostered minority adolescents' positive ties to their cultural ethnicity. Results indicated that for Hispanics, peer groups may create positive ties to their ethnic background, but crowd affiliation shows some aspects of stereotyping and discrimination.

Armenta (2010) compared 66 Asian American and 40 Hispanic undergraduate students from a Southern California university to observe how being identified with a stereotyped social group affected performance when a cue regarding possible differences due to ethnicity was present in the experiment. Both groups yielded towards the stereotype in a math test, with the high ethnically identified Latinos performing worse and the high ethnically identified Asian Americans doing better (low ethnically identified subjects in both groups were not affected). The impact of these results becomes important when we consider how often Hispanics are presented as incompetent and unable to assimilate to the dominant culture (Bergshieker, Shelton, & Richeson, 2010).

The Social Construction of Poverty

Immigrant parents want to give their children a better life than they had (Falicov, 1998; Lopez, 2007). However, Latino families are disproportionately represented in poverty statistics (Marotta & Garcia, 2003). Economic stress impacts intergenerational relationships as financial stressors are known for causing ineffective parenting (Leidy, Guerra & Toro, 2010). One specific example among the ways in which economics

affects the lives of Hispanic families is the study done by Dehlendort et al. (2010) that

suggests that improvement of the socioeconomic factors that impact Latinas' lives may

decrease adolescent childbearing.

Just as women become more autonomous and assertive when they contribute to

the economic wellbeing of the family (Hirsch, 2003, Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994), older

children may experience similar transformations. In a communitarian society offspring

are expected to contribute their income to the household budget (Lopez, 2007).

However, youngsters--following more independent Anglo values--may decide to

confront the family hierarchy, bringing extra stress upon their progenitors (Hondagneu-

Sotelo).

In addition to the danger of living in poor neighborhoods, daily news relating to

crime, substance abuse and sexual attacks may cause immigrant parents to become

overprotective of their children, especially daughters, forbidding them to leave the house

without the protection of males (Gayles, Coatsworth, Pantin, & Szapocznik, 2009;

Gonzalez-Lopez, 2005) and, as a result, increasing rebellious behaviors in the

youngsters.

Immigrant parents who are able to communicate openly and maintain close

relationships with their children during times of hardship help their children to master

problem solving skills and social self-efficacy (Dehlendort et al., 2010). Regretfully,

lack of intergenerational communication is one of the main problems encountered within

this population. For example, parents seem really surprised when their children are

caught shoplifting, but instead of using the opportunity to examine the causes of that

negative behavior, they emphasize punishment as the best solution. The extreme

differences between the American Dream the youngsters observe on TV and the reality

of being deprived of cell phones, iPods and laptops (among many other desired

electronic articles) is seldom discussed at home.

The Social Constructions of Racism and Discrimination

Mental health needs are aggravated by different stressors and have to be

evaluated accordingly (Blanco-Vega, Castro-Olivo, & Merrell, 2008). Perceived

discrimination and fear of persecution and deportation are stressors experienced by

undocumented immigrants (Moradi & Risco, 2006; Tran, Lee & Burgess, 2010).

Latinos are at high risk for anxiety, depression, somatization disorders, and substance

abuse (Cespedes & Huey, 2008; Mena et al., 2008; Willerton, Dankoski & Martir,

2008). Whatever the symptoms may have started before immigration took place

(Grzywacz, Quandt, Early, Tapia, Graham, & Arcury, 2006), during the traumatic

"crossing" (Bridges, de Arellano, Rheingold, Danielson, & Silcott, 2010), or as a

consequence of their illegal status (Tran, Lee. & Burgess, 2010), there is plenty of

research indicating that health providers are not fulfilling the needs of the Hispanic

population, especially in the rural areas (e.g. Sherrill, Crew, Mayo, Mayo, Rogers, &

Haynes, 2005; Coffman & Norton, 2010). Thirty-nine percent of the Latino immigrants

studied by Cavazos-Regh, Zayas, and Spitznagel (2007) reported not seeking health

services for fear of deportation. Most undocumented aliens self-medicate by purchasing

and using drug obtained in Mexico (Coffman, Shobe & O'Connell, 2008) or using home

remedies (Falicov, 1998).

Tran et al., (2010) compared 1387 adult immigrants of various ethnicities, and found that their subsample of 406 Latinos experienced the highest number of perceived discrimination, especially when applying for jobs. Even speaking English with an accent affects negatively immigrants' possibilities for employment (Carlson & McHenry, 2006).

According to Tran et al., (2010), fear of persecution and deportation is one of the issues impacting alcoholism in Latino immigrants. They found that Hispanics had the greatest figures for number of binge drinking days in the past month and the highest proportions of binge drinking. These researchers came to the conclusion that discrimination is a relevant factor in the disparities of drinking behavior between groups, and deduced that drinking large quantities of alcohol may be a way for men to cope with perceived discrimination. Even though the level of depressive symptoms is usually high in farmworkers and varies during the season, it is always higher in undocumented workers (Grzywacz, Quandt, Chen, Isom, Kiang, Vallejos, & Arcury, 2010).

Stories of being stopped by police in Mecca and having their vehicles confiscated for not possessing a driver's license, are told too often by immigrants. The loss of their cars—which may never be able to replace--means serious difficulties to get to work. Stories about having to run, jump over fences, or ask neighbors to hide them from the Border Patrol vehicles are also told regularly. Most Mecca residents know somebody who was deported suddenly, instantly disappearing from the community. They know they can be separated from their families in the wink of an eye, with no idea if they will see them again. I haven't found enough of those sad stories in the literature.

An interesting aspect of discrimination in the rural areas is that it goes beyond the classical White versus non-White dichotomy. Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) observed that the Oakview barrio include "many immigrant communities," with several "pockets of diversity coexisting and overlapping, sometimes in conflict with each other (p. 184). For example: legal residents looking down to the "illegals," literate folks feeling superior to illiterates, and bilingual persons believing they were superior to Spanish-speakers. Du Bri (2006), in his extensive ethnographic observations of the Mecca's inhabitants, found Spanish-speaking immigrants showing open discrimination--and sometimes violence--towards their Purépecha neighbors and other indigenous Mexican groups living in the area, who speak their own languages. Elaborating on this view, all human beings will be discriminated at one point or another. Some recent young Latino immigrants have told me about the pain caused by being laughed at school by peers for speaking broken English; others have expressed a paradoxical complain because, being third generation Latinos, they were made fun of for not speaking Spanish.

Religion and Other Institutional Powers

Catholicism is the most influential religion in Latino countries but it is not a uniformed dogmatic experience, since it has been enriched by indigenous local spiritual beliefs and ceremonies (Falicov, 1998). Lopez (2007) indicates that Mexican farmworkers are the "most heavily invested in the spiritual balm offered by Catholicism" (p. 249). She also claims that its overwhelming influence on certain areas of the population, especially on women, promotes self-sacrifice and oppression as a proof of being faithful, values that conflict with American ideology. How the meaning

given to religion plays into family relationships is a fascinating area of research, especially when many immigrant youth do not agree with their parents' beliefs.

Worby and Organista (2007), in their comprehensive review, were surprised by the lack of research regarding the influence of organized religion on alcohol use in the Latino population. One good example of a positive impact is found in Hovey and Magana (2002) study that found that lower levels of anxiety—which are related to less addictive behaviors--were found among migrant farmworkers who attended church. It is well documented that many Mexicans choose to stop drinking (or smoking, eating meat, etc.) during the religious period of Lent, in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the most important saint in their country.

In addition to religiosity, Escobar, Nervi & Gara (2000), mention other protective factors for immigrant Latino families that merit more research. These include governmental laws that should try to keep the members together (versus separations as a result of deportation), maintenance of a supportive larger community (instead of reduced services in poor areas), and availability of healthy culturally appropriate diets (contrary to public advertisements of junk food). Regretfully, U.S. immigration policies discourage positive outcomes, and immigrants' health starts deteriorating after their arrival to the new country, at the same time that the emotional stress increases (Worby & Organista, 2007; Finch, Hummer, Kolody, & Vega, 2001).

Hancock & Ames (2008) propose that social workers working in rural areas support clergy in presenting domestic violence programs to the community. Developing a plan to use houses of worship as therapeutic centers may be a practical solution to the

problems of governmental apathy or budget constrictions (Boltri, Davis-Smith, Zayas, Shellenberger, Seale, Blalock, & Mbadinuju, 2007).

Summary

The present review demonstrates that the literature on transnational Mexican couples living in the rural area of Southern California who are dealing with adolescent substance use is far from consistent and homogeneous; at times, it even seems contradictory. Looking closely at this valuable information gives us the opportunity to ponder the different discourses in order to try to understand the meanings involved in the migration history of the participants, the changes related to gender and hierarchy that develop in their relationships, the influences of the ecological contexts in which they live, and the issues related to their family life cycles. In doing so, the relational processes that guide the effectiveness (or failure) of immigrants in dealing with their children's addictions are made visible. More yet, in trying to increase our knowledge of this way of life, our dialog generates understandings that may open new paths to action (Gergen, 2009).

Most Mexican farmworkers come to the United States seeking a better life for their families, pressed to leave their country of origin by the economic hardships caused by political maneuvers and international treaties. Their experiences crossing the border--travelling individually, as a couple, or with children--are sometimes traumatic and may have lasting negative impact in their lives and in their relationships. Families who travel together have a different experience than the ones who do it in stages--with children being raised by relatives for long periods of time and going through a series of

attachments and separations. Family reunions in the midst of acculturation often develop strained parent/child relationships which end up in ineffective discipline.

Values of romance and sexuality are being constantly renegotiated in the new land, with many couples feeling torn between being more "modern" (with more liberal and individualistic ideas) and feeling guilty for rejecting the "old" (conservative and collective). Directly related to this is the constantly challenged issue of respect: respect within the marital dyad; respect in relation to intergenerational patterns; and the big item in collective cultures, respect in the community, where being modern has consequences: for men the risk of being seen as weak; for women to be labeled as indecent.

Being raised in a culture in which women and children have little, if any power and moving into a culture that protects women and children, diminished patriarchal authority is a fact hard to be accepted by many men. Most Latinas feel their relationships with spouses are more egalitarian in the United States, especially when they are able to contribute financially to the family. Men help around the house more often, but there is a delicate equilibrium that is maintained, especially by the women, who try to avoid major conflict in the relationships, protecting the wellbeing of the children. Tension related to the redistribution of power within the couple influence on the new ways they need to learn in order to discipline their children.

The ways in which Latino adolescents form their identities in the midst of two different cultures--trying to remain connected and independent at the same time--may not be a main part of this study, but how the acculturation process impacts their use of illegal substances is. Alcohol consumption, as a cultural expectation in Latino youth, may be exasperated by peer pressure (need to belong to an accepting ethnic group), or

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by the distress in their lives (need to forget about past traumas related to immigration, or about present distress related to being discriminated, or the perennial menace of deportation).

The literature about Latinos in the U.S. shows many challenges but also shows lots of resiliency. The stories of the Mecca participants reflect optimism and hope in the midst of the suffering produced by the crisis of adolescent substance abuse. How those stories were collected and analyzed is explained in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHOD

This research is part of the ongoing Contemporary Couples Study (CCS) of the Counseling and Family Science Department of Loma Linda University, directed by Carmen Knudson-Martin, PhD. The CCS looks at the ways in which couples' relationships adapt to changing social and economic contexts.

This qualitative research project, undertaken from a social constructionist perspective, tries to understand issues of gender and hierarchy of Latino transnational couples in their interactions with their adolescents who use/abuse substances, with the purpose of creating grounded theory. This dissertation draws on a feminist critical theory perspective, focusing on the consequences of living in a unequal and underserved environment. These frameworks guided the methodology of the study, combining ways to find meaning on the experience of the participants with providing practical guidelines to improve their lives through social justice advocacy. "Social inquiry is a practice, not simply a way of knowing. Understanding what others are doing or saying and transforming that knowledge into public form involves moral-political commitments" (Schwandt, 2003, p.315).

Why a Qualitative Method?

A qualitative research design was chosen for this study because it is the best method to understand meaning (Heppner, Kivligan, & Wampold, 1999), following the idea that meaning is created by the symbolic interactions of individuals (Meade, 1934) which in turn, form the social constructions that guide people's lives (Gergen, 2009;

Schwandt, 2003). Qualitative research is well suited to examine complex and dynamic

social issues, especially when considering the effects produced by social context, such as

gender, class, race, and ethnicity (Denzin, 2009).

When the goal of the researcher is to try to understand the social constructions of

the participants; this is easier done utilizing language, as it is the case of qualitative

research, instead of just trying to confirm or disconfirm hypotheses, as in quantitative

research (Heppner et al., 1999). Rather than isolating variables to study how they

control each other, qualitative analysis begins with the premise that behavior only has

meaning in relation to its whole context (Heppner et al.).

The systematic set of steps developed by Strauss and Corbin (1998) guided this

study. The steps were followed showing responsibility and respect for scientific

procedure, at the same time that respected the participants' input, attempting to grasp the

maximum of their experience possible. This study implemented a methodology inspired

by Denzin (2009) which includes multi vocal texts, accepting that there are only ever

partial truths, rejecting the idea that the world is monochromatic, and emphasizing a

commitment to social justice.

Why Grounded Theory?

In developing this dissertation proposal, my overall desire was to know more

about transnational couples, and their own understanding of the constructs of gender and

hierarchy in their new environment. The focus of study was later narrowed to know

how those views affect the parents' interactions with their adolescents who use

substances, and with the social institutions that influence their lives. It was therefore

necessary to select a methodology that could most appropriately answer these questions.

Methodology is a way to think about and study social realities (Strauss & Corbin, 1998)

in order to help researchers in answering those emerging questions.

If the questions would have been exclusively about the meaning of being an

immigrant, *phenomenology* would have answered them better; if the intention would

have been to describe what is happening in the home where adolescents use or abuse of

drugs or alcohol is present, *ethnography* would have been more effective (Morse &

Richards, 2002). Because the questions in this study emphasize how do cultural ideas

and social contextual factors impact the parents' ability to deal with adolescent

substance abuse, a *grounded theory* design was chosen.

Grounded theory is the qualitative interpretive framework most used in the social

sciences today (Denzin, 2009). According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), grounded

theory is defined as "theory that was derived from data, systematically gathered and

analyzed through the research process" (p. 12). The belief is that "through detailed

exploration, with theoretical sensitivity, the researcher can construct theory grounded in

data" (Morse & Richard, 2002, p.54). Because grounded theory methodology involves

clearly defined steps that investigators need to follow, it is said to be the closest thing to

a "good science" model within the qualitative research paradigm (Denzin).

This process of interpretation should be systematic in order to be trustworthy.

Janesick (2003) presents the explanation given by Lincoln and Guba (1985), that

trustworthiness is obtained only after data have been scrutinized for credibility,

transferability, dependability, and confirmability (equivalents of internal and external

validity, reliability and objectivity, using quantitative vocabulary). Because

interpretation is subjective, "an art that cannot be formalized" (Denzil, 2009, p. 112), trustworthy data, after being subjected to the constant comparative method of analysis required by grounded theory, creates theory ready for peer scrutiny and external audits before being ready to be released to different venues, in various possible ways.

Constant comparison involves maximizing the recordings of the process, paying equal attention to the transcriptions of the participants' interviews, the memos written by the researcher, the discussions with team members, and the ideas or hunches that may arise during the analysis. It also requires to compare and contrast all these data among themselves and with the literature on the topic (Morse & Richards, 2002). Comparisons highlight variations in the patterns to be found in the data, making differences visible by contrasting properties and dimensions under different conditions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The constant comparison of the narratives gathered helped understand the experiences of the transnational habitants of Mecca. My interest in this population developed from my first interactions--working as a marital and family therapist--with clients and with the participants of the parenting classes that I have facilitated in the area for over four years. Even though I am Latina, my interactions with Mexicans had been very limited until that moment (having lived in New York most of my life) and my knowledge of rural life was minimum. I quickly learned to admire the hardworking individuals who shared their experiences with me, and as I became better acquainted with their country of origin, to appreciate the rich Mexican culture. Observing how much of the parents' identity is the result of their children's behavior, made me curious

about how this would affect their parenting, living in such a disconcerting environment (Mecca remains more "Mexican" than other cities; nevertheless, it is U.S. territory).

After combining the multiplicity of voices from my clients with the growing number of voices from the literature I had a sense of the confusion that immigrant parents feel when their efforts in helping their children to abandon their dangerous habits seem futile and no new options appear feasible. I didn't enter this study with a presumption of having an answer. I planned to follow the participants' lead and, through their experiences, develop grounded theory that would fill this gap in the literature, and provide more tools to clinicians working with this population. Within qualitative methodologies, these were not null hypotheses to be confirmed or rejected; they were not used to generate data but rather "to generate ideas or ways of looking at the data" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 90).

The grounded theory approach is based on symbolic interactionism (Morse & Richards, 2002), and works well with a feminist critical theory. That is why it was chosen for this project. The rest of the chapter presents how the guidelines developed by Strauss and Corbin (1998) were followed in this study.

Sample Selection

The original design for this study called for a selective sampling, recruiting subjects by word of mouth and from the parenting courses led by the researcher. This was supposed to produce a snowball effect, as it was expected that the first participants would advertise the interview to their friends, relatives, and neighbors. In practice, I was surprised when none of the subjects recommended other names as possible participants.

At the end of each interview, the subjects were asked if they knew of other couples who would be interested in taking part in the study. Some said they would think about it, but none gave leads. The value of privacy of the Mexican culture may have been sub estimated by this researcher. A complementary explanation could be that inviting acquaintances to the parenting sessions (happening all the time) may reflect a positive desire to obtain more knowledge; by contrast, the interviews about drug addicted children may be seen as proof of having failed as parents, a negative concept.

The phrase "Never assume a sample is waiting for you" (Morse & Richards, 2002, p. 74) is a cruel reality, especially when working with immigrants. Therefore, invitations to participate were extended at English classes, Alanon meetings, Familias Unidas assemblies, church activities, health fairs, on the streets, and along the lines people formed while waiting to receive the free food distributed by Catholic Charities every week. The last one was the most productive. Volunteering at events made my presence more familiar in the community. It also allowed for the distribution of free material regarding substance abuse, and lots of referrals to rehabilitation centers, counseling agencies, and AA and Alanon meetings. In connecting with possible candidates, a few families were visited, and even if they didn't fit the criteria for participating in the study, they benefited by listening to general information regarding adolescent development and the benefits of getting additional help.

Couples were offered a $25.00 gift card for completing an open-ended interview which lasted about one hour and a half with the first families, and about one hour with the last ones, once the categories were more defined and the stories became somehow repetitive. Both husband and wife had to be available to be interviewed at the same time

in order to make the co-constructed aspects of the couple relationship more visible. This was a problem for some women whose husbands' jobs took them away often, and for couples in conflicting relationships, who did not want to be together. Even after being offered to be interviewed separated (as their input may have given another variation to the study), the women making the contact refused.

Undocumented immigrants--many of the inhabitants of the area--are suspicious of strangers (Janesick, 2002). Even when they agreed to talk with me, there were physical obstacles that had to be sorted away. Because they move often, some didn't know their present address, or didn't want to give it out (sometimes those homes are shared with other people without legal status). One couple who preferred to be interviewed at the Family Resource Center's office didn't show up. This population often doesn't have cellular phones, or money to pay for the service, what makes setting appointments more challenging. After the first contact some were given the researcher's phone number to call for further information or to make an appointment, but nobody called (different area codes also complicated the process).

From the beginning of the recruitment process, I tried to earn the trust of the participants by being open and honest regarding the purpose of the study and my own interest and biases (McKean, Skaff, Chesla, de los Santos Mycue, & Fisher, 2002). Being understanding and patient was vital as, at times, it was necessary to call several times to schedule or reschedule appointments. However, many of the women were very enthusiastic when contacted and decided on the day and time immediately (without even consulting with their husbands). Two of the families said the offers were considered an "answer" from God.

Participants

The sample for this study included sixteen couples. The only two that were not married, both had been together for six years. For the other couples, the amount of time married ranged from twenty-one to forty years, with a medium of twenty-six years. The medium age of the women was forty-eight and of the men forty-nine. Ten couples reported earning less than $20,000 per year, and the rest between $21,000 and $40,000. Nine participants said they had no formal education, fifteen finished elementary school and eight graduated or almost graduated from high school. Only two of the couples were not Catholic. Two couples, and one boyfriend, were the only undocumented participants.

Years in the U.S. varied from fifteen to forty-seven, with the medium being twenty-nine years. Even though this is not an exact number, as it relies on the best guesses of the participants (some of whom have been moving back and forth across the border since their first arrival) it shows that these families were not new in the host environment.

The sixteen couples had a total of sixty-six children. The minimum amount per family was two (three couples) and the maximum was seven (one). Medium number of children per family was four. Even though some families had more than one offspring using illegal substances, it was mostly the experience of the youngest that was considered for the interviews. The range varied from fifteen years old (two) to twenty-three years old (one). There were only three girls among the sixteen youngsters.

Six children were over nineteen years of age at the time of the interviews. The first four (20, 21, 21, 23) were accepted automatically because they were still young and

had started using substances when they were teenagers. The last two adults (26, 36) were sought purposely, after saturation had been reached, in order to incorporate the retrospective stories of parents who had spent more time involved in the crisis of addiction, and see if their experiences would add new insights. The last couple, whose son is thirty-six years old now, have spent the last eight years (since he quit) afraid that he would relapse. He had used a variety of drugs for a period of over ten years. The experiences of the families of the older sons reaffirmed the concepts flowing from the testimonies of the other participants and fitted the emerging theory over the long term.

The parents reported that seven of the children continued using, there were doubts about one, and they believed that eight had quit. From three of this last group, abstinence was induced by special circumstances, and the parents were not sure for how long it would last once things were back to normal: one adolescent was in Juvenile Hall, one was pregnant, and one had checked herself in a youth shelter.

Years using drugs or alcohol varied from one day to eleven years. Even though only a few parents were sure of this timeframe, and one couple couldn't even guess a number, the medium time using that was reported was almost four years. Appendix C provides detailed demographic information regarding the participants.

Informed Consent

Each couple was interviewed face-to-face, at their homes. They completed a short written demographic questionnaire, received a verbal and written description of the study, and signed an informed consent form (Appendix A). A verbal explanation of the informed consent form was paramount since they had very limited literacy skills. Even

though the documents were in Spanish, I had to write down the information they provided (many of them had difficulty even signing their names). They were advised about the main goals of the study, about the ways in which their identities would be protected, about confidentially and its limitations, about their right not to answer any questions that made them uncomfortable, and about the option to stop the interview at any moment they wished. I explained that they would still receive the gift card if they decided to withdraw. Obligations, benefits, risks and responsibilities were made clear before the beginning of the interview, making sure they didn't feel coerced.

Participants were also asked for the possibility to be contacted again if more information was needed. They all agreed, but only a few were able to give the stable address or phone number of a relative or friend in case they moved. They considered themselves to be the established ones. They weren't enthusiastic about participating in a focus group or a future presentation about the results of the study. This concurs with the previous idea of privacy emanating from their lack of participation in sharing the study with people they knew.

Interview Guide

The CCS semi-structured interview guide was translated and adapted to incorporate the specific interests of the study. The order of the sections was maintained: Brief History of the Relationship, Relationship Ideology, Relations Structures and Behaviors, and Decision-Making and Conflict Resolution. Two new sections were added: Adolescent Use of Substances and Issues of Culture and Social Justice.

Regarding the History of the Relationship, for example, I included probes about the migration experience of the couple and occupational variations in their lives. Because, in my experience, Latino clients with limited vocabulary not only don't mind answering direct questions (they are easier than having to wrestle with thoughts trying to explain feelings and concepts) but prefer them, even probes were prepared as open ending inquiries. Examples of questions are: What made you move to the U.S.?; Who decided?; Were you two in accord?; How did the children react?; How did you come (together, separated)?; How did your family of origin react?; Tell about the experience of crossing the border; How did you adapt at the beginning?; How was your experience of working in the fields?

Questions relating to the Ideology of the Relationship provided information about what the participants believed was a "good" relationship, their expectations changed over time, and the ideas that influenced their gender experience. Also a significant part of the interview referred to what they considered a problem and how they dealt with it, and how they determined if their union was fair for both.

Specific questions and examples were also added to this section: Who has more authority at home and how do you know it?; Do you ask permission from your husband to go out?; Do you inform your wife when you are going out?; How do the children respond to the parents orders?; If you want to eat Chinese food and he wants tacos, what do you end up eating?; If you want to paint the living room white and she wants it beige, what color will the room be? Why?

In relation to the Structure and Behaviors of the Relationship, I wanted to know how much time they spent together, who decided how to use that time, and how they felt

about it. Also important was to know how they divided household responsibilities, including the supervision and discipline of children. They were asked how they maintained their emotional bonds, who noticed the needs of the other, and how they helped each other emotionally, including sexual closeness. Issues of hierarchy were informed by direct questions such as what place authority played out in the relationship and by probes regarding hiding power, like changes in schedules to fit each other's needs, or doing things just because the partner liked it.

Specific examples of domestic responsibilities and situations included: How does it feel helping your wife washing dishes?; How does it feel helping your husband in the garden?; When was the last time you went dancing?; Who attends the meetings at your children's school?; If you have a day off and he wants to go watch a soccer game and you want to go shopping, what do you end up going?; How much of your parenting style are you copying from your parents?

Regarding Decision-making and Conflict Resolution, items including economic issues and conflict arising from the child's use of substances were presented. This was closely related to the Adolescent Use of Substances section, that included questions to gather general information, such as: Tell about the beginning of the problem, how did you found out?; What has been done to solve it?; What has been successful?; What have been the consequences for your child?; What have been the consequences for the family? What do you think is going to happen?; How has your faith in God helped you during this crisis?

Other inquiries related to the impact on the couple's relationship: How has the problem impacted the way you relate to each other?; Who has more responsibility for

the lack of obedience of the children?; Do you believe that having done something different in the past would had made things different today? What? How?; How often do you talk about the problem and decide together about possible interventions?; What things do you do differently now?; How do you support each other while confronting this crisis?

The Issues of Culture and Social Justice section included aspects related to Legal Status, Government Laws, Schools, and Church, with questions like: Do you feel you have ever been discriminated? Tell me about any incidents with the Border Patrol you might have had. How has been your experience with the Police Department? What is your opinion of the California's laws regarding physical punishment? How has been your experience with your child's school? Do you think schools could do more to help families like yours? Do you believe undocumented workers are treated just like residents and citizens? How would your life change if you could obtain legal status in this country? The complete CCS, in English and Spanish, can be seen in Appendix B.

The Process of Theory Creation

Data analysis begins in the interview, with the researcher who keeps creating mini theories in her mind, and adds questions that probes those lines of thought generated through researcher-participant interaction. The fact that the interviews were conducted in Spanish, and that only one person was involved in collecting data, guaranteed that in this study-- even when adding the evolving questions—the structure was maintained in such a way that the data across participants was comparable (Hill & Thomas, 2000).

The Researcher as Instrument of Analysis

In qualitative research the researcher is "actually the instrument used to analyze the data" (Morse & Richards, 2002, p. 168). Because the analytic process is not separated from data collection, my initial hypotheses and themes helped initiate the process and new questions in subsequent interviews reflected the emerging areas of interest. For example, the importance of *work* in the lives of the participants called my attention during the first interview, but no questions had been prepared about that subject. The issue of *husband blaming his wife* came up very strongly with the fourth couple, but going back to the previous narratives, it became clear that, in a subtler manner, it had been an important part of the interactions of those spouses too.

To be able to probe successfully is a skill that I believe I have acquired. Listening to the narratives, I became aware of "the relationships regarding the structure, occurrence, and distribution of events over time" that is needed in order to produce even more interesting questions (Janesick, 2002). From that moment on, questions about work and blaming were incorporated to the list of inquiries. Some of those questions were guided by conflict found, exemptions, or simply things that didn't fit, and that had to be probed (Babbie, 2005). The most interesting example was about couples repeating that they have the same authority at home. If those answers would have remained unchallenged they would have not reflected the more realistic picture that additional questions uncovered: women know what men want and act accordingly, in order to keep the peace at home.

Denzin (2009) reminds researchers that they belong to a moral community connecting individuals, through the dialogic conversation, to the larger moral

community. As such, doing interviews is a privilege, not a right, especially because information is transformed in shared experience, becoming a "performance event" (Denzin). In order to be a respectful participant of this performance event I tried to keep constantly checking myself to be sure that I was not imposing my ideas on the participants. Being respectful at times when my biases were challenged --such as listening to women's testimonies about being overwhelmed by work and not expecting any help from the partners who preferred to watch television; or not being able to go out because the capricious husband didn't give them permission-- took some self-control and restrain.

Another danger that I tried to avoid was the temptation to "do therapy" during the interviews, since I am a licensed marital and family therapist and the stories the participants told reflected great pain or distress. Witnessing the suffering that the addictions of the children caused in the parents was heartbreaking. Some of the participants had deep wounds from their own childhoods that had not closed. I believe they were able to feel support and empathy from me, within the boundaries of a respectful limited interaction. All the participants that wanted it received referrals to counseling agencies or rehabilitation centers.

I transcribed the audio tapes and translated the interviews into English. They were analyzed using the grounded theory methods described by Strauss and Corbin (1998) and enhanced by Corbin and Strauss (2008). Analysis and data creation thus proceeded simultaneously, with concepts being developed during the conversations, during the transcribing, and during the translation. Interviews were collected until the theoretical saturation point was reached. That means until no new or significant

information was obtained while coding, and properties, relationships and dimensions

remained without variation (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this case this was obtained

with sixteen interviews.

Data Analysis

The *formal* process of analysis in grounded theory begins after leaving the field,

when the notes and audiotapes are processed. Transcribing can become a tedious task,

especially when the interviews are long. But in my case, reliving the interactions with

the couples in such a detailed and slow way helped me to understand their experience in

a deeper and more meaningful way. Noticing the changes in the tone of voice,

remembering glimpses between spouses, or recalling silent tears, were precious nuggets

that are difficult to appreciate by just reading a transcript. Parts of the interviews

sounded like poetry; others like comic relief; I cried and I laughed while transcribing the

powerful narratives. A symbolic interactionist lens explains why the researcher is

transformed as a result of this process, and, for sure I can say that, after listening to the

tapes, I am not the same person that was before.

After transcribing interviews (and many times simultaneously) the process of

coding began. That means "the analytic process through which data are fractured,

conceptualized, and integrated to form theory" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 3). Morse

and Richards (2002, p. 115) explain that "coding is linking, rather than merely labeling."

Coding is more that giving names to individual concepts and ideas being derived from

the data; it involves the delicate combination of demonstrating respect for procedures at

the same time that welcoming fluid and skillful application of methods. All this is being

done in the midst of constant evolving theoretical concepts (Strauss & Corbin).

Open Coding

During this phase categories started to emerge as key phrases and statements

were chosen and bracketed showing that they have special meaning. Some examples of

open coding follow:

"Oh, no… because [without children it is like there isn't… Are we only going to

be looking at each other faces?]" This statement, from a father of younger children, was

coded as *father stays home for the children.*

That same importance given to children was noticed in fathers of older, addicted

children: "He is very… how do you say?... very friendly, a very nice person… And that

is why I believe [his friends abuse him]… He doesn't know how to say 'no'". This

statement was coded as *father defends child.*

Regarding marital issues, the testimony of this wife is powerful:

He doesn't want to remain there and earn what he earns and that we spend it in
the rent and the food only. I believe that is what he doesn't want; he wants me to
work so we can save a little. I think that if he would see that with his income… if
he would earn enough for those things, I imagine [he would tell me not to work],
that I stay in the home.

This one was coded as *wife elevating his husband's image*.

"Staying close to the data is the most powerful means of telling the story"

(Janesick, 2002, p. 63). The meaning that the participants give to a word, a phrase, or a

sentence is open to several interpretations; a constant comparison analysis--going back

to the data--will indicate which one is more accurate. Looking for clarification of the

first example, another quote from the same husband confirmed it: "It is like… [there has to be children in the house]. How good is an empty house? [To be us alone…no]…" This was coded both, as *father stays home for the children* and also as *father being honest*, and led to a completely different marital concept. Key words were signaled in a line-by-line analysis and the concepts were examined and compared--looking for similarities or differences-- to be finally labeled and classified.

At the beginning, I coded too much, being afraid of missing things. But to code too little is also bad because definitely data will be missed. The general advice is to work with a team, or at least consult with other persons. Even though the data collection stage of this study involved only one researcher, working as a team with my dissertation committee chair to analyze the data provided the additional support needed. Drawing on her to question my interpretations brought new perspectives to the project.

Axial Coding

It is impossible to indicate where open coding ends and axial coding begin. Connections among concepts started appearing since the beginning of the process. Axial coding adds depth, structure and process to the data, forming subcategories; it "moves the focus around a concept" (Morse & Richards, 2002, p. 121). It is a way to code "around the axis of a category to add depth and structure to it" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 142). This is the process of discovering how categories relate to each other, which involves thoughtful dedication and also intuition. The actual linking is done at the conceptual level, utilizing the participants' words but using the investigator's interpretation of the events. Here we should find answers to "the questions of who,

when, where, why, how, and with what consequences" in order "to relate structure to process" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 126).

Thirty three categories were developed in my study, divided in three main subjects (for easy reference): General Concepts, Couple Concepts and Teen Concepts. The first classification included titles such as: Poverty in Mexico, Culture of work, Culture of Use of Substances, Adventure of Coming to U.S., Hope for a Better Life, and Conflict between Cultures. As the analysis continued, some categories were merged, like Adventure of Coming to U.S. and Hope for a Better Life.

Some of the important Couple Concepts were: Being Practical, Survival Skills, Old Machismo, New Machismo, Accepting Influence, Elevating the Partner, Role Confusion, and so on. The first two were quickly merged. Examples of Teen Concepts were: Importance of Children, Parental Roles, Monitoring Children, Blaming Adolescents, and Blaming Others.

I tried to write detailed analytic memos after each interview, to help clarify the emerging ideas, to narrow concepts, and to consider how those concepts related to others, but after the first transcriptions it became easier to link specific examples in the narratives with the more abstract concepts being developed, and the memos became shorter and more focused.

At times, in difficult, subjective concepts such as Elevating the Partner, I was lucky in finding many voices converging in one simple statement that explained lots of the different aspects of the construct. The following is an excellent example:

> Well, because he is the man; he is the father… of the family. He is the one who… It is not that I don't have voice or vote, but I like that he makes the decisions, he is the one with more authority in the house…We both have power

but I prefer that he has it…Yes, because we need to have… to agree both, to be able to make any decision, but…there are times when I prefer that he makes it, even if I don't like it.

At this point, the main categories were taking shape. However, some concepts were found ingrained in most, if not all, the categories. I am using the construct *Work,* to illustrate, in a gendered way, how the analysis found it to be a main component of the overall picture presented by the participants in several aspects of their lives.

For women, work was seen as *a source of individual distress* ("When I entered to work in the fields I cried the first day. I cried that my hands hurt, saying, 'I am not going back'"); *conflict within the relationship* ("Well, I… Yes, I had wanted her to work, but I don't ask her or force her to do it"); *feelings of failure* (Now almost everything is done through the computer, and we don't know… we are ignorant… and I have tried [to find a new job] and I have not been able to do it"); *a way to cope with the problem of the children* ("Nothing hurt and I felt better when I worked"); *an excuse for husbands not to help at home* ("And I also worked, and I also came home and I had to cook, and to have everything done… And he only worked"); *a source of pride* ("It is something I will never be able to complain about, because he is a good worker…he always has work in his mind, always"); *a small step toward more egalitarian relationships* ("If we both work outside the home, we both should work inside the home"); *a way to define roles* ("[We] are the ones who do it all… take care of the children, clean the house, cook, do laundry, daily chores"); *a measure to predict their children's future success* ("sometimes he [son] earns little… but he doesn't try to work hard"); *a cause of family separation* ("He was under stress because he worked a lot and there was not money… That is why I used to go back to Mexico… And we were going back and forth); *a punishment for*

unruly children ("He works with me because I take him. If I wouldn't work, he wouldn't work") and so on.

For men, work was *personal identity* (I tell him he is like a work machine because from work to the house, work, house"); *a divine blessing* ("We have to thank God that we are alive, we can see, we have hands, we can work… giving us eyes, hands to work, that is good"); *their main commission* ("I give her complete responsibility about everything related to the house. I only dedicate myself to work and bring the money; to work"); *a purpose in life* ("Working hard, that they [wife and children] have their needs supplied… That they have what they need"); *a way to demonstrate authority* ("If she is in a hurry… I help her… But if I see she is not in a hurry, no, no"); *a consequence of the way they grew up* ("That is the way I learned from childhood. My father worked, my mother just was there…"); *an escape from the adolescents' problems* ("I get to my job, get into my room, and get out of my room and go to my job"); *an explanation for not disciplining children* ("Because one is always working, or fixing something, that I, now, seldom go out. … but what punishment can I give them?"); *an opportunity to blame the women* ("Well, I tell her that she should make them do housework, but she never does"); *a measure to judge children's friends* ("I don't want them to have contact with that people who do not work"); *an obstacle to move to a safer place* ("Because I don't know how to do any other work than in the field"); *a reason for being detached from drug addict son* ("That is why I was not able to give him more attention. Maybe if I had worked less… But… if working the money is not enough, imagine if I work less…"), and others.

The above examples and many more, formed the fluid streams of thoughts and ideas that were being constantly compared among themselves and with the context in which the families developed. In doing so, the concept of Culture of Work was divided, and Work as Source of Respect and Work Blamed for Detachment were born.

Seeing together most of the interventions that the parents used (Appendix D) gave an idea of the gendered ways in which the couples worked. Comparing the outcomes of their attempts to help the children showed the limited success they were obtaining. As the concepts started presenting a richer and deeper understanding of the experience of the couples, my closeness to the data allowed me to participate in their lives and to learn and benefit from their experiences.

Selective Coding

This is the final step where data becomes theory, as categories are integrated and refined. At this stage of my analysis, there were three main categories, each reflecting a set of interrelated concept: Work, Family Unity, and Respect.

Now the abstract concepts derived by the detailed descriptions of the respondents would explain how, in a general sense, cultural ideas and social contextual factors impact the ability of Latino couples to help their adolescent children who are involved in using substances. A core category, to which all other categories are related, had to be brought to the central focus, without being forced. In trying to identify it I followed Strauss and Corbin (1998) integration technique of writing a storyline about "what seems going on in there." In dialog with the other team member, it came to light that the

concept of Respect was what brought all the other aspects of the experience of the participants together.

The social construction of Respect encompasses the values represented by the importance of Work and the paramount desire of maintaining Family Unity. Men who feel respected will be good providers who will maintain a safe environment for their love ones. Women will keep supporting such men, and sacrificing while trying to keep them willing and able to comply with their cultural duties. Children who respect their parents by obeying and honoring them, are expected to imitate their work habits and do their part in preserving the wholeness of the family nucleus.

Once the grounded theory was outlined, the following step was to refine it, making sure it maintained internal consistency, it flowed logically, the categories were fully developed (able to demonstrate a range of variability), and the participants would be able to relate to this final story if it would be presented to them (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Exceptions

It was surprising to find how much the majority of the families had in common (married, home owners, stable jobs, church goers, citizenship obtained by them or their parents through latest amnesty). The only couples with less than twenty years of residence in the country were the two who were undocumented. Even though their experiences regarding their children's addiction were similar to the other parents, they suffered more distress regarding work stability, possibilities of improvement, and interactions with the social context.

The major exceptions regarding couple's relationships and parental authority were due to the two unmarried couples, who had more egalitarian relationships because the women had had previous marriages and had been on their own for some time. The men related differently toward their own biological offspring, participating in monitoring the girlfriends' children but using the mothers as intermediaries for interacting with their stepchildren.

Trustworthiness and Transferability

Because qualitative inquiry is "subjective, interpretive, and time and context bounded," *truth* is relative and *facts* are individual interpretations. That is why some authors argue that validity and reliability can only be used with positivist paradigms and they suggest that a better word to apply to the credibility of the qualitative study is *trustworthiness* (Guba and Lincoln, 2002).

The researchers explain that trustworthiness and transferability in a qualitative study will depend on how well the process of analysis is explained, how the researcher biases are addressed, and how much the results reflect the true meaning that the participants give to their experience. Following social constructionist thought, I know that there are many ways to interpret events and that to try to judge validity that depends of the social constructions of the people is an impossible task (Janesick, 2003). Trustworthiness is found when the new findings of the project compare well, are easily accounted for, and fit logically with the literature, since "missing the essence of phenomena is a fatal validity issue" (Morse & Richards, 2002, p. 170).

Because I certainly support the idea that data gathering must continue until "each category is rich and thick, and until it replicates" (Morse & Richards, 2002, p. 175) I am confident that I went beyond the point when saturation was achieved in this study. Even though new data did not provide any more useful information, I continued gathering interviews in search of the possibility of finding more exceptions or variety (and because interested people asked to participate). As a researcher, I am confident in the results of this study by being able to backtrack, to discover and to report the history of the analysis, showing how I got there. A documented history of the project, including notes taken through the process was maintained (Morse & Richards, 2002). This is important, not only to allow outsiders to perform audit trails, but for future use of the data for publications.

By far the best proof of trustworthiness is to be able to implement the changes suggested by the study and see the results. This can only be accomplished if a journal article is published and clinicians can benefit from it. Trustworthiness also increases by going back to the participants and discussing the results with them. A sense of this was obtained during the last interviews, with the overwhelming correspondence of their answers to the analysis developed from the stories previously told by other subjects.

Regarding *reproducibility* (one of the canons of good science of Strauss and Corbin, mentioned by Denzin, 2009, p. 102) the researchers explain that similar conditions, analyzed under the same theoretical worldview, and using the same procedures for collecting data, in two studies "should be able to reproduce the same theoretical explanations of a given phenomenon." Often in quantitative research the most interesting studies are those whose results can be applied to different populations.

For qualitative researchers, *applicability of findings* is said to be more important than *generalizability*. That means that even though results of this study may have little meaning outside the context of transnational Mexican couples with adolescent children who use/abuse substances and lived in isolated locations, and its results may not be generalized to other populations, they will still have importance in several areas of the social sciences, and its results will enrich knowledge pools having to do with transnationalism, with substance abuse, with adolescents, with Latino couples and with rural areas. The results can not only help scientific minds, but also politicians and community leaders who may be interested in local information.

The two major gaps in the literature that this study is contributing to are (1) understanding the relational systemic process of the transnational couple making new meaning to challenged cultural values that define identity and (2) understanding the specific challenges that adolescent substance abuse presents to transnational couples. The results of this study are presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS

The participants in this study described couple relationships as being organized around the world of male work in which the men's job was the source of respect, meaning and pride for both partners. Men who were employed full time felt fulfilled not only in their roles as husbands, but in their roles as fathers as well. As they described it, work was central to their self esteem and the source of their respect --just like it had been for their parents-- and it was not related to enjoying or not what they did. Therefore, the response of the couples to their children's substance use should be understood in the context of the way they framed family life around male work.

Women, even though they also may have been working outside their homes, devoted their lives to supporting their husbands so they could be the best workers possible, and they took pride in their husbands' efforts. Taking care of the children so that their spouses didn't have to focus their energy on them was one of the ways in which women supported their men. Father involvement with the children was limited and defined by whatever the fathers chose to do. Male authority was understood, expected, and a source of comfort for the women.

Either by hard earned salaries or by well deserved unemployment checks, the participants commented about feeling proud of having been able to provide a relatively comfortable and safe environment that maintained the family united while the children were young. However, the crisis around their adolescents' substance use set in motion new processes that challenged the cultural idea of respect that for these families had historically been closely entangled with obedience and unity.

This chapter will highlight the experience of these transnational couples regarding the changes they went through when the crisis of adolescent substance abuse impacted upon their discourses of respect regarding work, family hierarchy, parenting, and larger system institutions.

Respect in the World of Gendered Work

For the participants who grew up in the Mexican fields, manual work meant survival. With the exception of Couple #8, who grew up in a city and their childhoods were easier than the rest (he began working young in order to acquire non-essential items; her father never allowed her to work), all the other men started working when they were children, doing extraneous agricultural jobs. The minute contributions of some of them were crucial in providing food for their families or for themselves (some became independent very early in life). The few women who didn't labor in the fields as girls worked as seamstresses with their mothers or helped other families doing housework. Even Female # 4, who came to the U.S. as a young child, was also working in a nursing home when she was 14. Remembering his life in Mexico, Male #4 shared:

> Well, they [relatives in the U.S.] sent [money]… when they could… or when they remembered, I don't know. But we always were in need… Then, in the morning I used to go to work for others, so they could pay me a little bit… and I left at two in the afternoon, and from there I used to go to where I sowed and worked [the family plot of land] until dark. Over there I got sick from fatigue. It came the time when my body didn't respond and I became ill. I fell. I didn't know what I had, because all my body hurt and I only wanted to sleep, resting…"

Working in the American fields today is also hard. Men complain of the effects of the heat and the pesticides, and the ones who learn a little English and make

connections try to find better jobs as soon as they can. Female #4 recalls her initiation harvesting grapes: "The first day I cried all the time…I told him 'I am not going back.'" But she did, and got used to the ordeal. Female #3 still suffers from migraines and sometimes she ends up vomiting.

Working is a source of respect for men and for women alike. Women respect men who work hard. Female #3 calls her husband "*a work machine*" that only goes "from work to the house, work, house," and when he is home, just like the other male participants, keeps busy tending the yard or doing repairs. About her husband, Female #6 said:

> He is concentrated in his work. It is something I will never be able to complain about, because he is a good worker. I can complain about many things, that he doesn't help me in the house, that he doesn't support me much with the children, that he doesn't go to school meetings, many things, but about work, I can't. He always has work in his mind, always "I am going to work, I have to work."

The Need of Female Contributions

All men interviewed were comfortable being "the man of the house," accepting the responsibility of providing for their families, just like their own fathers did. They would prefer that their wives would not work, just like most of their mothers didn't. Male #6 describes what his expectations of a good life are:

> Working hard, that they [wife and children] have their needs supplied… That they have what they need…. I give her complete responsibility about everything related to the house. I only dedicate myself to work and bring the money, to work.

However, working in the Californian fields, one salary is not enough and the discourse of male as sole provider is shattered by the inability of paying all bills without

female support. Male # 7, who had been treated for depression, caused by the stress of

financial strain, accepted this fact: "Yes, when she started working, our life improved."

If finances would allow it, men would prefer that their wives dedicate their time

to take care of the children, the house and them. But because they appreciate the

difference in their lifestyle that even part time female wages make, the men feel

ambivalent in their desire to entice women to work in the field. Male #4, whose wife has

babysat and breast fed other relatives' babies, said:

> Well, I… Yes, I had wanted her to work, but I don't ask her or force her to do
> it… She knows how we are and she knows if she can or can't because we have to
> balance the children, their care… Something else, if we have four or five
> children, and we have to pay for childcare, whatever she is going to earn, most of
> it will be used to pay for childcare, then it is better that she stays home to care for
> them. And in that way, they are not growing up with strangers, since sometimes
> things happen…

Other men, with older children, pressed their spouses to become more active in

job seeking, like Male #8, whose wife had always worked in an office in Mexico and

"hates" agricultural jobs. When asked about a "fair" relationship, he responded:

> I believe that if she would work, everything would change. At least many things,
> not all. There are things you can't buy with money, but there are many things
> that get easier when you have money. But yes, that would be one of the fair
> things, that she works.

All the women in the sample wanted to work, but not all wanted to work in the

field. Only Females #1 and 7 didn't complain about their full time, year-long

agricultural positions. The latter enjoyed working side by side with her husband and

didn't want to change that (she didn't drive and didn't feel the need to learn). Female #1,

mother of three young children, was undocumented and illiterate and probably believed she was not capable of finding a different job.

However, even if men correlate women's employment with financial need, women have other reasons for looking for employment outside the home. Female #1 acknowledged: "I believe that… he [partner] wants me to work so we can keep [save] a little. I think that if he would earn enough … he would tell me not to work, that I stay in the home." But she added with a little embarrassment: " I like to work. I don't like to be all the time in the house."   Female #5, whose older child's addiction added to the detrimental emotional effects that her husband's alcoholism regularly imposed on her, believed in the therapeutic influence of working outdoors, even though she didn't get any help with housework:

> It is very heavy…you know, the house is big and, for me, it is too heavy…When I do work [in the field], it is ok because… yes, you do need to work, to get out of the house for a little while… Because when I used to work, nobody hurt me… Nothing hurts and I feel better when I work.

Gendered Conflict Regarding Housekeeping

The women who were working outside the home didn't feel that their financial contributions brought them much respect from their families, since they received very little help, if any, at home. Not having to do housework was the advantage the women said their husbands had, as expressed by Female #6: "And I also worked, and I also came home and I had to cook and to have everything done… And he only worked! ... I was always working, always, always!"

Even though these women believed they work more than the men (when considering also taking care of the home), male work was more respected. None of the

men acknowledged that their partners worked harder than them. A few husbands were willing to help a little in housework. "Outside, my work is outside… Very rarely [I help inside]. Sometimes I mop, sweep," says Male #6. Female #1 recognized that "sometimes, when he sees that I can't do it, I see him taking the vacuum cleaner." But what she would like is different: "Something fair would be for him to say: I wash the dishes and you prepare the food. That means, fair for me is that if we both work outside the home, we both should work inside the home." It is interesting that even though she mentioned that they had good communication, she never asked him for help.

For a Mexican man to do traditional female housework would be going against cultural values, and that is a hard step to take for some. Male #5 expressed this feeling very truthfully:

> What I don't like it is when she asks me to do something… I say that… it should come from me, because sometimes she tells me "Do this" and I don't like her to tell me…Things around the house I don't like that she asks me... Sometimes, if I see her in a hurry, even if she doesn't tell me, I… And if she is in a hurry, doing something, and she tells me, that I do, yes, I help her, because I see she is in a hurry. But if I see she is not in a hurry, no, no.

The one husband who helps more is recognized by Female #4, who is not employed right now: "He comes, and sometimes he cooks, without me telling him, sometimes he cooks. If I go out somewhere, and he comes, they [husband and children] clean the house. When I come everything is clean."

If the wives asked their partners for help, the most usual answer, repeated in many interviews was "tell the children to help you." However, very few of the children helpes; *none* of them appeared to have emulated their parent's work ethics, and this caused conflict within the family. Wives preferred to refrain from asking help from

husbands in order to avoid fights regarding the lack of support from the children. The end result was female resignation, as expressed by Female #1: "I believe I do things better alone that to keep asking 'Do this, do that'. By the time I finished yelling, I could have done it myself, better."

None of the women believed their earnings (or lack of) made a difference in the power structure of the family. Females #1 and #11 were the only two who mentioned that they earned more than their partners. They were also the only two who weren't married, and the ones with children from previous partners. These women had experienced being single mothers and were more independent than the rest. Nevertheless, more income meant less stress on the men to fulfill their obligations as providers, and an overall smoother atmosphere at home.

Intergenerational Conflicts Regarding Work

Work didn't have the same meaning for the younger generation. Children growing up in the U.S. are protected by laws that would consider "abuse" the way their parents, when they were their same age, labored in Mexico. Either because they were afraid of the authorities, or because they didn't want their children to go through the sacrifices they painfully remember from their own childhoods, these immigrant parents often moved to the other extreme, and neglected to teach their offspring healthy work habits.

 Male #2 complained about the lack of cooperation from all his children but recognized that the way he and his wife taught them made them that way: "But, you know what… it is mostly like…when we put rules to the young people, like I am weaker

and more sensible about not to give them burdens, but it is wrong." And his wife added:

"We talk about it [stronger discipline]… and they [successful parents in church] tell us

what we need to do… He [husband] has to become stronger, and me too… But as I told

you, we love them so much." He continued: "It is our fault, for spoiling them, for loving

them too much… And I believe that we did wrong, because there should be rules and

everything, but that is like… wow, we didn't want them to do anything."

Male #3 remembered with pride how he and his brother, during adolescence,

earned more than any other members of the team gathering strawberries, because they

worked seven days a week and didn't take time for lunch. Being forced to work since

childhood, he never learned to read or write. All his earnings were given to his

extremely abusive father, until he became an adult. After he got married, he volunteered

for an after work project that built homes in his neighborhood, including his own, and

that required that, at times, he had to sleep at the construction site. None of his three

children followed his example regarding employment; the three have been

disappointments regarding work ethics. The younger one labors in the field with his

mother, because she drives him back and forth, and works just enough to pay for his

drug habit. Reflecting on the way he has influenced his children, this father accepted

responsibility:

> I never tried to force them to do any of the things that I was forced to do. I never
> did it and I am not going to do it. But I don't understand that, when I was eleven
> they wanted me to do things [work] as an adult. I couldn't do it, and I was
> [called] worthless. I am not going to blame them [children]… Not at all, they are
> not guilty of anything.

Adapting to raising children in a different environment, Male #4 blamed the lack

of cooperation of his young children to the advantages they were enjoying in this

country:

> To them, there is a world very different to ours because… I look at them and
> look at me when I was their age… and I say "My children are rich; they are
> millionaires comparing to the way I was, and how she [wife] was" because our
> situation, or story, is very different… They have everything, even too much, and
> even with that, they feel they are missing things… And I remember that my
> preoccupation, and my brother's biggest worry was "What are we going to eat?"
> and "We have to find what we are going to eat, together."

Some of the women have used working in the field as a way to teach a lesson to

their addicted children (to show them what their future will be if they don't change), and

as a punishment. Female #5 shared:

> The last time I told him [son] "You don't want to study; let's go to the field" and
> I took him to the field, for him to see what it is to do that work. And I took him
> for two years. I started working in order to take him, because I wasn't working. I
> didn't have to… Well, I do have financial need, but I have my husband, and I
> have my small children. And I told him "I have to care of my children, but I am
> going to go [to work], just to take you." And he learned from the field, and now,
> on his own, he enrolled in school.

None of the parents wanted their offspring working in the field. For some of the

couples, the decision to move to the U.S. (instead of coming only to work during the

harvest seasons) was to provide better opportunities for their children. Female #6

explained this:

> I wanted that my children didn't have the same limitations that [children have in
> Mexico]… Because to be in the field over there is much worse that to be in the
> field here. Over there there are no options. It is the field; it is the field. There are
> not even factories, not even malls, there is nothing, nothing. It is the field, the
> field, and the field. There is the only thing….And I realized that if we didn't stay
> here, because we were just coming to work for the seasons, if we didn't stay for

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[the children] studying here, they were going to do the same that we were doing. Even being citizens would not make a difference, even if they came back [from living in Mexico], they were going to do the same thing, working in the field, if they never learned English and finished school. If they didn't get an education, it was going to be the same. That is why we stayed.

The dreams the parents had for their children were easily shattered by the crisis of adolescent substance use. Children lost interest in school, mixed with risky friends, and became unapproachable to adults. The respect these transnational couples demonstrated to their own parents by being good workers, inside and outside their homes, didn't exist within the new generation. The authority of the parents was being seriously challenged, and the traditional meaning of the word respect was crushed. Seeing their sacrifices wasted and their hopes vanishing caused strain in the relationship of these couples. The structure in which the family hierarchy was based became challenged by trying to find solutions to the problem.

Respect in Couples' Relationships

None of the couples interviewed seemed to desire truly egalitarian relationships. Some of the women talked about wishing to make changes in search of equality but their actions implied reinforcement of the cultural values that had always guided their lives. It is important to understand how the discourses of respect and authority within the couples impacted the ways in which they dealt with their addicted children.

Males had upmost authority in the homes, with females not only accepting the traditional hierarchy they had learned from their own parents, but also feeling relieved of being able to avoid making difficult decisions. Female #8 expressed the feelings of many other wives:

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Well, [he has the authority] because he is the man; he is the father of the family It is not that I don't have voice or vote, but I like it that he makes the decisions; he is the one with more authority in the house…We both have power but I prefer that he has it… Yes, because we need to have… to agree both, to be able to make any decision, but … there are times when I prefer that he makes it, even if I don't like it.

Female #5 wasn't physically afraid of her husband but wanted to keep him worry free. Her way of obtaining agreement –typical in this group-- was to find out what he wanted first and then support his idea:

Yes, because when there is a problem… even if it is something simple, I don't feel comfortable making decisions, and I say "I have to tell him, and if he says yes, fine". Even if I do want it to be done I don't feel comfortable, free to decide on my own… I don't want him to get upset, that is why I ask for his opinion in everything, so we agree. I don't want problems.

Couple's Ambivalence Regarding Hierarchy

When couples talked about being "equal," they usually referred to being comfortable in their cultural roles. Regarding who had more authority in the relationship, Female #2 said she did, but she later clarified that it was just in relation to the children, and only because she spent more time with them, reason why she was the one giving more orders. Her husband, a very religious and talkative man, used to oversee his wife orders:

And I, being the father of the family… I listen at the order [she has given], if the order, what she says, is to benefit [the family and to help us to be fine. But sometimes it is an order that can wait for the next day, and sometimes she is tired, and sometimes that is not the moment, and sometimes to enjoy and keep the family more in peace and more calm, sometimes it can be left for late. But she, yes, I say, that she observes more, because she is in the house more, what is happening, and on what she sees she has authority. And that authority, as I said, I

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give to her, and if I am not here she has the authority in looking for the children and whatever is needed.

Wife #2 didn't feel upset for "being given" authority by her husband. Her only comment was regarding being rebuked in front of the children:

Yes, but later on, we get to each other and I tell him 'you know what, in front of the children don't contradict me because they are going to become disrespectful'.... But I feel with a little [authority], not much.

When she didn't agree with her husband, she moderately challenged him: "Well, sometimes…I am not so wrong in this and then he says 'yes' and then we start [to discuss the issue] and then the two of us come to an agreement." Men's opinions seemed to have more weight than women's in the outcome of their discussions. Male #4 shared:

I have analyzed myself… and I have always felt like… how can I say it?... like the man of the house… Like sometimes it is difficult… I say "I am going to make a decision and"… well she does give me her point of view but I… I accept what she suggested me when I… when I don't have other options…Then I say "Well, if my idea doesn't work, then…"

Male #5 expressed his idea of equality in the share of authority with similar words: "And when she decides alone, if it is for one's wellbeing, I do let her. I do what she tells, but only if it is for good." He didn't realize that he was the one who unilaterally decided what was good and what wasn't. Male #6 believed he and his wife had equal authority in the relationship, but his wife said: "In certain things I make decisions but in certain things he does; [in] the important ones [he does]… When I tell him 'Let's move to Fresno' he says 'No'."

The women in this sample didn't seem to be seeking more power in the household but would like to reach an enhanced level of communication in which they

could feel heard, understood and respected. Female #4wasn't attacking the authority of

"the man of the house" but didn't want to be ignored:

> He thinks that because he is the man he is the one who decides in all. That is in what we have always had problems. Because I tell him "You, because you are the man of the house you can do whatever you want, and don't let me tell you that it is not like that."

Female #6 gave a good example of the negative effects of husbands ignoring

wives' input (this is the only couple of the sample who was experiencing serious

financial worries, losing their home and unable to pay for their son's school):

> We have had several problems because he is very impulsive. In that way, the cars, twice we were at the agency and I said "No, no, no" and we get mad at each other…. I have never had a car I really wanted.

Some husbands seemed to start accepting more influence from their wives. "In

the past… if she liked or not, I did it anyway. But now… I see if she likes it, and if she

agrees, we do it. If not, we don't do it. But I do share more." These words of Male #2

showed some change. However, the meaning loses power when we consider how hard

these women work to agree with their men. Nonetheless, some of the statements

indicated that the issue of egalitarianism was at least beginning to be considered in the

new environment in which the couples lived. Male #7 reaffirmed this:

> If I understand soon enough the benefit that her decision would give, I would be supporting her in her decision. The problem is that sometimes one realizes the result of things when it is too late. But if I understand that her decision is better than mine, and we still have time, I agree to…

An area in which women were less inclined to automatically support what their

husbands wanted, and insisted to be heard, was when they wished to maintain the unity

in the family. A good example of the struggle in making important decisions was presented by Couple #8, who was stressed financially. The husband wanted his family to live in Mexico, where they owned a house and his wife could have kept her job in a comfortable office. Because they had a tourist visa they could visit often, travelling both sides of the border. Instead, his wife wanted to move permanently to the U.S., to be together, "even if they had to live under a tree." After discussing the pros and cons of such move, the husband changed his mind. He explained why he believed that yielding to his wife's desire was not a sign of weakness but reinforced his authority:

> Well, her persuasion was huge and I decided to let her, but then it was that I made the decision, and she was the one who wanted that decision. [If I had told her "You have to go back"] she would have gone back. That is what generally happens… That is what she means when she says that we both make decisions, but finally the last word… it is like if I am the President, but she is the Congresswoman… She prepares the field for what it should be done, but I say yes or no.

The Gendered Meaning of Respect

Females in this study held varying levels of decision making and influence upon partners. However, they accepted the culturally privileged male authority as a demonstration of respect, and as a way of keeping the peace and unity at home. However, this should not be considered a static position; conjugal relationships are often evolving, as Female #6 demonstrated. After trying to please her husband by sacrificing things she enjoyed and he didn't, she explained her idea of a working relationship:

> He is like that. I have learned that, like a couple, at first I said I was going to try to adapt to him, so I changed everything, my music, my tastes, everything. Then I said "Well, he is not enjoying it, and I am not enjoying it, and I am failing trying to please him," so each one now, we are in the car, he brings his music, or in my car I have my music… We are very different… what he likes I don't…but

I learned that that is the way things are, that is the way he is and he learned the way I am, and it is like we maintain a balance…

Men's idea of respecting their wives was not based on obeying, pleasing or adapting to them. Male #2, whose wife easily converted to his religion soon after marriage, expressed how she earned his respect and deference by serving him well and helping his family:

> Respect is to be careful of what you say. Not to make her feel bad or to humiliate her. Because sometimes one does something bad and how terrible would be that her, being the mother of my children, my spouse, having been for so long with her, that I see that when I get sick, in the night or at any hour, she worries and helps me. And what awful would be that seeing all that I would treat her badly. Or yell at her, or answer back, or scream. Then, all that she did for me, in a moment of anger or that I am not happy for something, take it all out, and curse her, or humiliate her, or yell at her. That, I believe, the respect one has to be very careful and take into consideration all the goodness one has received from her.

He "respected" his wife by not mistreating her, and allowing her to go out alone, and visiting her relatives regularly.

Regarding showing respect to their husbands, Female #2 presented the opinion of all the other women: "[Respect is] to behave well when I am outside," by avoiding any conducts that could be misconstrued as suspicious of infidelity. To reduce conflict at home Female #6 radically changed her social life:

> There are limits: "You can go to the parties with your friends but you can't dance." A female friend invited me to go to the casino, "No!" She invited me to a dance, "No!" "I am going to have supper with my female friends," "No!" He gives me my space but he has limitations… Before it bothered me… and I even was uncomfortable when I was in a party with my friends, because he didn't want to go, so I went, and I was thinking about him, or the telephone, and I didn't feel like… I didn't enjoy myself… Then I didn't go out anymore but, it was a period where I did, and felt like "Why did I come? I am here and I am not enjoying it".… [Now] we are happier to be in the house. When we are off

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[work], we like to watch a TV program, or to have a barbecue. We like to be home.

The wives in this sample, regardless their level of acculturation, believed that respecting their husbands made them respected women, and planned to keep supporting their spouses. However, the experiences of their children regarding the issue of respect, obedience and family unity were very different.

Gendered Parenting and Intergenerational Respect

The words *respect* and *obedience* were often used as synonyms by the couples in this study. Just as wives were expected to respect husbands, children were expected to respect both parents. Perceived disrespect could have serious consequences, varying from corporal punishment to being cut off from the family. Some participants remembered proudly some extreme efforts they made to obey their abusive progenitors when they were children. That is why it was hard for the couples to accept the changes their own children experienced growing up in the individualistic environment of the new country.

Fathers as Disciplinarians

Regarding discipline, couples concurred that children obeyed the fathers more than they obeyed the mothers. Couples #11 was the only one under matriarchal authority because the male partner was young and wasn't the father of any of the children. Male #1 was the biological father of only the two younger children, but still, his partner affirmed his influence as an authority figure:

It is like, to him, without doing anything, they [the children] respect him, and not me. I have to keep telling them many times for them to listen. But he, for example, if he says: "Now, come, bring me that," they do it. And I have to repeat it three, four times for them to do it.

Women explained that their husbands' minimal interaction with the children (a consequence of the men complying with their work responsibilities) gave fathers the advantage of an aura of respect that the mothers lacked because –according to several women-- the children got used to their constant nagging and ignored them. Female #4 had an explanation that it was echoed by other wives: "Because he is seldom here, they respect him more… If he tells them something, they do it. If I tell them, they don't." That lack of respect towards maternal authority affected the behavior of Female #5:

Yes, I tell my husband that… that… because they almost don't see him during the day… they are not upset with him, so sometimes they listen more to him. And because I yell at them all day long, they don't listen to me… And I tell him "Go, tell them that you want their rooms clean" and he goes and tell them and they do it. And I tell them "Now" and they don't tell me "No" but they say "Later, Mom," "Later, Mom," "Later, Mom," and I get desperate and I yell, and my husband tells me to stop yelling at them."

Some men were more willing than others to be involved in disciplining their children. Males #4 and #7 spoke about their expertise in imposing consequences:

She, because she can't handle them [children], she tells me to take charge…. I believe that is the way we balance each other. In trying that the kids obey. Because if they don't obey her, then I go and I… It is not that I hit them, but I punish them, like "You are not going out to play."

That is what I tell her, that if she asks them to do something, they have to do it. And that is my duty, that when I ask them, they have to do it. If they don't, there are consequences. But she doesn't give them any consequences… Yes, yes. That is why they do what they want.

Nevertheless, even if fathers were more effective than mothers implementing discipline, few of the adolescents using substances obeyed neither parent during the time of conflict. When the men experienced this challenge tearing down their authority at home, they didn't know what else they can do.

Men's Handicaps to Effective Parenting

After the first reaction of blaming the mother -- a position taken by all the married men in this group-- men realized that they were not equipped to handle successfully the issue of adolescent substance abuse. Male #7 explained why the way in which he was raised, working all the time, didn't prepare him for confronting any crises that included close involvement with the children:

> The truth is that the man in Mexico is never home… He is not home, because he comes, but there are many places where to go, and there is a lot to do. Over there, one has other things, like animals to take care of, and there is no time to be in the house; the mother is the one who takes care of the children.

Male #4 had a similar experience that did not help him to develop the creative and collaborative ideas that are suggested to the fathers living in individualistic societies:

> The image I have from my father, it was like that. He always came from work, ate, and he, well… with us he didn't talk, he didn't play. I saw him going outside with the adults. They were apart, and the children were apart… The children played among themselves, and the adults were there watching that we didn't have an accident, and that we would behave well… and I think that I have done the same with my children… [I have imitated] what I lived in my home.

Male #8 reaffirmed what he believed was the most effective hierarchy regarding authority in the home:

> Well, I have been of more strong character… like with more corrective power for things that are incorrect, telling them what it is correct and right… when there is something big, when she says "I can't control this," but in other simple occasions like "Make your bed" "Clean your room" "Hang your clothes" or things like that, she does it. Things that are fast, short, of the moment, she is in charge. Things of control, like the problem that we are having with our youngest, well, I am in charge. *Even though I have not been able to do much about it.*

Male #3 reflected on his frustration trying to connect with his son:

> You can yell at him, you can hit him, you can tell him whatever you want, he doesn't answer… I have locked myself in my car with him and I have asked him "Tell me what you want, tell me what you are looking for…"

Fathers Minimizing Problem

Two of the men interviewed presented developmental excuses regarding popular cultural ideas accepting the use of alcohol and marijuana as almost a rite of passage for males whose novelty tends to eventually disappear. Male #1, whose partner had successfully helped him to stop drinking, repeated the advice given to his wife regarding her seventeen years old son in jail:

> "Show him [son] the good in one side and the bad on another side," I only tell her. She tells him, but he doesn't listen. But that, it is the same… I, when I was young…We don't listen [when we are young], right? I only started to mature when… when I was like… 25 years old" ….He is going to come out fine.

None of the mothers agreed with this idea; all of the women said they only drink socially or not at all, and none of them had used drugs.

Even though the previous argument didn't apply to girls (who are mandated by culture to remain abstemious), in regards to his sixteen year old pregnant daughter, Male

#4 tried to blame her misbehaving actions to the characteristic irresponsibility of youth. This idea, in a way, resulted in a form of diminishing his parental responsibility. He explained:

> I wanted for her that she had a change, well, but it is difficult. I understand her, I put myself in her place, because she is young, and she… well… will continue to act like that until she matures…

Minimizing the children's problem was a coping strategy used by parents. Male #5 had a different way to try save some of the respect that it was quickly disappearing from the relationship with his son. He said:

> But I did not think about that because he was bad but he was not bad, bad, bad, like….When they are really bad is when they steal from the parents, they steal things to go and sell them, and he hasn't.

Trying to excuse the adolescent or to reduce his or her responsibility for the problem is only a fleeting respite for parents. Regrettably, most of the men in this study, at one time or another, had to confront the reality of their failure in straightening the defiant child.

Men's Reactions to Failure

The challenge that adolescent substance use presents to the conjugal balance leave men at a handicap: husbands are used to women protecting them in the home front. When the women can't do that, the relationship suffers. Female #5 expressed this concept of shielding the husband from intergenerational conflicts using simple and

illustrative language: "And he comes [home], and he takes a shower and goes to bed, and I try to have the children under control, to allow him to rest."

The men in this study took for granted their wives' efforts to protect them. When that protection failed, a common male reaction was anger. As Male #7 affirmed: "When she [wife] becomes serious is because she sees that I am angry. She says that I yell and I get upset. Yes, I feel mad when I don't see control, the control of my family." In another part of the interview, the same father, upset, asked his wife: "What options have you given me in order to improve the things with the children?" It seemed like the men also blamed their wives for the unsuccessful outcomes of their own efforts.

Mothers as Communicators

Once the fathers found out about the substance use problem, the most common first intervention used was to ask the mothers to talk to the children. Only Couple #2, whose daughter said the closer she got to marijuana was being next to the school friends who were smoking it and with whom she was suspended, spoke *together* with the adolescent, in what they believed was a successful intervention. After that the couple didn't feel the need to address the issue again.

For all others, the experience was difficult, all their first attempts failed, and deciding how to handle the problem became more complicated. The male position of authority in directing the women how to proceed turned wearisome at times. Being in the middle, trying to please their husbands, care for their children, and dealing with their own guilty feelings became overwhelming for some mothers. Female #1 recalled her frustrating experience in following her partner counsel:

He [partner] used to tell me, "Tell him [son] that he should do this, he shouldn't do that" but I used to tell him and it was like I was talking to [a wall]… He used to say, "I am not going to obey. You can tell me anything you want but I am not going to listen. I am going to do what I want to do. I am not going to do what you want. I am not going to listen to you." Talking to him didn't help.

Mothers as Intermediaries

At the beginning of the problem, most men didn't recognize or acknowledge the efforts made by their partners. That was not a reason for the women to give up on their quest. The mothers weren't shy in dialoging with their children. Female #5 felt her spouse didn't appreciate her hard work in convincing his older son to stop using the drugs that were dividing the family and ruining his academic prospects:

> But I was giving him advice, and I spoke with him. Every day I was talking with him; every day I spoke with him. My husband wasn't here but I was talking with him every day, every day. And I used to give him lots of advice, regarding the future he was creating, what was going to be ahead of him.

The experience of Female #7 in being used as intermediary was very similar:

> Well, I… He [husband] gets upset and complains that I don't talk to the child. I do talk to him, I speak with him. He [husband] wants, I don't know, like he wants that I yell at him [son], or that I scold him [son] in front of him [husband], so he knows. I talk with the child, and sometimes, when we are going to work, I tell him not to do this or that. "No, mom, that I am young, and I am going to enjoy life, that the world is coming to an end," and I don't know how many other things he says. But I do give advice to the lad. And he [husband] is always saying that I spoil him [son].

Mothers as Peacekeepers

Not all verbal exchanges with the children resulted in serene communication. Some mothers received painful attacks, and the support from the husbands varied.

Regarding his wife attempts to communicate with their son, Male #5 observed from a distance:

> She… when our son started doing that [drugs], she… I saw her [wife] that she suffered a lot. But sometimes I blamed her because she used to [allow that] he [son] yelled at her, and she allowed it. And I told her "Don't let him"…. I told her not to allow it because he was going to completely lose respect and, and, and to me he never showed lack of respect.

Some mothers preferred that they did the talking, instead of their husbands, in order to avoid the risk of violence created by heated discussions between fathers and children. Female #12 had spent many years mediating between her easily irritated spouse and their addicted children. Female #5 was another peace keeper:

> It is that him… My husband didn't talk to him [son], he yelled at… and I used to tell him [husband] "I am not angry for what you say, but for the way in which you say it"… To talk correctly, without yelling… Because they irritated each other… Because if one uses violence and they [children] are doing badly, I don't believe they are going to react positively.

Female #6 remembered the time when, during a fight, her son closed his fists, a movement the father interpreted as threatening and impelled him to retaliate. The three participants seemed to have different recollections of the incident, but the mother's arm still shows the scar confirming that she blocked the blow that could have hurt the young man. When her husband ordered the son to leave the home because he "didn't want drug addicts" there, she supported him: "That is not acceptable [the lack of respect]; it is something I am not going to forget… 'If you don't feel comfortable in the home and you want to leave, perfect.'" With a broken heart, this mother decided to support her husband over her son. The son didn't leave.

Mothers as Counselors

Female #5's words represented the women of the sample who, instead of the harsh discipline chosen by their husbands, tried to understand their children's experience. She was successful, in part by appealing to his son's feelings:

> I believe that one person, when is doing badly, I believe, I think that, that, with demonstrations of love is how they change…. And that is why, when my son was doing badly and he [husband] says that he mistreats me, mistreated me, what I had in my mind was that he [son]… it wasn't my son who was telling me those words, that it was the drug that was showing lack of respect towards me… That is why I was able to cope… I, when my son was insulting me, I knew that it wasn't my son saying all that; that was the drug…

Women's Handicap to Effective Parenting

Being in the middle between the struggle of fathers and children was not easy for the women who were used to respect their husbands but wanted to defend their offspring. In their zeal to rescue their youngsters, working within an emotional frame (lacking in most of the men), some women confessed making mistakes. Female #5 expressed her remorse refusing the first call for help made by her son:

> He ended up telling me that he needed help, for us to help him, but no, I didn't do it because he… I don't know… for fear, for lack of… wisdom. Because I thought that maybe that would harm him in future jobs or something like that….

She felt worse when the son made her responsible for his addiction:

> He felt a victim on everything… And then he started to bring up… to make me feel guilty… when he was small, that… that "You, because you were watching my father, you neglected me to care for my father… Because he was drunk all the time, you left me to go and care for him."

It was an impossible dilemma for this mother to have to choose between her husband and her son, when both of them needed her so desperately.

Parents' Interventions

In addition to the first intervention used by the couples: men ordering women to making the children stop by talking to them, parents tried other strategies with variable results. The couples who were unsuccessful working together experimented with independent ideas, sometimes keeping them secret from the partners.

Fathers' Interventions

Monitoring was what men report as their most common new behavior. Male #1 said he knew the families of their children's friends and the homes where alcohol or drugs were used. He informed his partner and she decided if the children were allowed to go to visit their friends or not. Male #4 continued checking with whom his boys and girls played outside (without them knowing). When the neighborhoods kids came to his home, he wanted them to play in the living room, not in the bedrooms (behavior his wife considered excessive).

Checking their children's friends became an obsession for some fathers. Some had been very active in asking them to leave their premises. Male #3 built a fence around the house to make it more difficult for his son's friends to enter the property. He also intercepted phone calls and asked advice from police officers. Male #6 visited with the father of one of his son's friends who was dealing drugs, informing the father that he would call the police if his son appeared again at his home.

Mothers' Interventions

Looking for help from mental health professionals was an intervention sought by women only. All the interviews in this study were initiated by the women. That some of the men were informed of the arrival of the researcher at the last minute seemed to indicate that the women were becoming bold and didn't want to give their partners the opportunity to disagree.

The women became active in searching for various ways to help their children. Female #6 asked a coworker who used marijuana to teach her about the drug. To urge son to look for a girlfriend, allowing her to live with them, or to move on their own as a couple, was done by Female #3, wishing to find a good influence over her son. Female #1 asked God to "lock him [son] up because he didn't listen," a prayer that was finally answered when he was arrested. Female #4 slept on the stairs blocking what she considered the only escape route, even though her daughter started leaving by a second story window. A detailed list of interventions and their outcomes can be found in Appendix D.

Parents' Disagreements Regarding Interventions

Parents described feeling more desperate as the children continued using substances. The different gendered approaches to the problem increased conflict within the couples. Some of these conflicts were created by the memories that each parent had of their own childhood, and their different opinions about the influence of their adolescents' friends, the significance of peer pressure, the importance of maintaining the family together, and various gendered cultural views.

Parents' Memories from Childhood

How differences in the way the couples grew up affected the way they confronted their children's use of substances was illustrated by Female #4. She had been unable to forget how unhappy she was when her mother died and her father let her and her younger brother stay with friends. Her maternal aunt, in an unscheduled visit from the U.S. found the children, covered by sores, eating scraps from the floor. Moving to California was an improvement but the girl faced other challenges: her very strict aunt didn't allow her go out or even speak on the phone with friends. "I said, 'My children are not going to go through what I went through' and I used to tell him [husband], 'Let her go out'… and that was my mistake, to have placed so much trust on my daughter." Against her husband's orders, she let the child go to the movies and the state fair with friends. Male #4 said:

> That was a problem between us. And then… when I said, "My daughter doesn't obey me because her mother supports her," then I felt like I was left aside. Even though I say "no" and she says "yes," then my daughter does what she wants, what is better for her. And that is why we had [fights]… And then I saw how things were and yes, I spoke about, but I knew that I was not going to be obeyed.

The Influence of Children's Friends

Even though most couples are in accord regarding monitoring their offspring's activities with friends, distinguishing between the "good" and the "bad" acquaintances wasn't an easy task. Some disagreements between parents included the kind of events that children were allowed to be shared with peers, for how long, and so on. Female #5

acknowledged that the drug-using friends of her daughter also provided protection against mates who bothered her at school.

An interesting role reversal (mother forbidding her son's risky friends to come to the house, usually a male prerogative) produced her partner's anger. Female #5 wanted to became strong, but her husband, instead of supporting her actions, decided to validate male respect for his son, and reproached her:

> And my husband scolded me … My husband even told me that "Why do you say things to his friends? He is the one you have to talk to. You are only making him look bad in front of his friends." And I said "Those are no friends, and even if I take him from here for a while, it is something."

Going against the orders of her husband was not easy for Female #6 but her involvement in school activities helped her understand the challenges that youngsters had due to peer pressure and made her take her children's side, against her partner's, who had never attended school:

> We had problems, because he blamed me… Then, he was never in agreement in that … they wanted to wear loose pants, and he said: "No", and I said [to the children] "Do you know what? I am going to let you, but within some limits, with limits".... He [husband] used to tell me that it was my fault because I allowed him to spike his hair high, because I allowed long hair. I tell you, that because he [husband] doesn't go out, he doesn't know the pressure the young people experience in school.

Desire to Maintain the Family United

It wasn't easy for Male #7 to order his son to leave home. More than punishing the child in anger, he wanted that the boy would "appreciate that outside he was not going to have what he had at home" and decided to change. But his wife intervened in

favor of the teenager, going against his wishes, and the son was allowed to stay; another reason why the husband blamed her for being "soft:"

> And we didn't do it and from then on he continued in this path, and I, with work and everything else… we didn't pay much attention to him…. Yes, yes, I used to blame her. I was trying to punish him in some way, because we had to do something. But she said that if we threw him out on the street there were more chances for him to get lost. Then we did nothing, and look at how he is now.

Latino families rejoice having grown children living under the same roof, for as long as they want to stay. To ask one of them to leave is not taken lightly. Male #9 initiated the idea of their son leaving home, and he left. His wife's influence made him regret his decision and the couple, together, searched for their son until they found him and brought him back home. Both parents believed the child reacted positively to the incident and kept clean since.

Gendered Cultural Views

Male #7 insisted that mothers have more ways to punish children for misbehaving than fathers. From his place of authority he pressured his wife to become more assertive, suggesting that she should stop doing the son's laundry. This seemingly trivial act placed this Latina mother in an insurmountable quandary, not easily understood by people foreign to her culture.

After explaining the practical reasons why not washing the son's clothing with the rest of the family's was a mistake, Female #7 started crying and said: "He [husband] has told me that he [son] blackmails me, because I do things for him. *His mother used to do things for him [husband] also.* He is my son!" This mother worked full time in the field, side by side with her husband, but she still considered it a privilege to be able to

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serve her family; not to have clean clothes to offer to his son would have been a symbol of her failure as a mother, as it was understood by the cultural context in which she lived.

Male #10 expressed the same feeling: "I thought I could control him when he was small and I told her I was going to do this and that, but she used to ask me: Was that the way you were treated? They didn't treat me like that because I didn't behave like that! But at that moment I could have done something, but she didn't let me."

The couples in this study had the opportunity to act together, to trust each other's strengths. Unfortunately, during the time when the crisis peaked, very few did. Instead, they used different levels of blaming against each other that increased tensions at home and certainly didn't help the children. How the blaming involved the larger systems in which the couple lived is presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

INFLUENCE OF THE LARGER SYSTEMS

The relationship of the parents to the larger systems was multifaceted and sometimes paradoxical. This was the context for their parenting response. The concept of trying to locate blame regarding the initiation and recurrence of the use of substances by adolescents showed an initial blame assigned within the family (to the mothers because of their "lack of strong discipline" and to the fathers due to their unavailability caused by work), but there were also important elements outside the household that were part of the factors contributing to the problem. Couples' comments regarding schools' perceived inefficiency, laws that endorsed the power of children over the parents, a police force tired of dealing with out of control kids, the absence of local rehabilitation centers, and the effects of poverty (lack of financial means to pay for higher education or healthy entertainment for the children) follow.

These transnational immigrants wanted to respect the different laws, customs and values of the host society. For the families in this study, the core values between both cultures didn't differ much while things went well. All the interviews showed many positive thoughts and an overall sentiment of admiration for the adopted country. However, at the moment of crisis, everything got more complicated, especially in the areas of conflictive arenas.

Schools

Most couples in this study had little praise for the children's schools. Some parents complained about policies that didn't take into consideration the magnitude of

the infraction; suspending children and sending them home to enjoy television and video games instead of giving them extra work during school hours; lack of advice for parents in how to deal with juvenile substance abuse; inability of authorities to stop drug dealing within and around school grounds; lack of interest in helping students demonstrated by teachers and administrative personnel, and so on.

Male #1 would had liked to see more education regarding drugs and alcohol in schools "early, because they [the students] start very young." Female #6 described the frustration of feeling ignored:

> I believe there is a lack of help from counselors. There is a need for good counselors… to give support to parents and to young people… I told them "I have this problem, how can you help me? Because I know there is a problem, and we want to confront it"…but they didn't have a psychologist because of the budget… I never got help. I told them "Call me" I gave my phone, my cell number, but I never received a call. I called them and "Oh, yes, we are going to call you" but I never received help.

Male #8 made teachers responsible for some of the negative attitudes of the children:

> I have noticed little cooperation from teachers, like "That is not my job"… When they start doing things, like our daughter is doing… make them understand that they also have responsibilities. "Yes, because you teach them what are their rights, that is why the attack us with their rights" "You have no right to touch me; you have no right to ask me; you have no right to break my privacy, my things; you have no right to this, you have no right to that." I don't even have the right to give her a spanking. "Well… and your obligations, what are they?" "I don't have any" and I told that to the teacher "You make sure they know their rights, but you should show them their responsibilities."

These parents felt disenfranchised; that they had no way to make an impact on the system, or that the system was not responsive to them and their needs. However,

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from being ignored by the schools, they feel overwhelmed by the rules and regulations of other governmental institutions.

Government

When parents started receiving fines for children's skipping classes or driving without a license, being charged for days spent in Juvenile Hall, or other penalties, their financial stress multiplied, and their frustrations increased.

Female #1 wanted the government "to stop overprotecting the children" and stop punishing the parents. The couples in this study grew up in an environment in which corporal punishment was the most common way to correct misbehavior. Since the laws of the State of California forbid this intervention, they felt lost and powerless. Female #1 would have liked to be able to apply some of the discipline used in Mexico without being harassed by police.   Regarding the omnipresent threat of the Child Protective Agency removal of the children in case of suspected abuse, Male #4 commented:

> What I observed is that what is failing is the system. How do the adolescents, for being minors, can do what they want, and then there is no, nothing that can deter them… When they become adults, they are already delinquents. .. I used to tell my daughter, "I am with my mouth wide open: you have done so many things that I never did, not even as an adult… and she only laughed…. Then… if I saw her on the street, and got close to her, she started running… Then, I couldn't… I am sure that if I grabbed her, from the hand, to try to bring her home, she would struggle, and I would end up losing, because she was going to say that I abused her… or something.

Police

Parents reported that face to face dealings with law enforcement agents usually began in a positive way, but when the negative behavior of children required frequent

police interventions, the parents felt that the agents turned against the parents, making them feel guilty for their inability to maintain their houses in order. Couple #3 was the only one who expressed having a good relationship with police and regularly asked for their advice. Regarding the harassment and physical abuse her daughter was experiencing in the hand of fellow students in school, Female #4 shared:

> I told her "Ok, if they hit you, you defend yourself. Don't let beat you up." And she told the police that and they said "Oh, what a mother you have that is teaching you to hit?....What did the police say? That we were abusing the police, calling them often…. I told them "Well, that is your responsibility…CPS is investigating us… I was told I had to call you every time this happens [daughter leaving the home], and I will keep on calling you"…. "You should know how to care for her." "We can't be the 24 hours of the day, if she leaves at night, I am not going to be without sleeping," even though some days I slept on the stairs, to make sure she would not go out. And she left by the second floor window! …. My own daughter said "Here the police officers do nothing"…. She realized they [police] would do nothing to her because she was a minor…. She even told them, directly "If I don't listen to my parents, do you think I will listen to you?"

Male #8, who at the time of the interview was working as a security officer, described the frustration of not finding support in the police department in looking for his daughter:

> Because sometimes, like these last days, she became worse, went out and didn't come back, and we called the police *but they don't pay any more attention to us*… She stayed away from the house for three days…

It appeared that the children learned quickly how to take advantage of the protection the laws give to minors and became experts in manipulating adults in places of authority, including, of course, parents.

It was interesting that within the couples there was no disagreement regarding the schools or the police department; either both, husband and wife, had complains, or

both didn't. In facing their relative powerlessness in society they maintained a united

front. There is a possibility that this was also another demonstration of the efforts of

women in agreeing with their husbands.

<p style="text-align: center;">**Poverty**</p>

The effects of poverty were also an issue that affected in various ways the

initiation, maintenance and outcome of the adolescent's substance use problem. Some

of the effect of poverty in this group were: it forced fathers to be away from their

families trying to earn more money; it produced overtired mothers; and it caused

children to depend on the only entertainment that available friends provide (marijuana

and alcohol are fairly inexpensive diversions).

<p style="text-align: center;">*The Power of Money*</p>

Parents' finances didn't permit them to pay for private rehabilitation treatments

or even counseling. They depended on free programs that very often were full. To

provide incentives good enough to be used as rewards for the youngsters to quit using

substances required funds that were unavailable to most of these families. Some of the

children owned computers but few were connected to the Internet. The ones who had

cellular phones needed to be very careful with the scarce minutes the parents were able

to afford. Movies, bowling, or the mall were places not easily accessible, and

expensive.

After high school, commuting to college or trade schools became, at times, an

insuperable obstacle for these families. The inability to pay even partial tuition for their

<p style="text-align: center;">115</p>

son's course on automobile repair was the main reason why Couple # 13 believed he

continued using drugs. A similar experience with her own son was shared by Female #6:

> The problem that we had talking with our son about drugs was… the stress he had, because he always said he wanted to study, and he saw that there was….no money, that it was too much stress to start checking universities, he didn't have high grades to receive scholarships. He was desperate…

Fear of Separation

For the families who seemed to believe they were failing in fulfilling the

American Dream, their precarious financial situation, combined with the depressive

atmosphere derived from their children's behavior, appeared to threaten their future

unity. While most of the couples desired to retire in the U.S. and take care of

grandchildren, the ones fighting to survive were considering moving back, alone, to

Mexico. Regarding retirement, Female #6, overwhelmed by financial worries, believed

that her family will be separated in the future:

> Going there, [to live in Mexico after children are on their own in the U.S.] we could be coming back to work again in the field, following the seasons, working the cycle, and then going back. And coming back to work, and go back, without having the stress of electricity, water, telephone… Then we could come and work, and be with them [the children] … I think that is my plan, to be able to rest a little bit…. I feel that our lives are gone, here, working and working… that our lives are gone, twenty years, only working and working. But I don't regret it because we have a compromise with them [children, to provide a good education].

Aid from Programs

While popular opinion sometimes accuses immigrants of abusing the system, the

experience of these families was different. Citizens and residents were able to collect

unemployment benefits and receive MediCal coverage and food stamps when necessary. None of the families interviewed were receiving Welfare or Disability benefits. A good example of respecting the system was shown by Male #7, who at one time handled three jobs simultaneously and still didn't make enough to cover the family expenses. Talking about the beginning of his life in the U.S. he said:

> I worked a lot, but I didn't know how to utilize public assistance. When I got my papers, the official from the embassy asked me why I was coming for [to the U.S.]. I said I was going to work, and he asked if I was going to be a burden to the country. I said no, and because of that I [decided that I] was not getting Medicaid or nothing. That made it very difficult because I was working ten or twelve hours, whatever I could, to make ends meet, and it wasn't enough. Because here the doctors and hospitals are very expensive… I didn't want to bother the government. That is why I had mental problems for a while, because the money was not enough, and my wife was not helping me, and nothing was left.

Jokingly, Male #1 summarized the issue of poverty for these transnational families, explaining how they decided, as a family, to search for entertainment. "[We go] where it is more convenient for all. If over there we are going to spend money, and over here no, here is where we go." However, all the families agreed about the absence of places in the locality for the young people to have healthy fun.

Immigration Status

Lack of legal status caused stress on the parents and on the children. Not only increased the poverty level-- since parents cannot take advantage of governmental aids-- but also children were banned from pursuing higher education.

Even though only Couples # 1 and #8, and Male #11 in my sample were undocumented at the moment of the interviews, many of the other participants had

originally come into the country illegally and had to confront the disadvantages of that

status for some years. The idea of maintaining the family together (her husband was in

the U.S.), urged Female #3 to jump over the fence at the border when she was three

months pregnant. She was caught, sent back to Mexico, and without waiting,

immediately jumped again, this time successfully. Female # 5 was seven months

pregnant when she did the same thing!

The undocumented couples have had problems with the law, especially for not

having driver's licenses. Every time these participants go out, they risk being caught

and deported, not able to talk with their relatives. Husband #1 was apprehended by the

Border Patrol but the agents decided to make fun of him instead of confiscating his

vehicle and/or deporting him. With resignation, he shared:

> Yes, the Migra drives by and sometimes you find it and you ask yourself what is
> going to happen. Sometimes they follow you but nothing happens. But it is pure
> luck, because some are stopped, and you must decide if you run or confront what
> is going o happen.

Couple #8, whose tourist visa was to expire soon, believed that their daughter's

drug problem was related to their inability to provide a better life for her (like getting

better jobs that would make possible buying a house in a safer neighborhood). They

also had a scary experience with the authorities that increased the constant anxiety

caused by the constant dread of not knowing, when they went out, if they were going to

come back to their children:

> The sheriff [stopped us and] was asking us about our papers… I was very
> nervous and… was unable to communicate well with him… They stopped us
> about 10 PM and let us go almost at 1 AM. And I was thinking, "The migra is
> going to take us. Why is he keeping us for so long? Something is going to

happen". But, thanks to God they let us go. Of course, they gave us the fine, $600, but at least they let us go.

Obtaining a green card was a dream for immigrants such as Male #1, who used to cross the border regularly years ago but had to stop after being caught:

> With that that Obama is giving us… hope. I still need two years to finish the deportation…I believe [my record] is going to be clean… I think he…hopefully will be able to give us papers, right? And then I will be able to go out [to Mexico] but in the meanwhile, we have to wait.

Church

The Catholic Church is the most influential institution in the area of this study. Few programs succeed if they don't have the approval of the church. Regrettably, according to the participants, the need for programs for youth, especially regarding substance abuse, had not been fulfilled. Parents who requested the help of the priest in regards to their children's problem, received limited benefits. The psychologist who volunteered her time in the Catholic Church counseling families didn't feel prepared to help problems of addiction and referred them to other towns, where transportation issues made solutions more difficult.

Only two of the couples in the study were Protestant. Some families attended services regularly and had Bible readings or prayed the rosary at home daily. Even the ones who didn't practice actively, affirmed that they believed in God. Parents reported that most children showed very little interest in going to church, not even to see friends

Female #1 only attended services in special occasions but she had a positive

attitude towards life in general. Fueled by her religious beliefs, she linked her blessings

with the health of her children and with the ability to work provided by God:

> I believe a lot in God, that if something is happening it is because God has
> decided it had to happen. And give thanks every day. For me… I am thankful,
> and I don't complain that today I didn't earn much, that I earned little, no. I have
> gratitude because my children are not sick, I have no other problems, or anything
> like that. I don't have much money, but I have health and don't have to be
> begging. Many people, who have lots of money, spend their time in hospitals
> because their children are sick, or because they hurt here or there. Not me.

Her partner shared her gratitude, highlighting the blessings of being able to work,

from which all the other blessings flow. He said: "We have to thank God that we are

alive, we can see, we have hands, we can work …. giving us eyes, hands to work, that is

good…with that I believe we are well."

A New Definition for the Word *Respect*

The crisis of the use of substances forced the participants to find a redefinition of

the word respect. For Latino families, respect is directly related to obedience. Any

diversion from complete obedience in the part of the children is considered lack of

respect toward the parents. The connection that the couples of this study had with their

own families of origin was mainly based on the importance of obedience to paternal

authority and the development of healthy work ethics that supported family survival.

Parents and children main interactions used to revolve around work, and their reactions

to those sometimes unspoken behavioral guides defined family respect. A new meaning

of respect is needed now, for the new generation.

Couples' New Discourse of Respect

Respect within the couple seemed to remain stable, as the changes within the marital dyad appeared to be minimal, and they were mostly related to the length of time of the addiction. The most affected parents were the ones whose children were still using. Even though it was hard to listen to the negative comments of her husband, Female #8, whose daughter had started using recently, decided to change her original tendency to cover for her and start supporting her husband:

> Yes, it has affected me, in that I… he [husband] doesn't trust me. Anything I say about our daughter, he says "no, there are lies". He, now, he seems to understand me a little better… It is true that many times I try to hide things from him… to avoid that he gets mad, start yelling, and all, but… right now… I reached a limit and now "That's it, stop. I am not going to hide anything else. It will be better to tell him everything". And, yes, I tell him everything.

As a couple, Male #4 reported that they were listening to each other better. In regards with her wife's allowing their daughter to go out against his orders, he explained:

> Well, I started to…understand what she [wife] was telling me, that she had been always inside [as a child], and that she didn't have friends, and then I understood that… And I remembered that I, even if I grew up in poverty… always in the afternoons I went out, with my cousins, with the neighbors, to play.

The longer the crisis, the more the communication improved and the blaming diminished. Couple #3 knew their son didn't plan to quit. Husband and wife called each other "up to ten times" a day when the son wasn't home. Male #3 expressed his fear:

> "Hasn't he called? Hasn't he arrived?" I always tell her [wife] "Please go out, at least look for him for a little while. You know he is probably with friends, search for him, and call me when you find out something."

Cooperation between the parties became more automatic and husband and wife accepted the situation, retained some hope, and started adapting, especially for the sake of the rest of the family.

Intergenerational New Discourse of Respect

The differences in work styles between parents and children were enormous. According to the parent's reports, no youngster in this study obtained joy from doing any kind of manual work. For some of the older ones, involved in paid labor, work was only an undesirable and unavoidable way to obtain money to buy drugs.

With obedience and the responsibility to work out of the picture, the parents were at a loss while seeking for a new base for respect. Unconditional love and full understanding through empathy were tried with limited success. Because I didn't interview the children, I don't know on what they base their idea of respect, but according to their parents' comments, the youngsters seemed to feel respected when the parents left them alone and didn't interfere with their decisions. Plain acceptance seemed to be the better accepted option.

Regarding her alcoholic son in jail, Female #1 tried to be optimistic but she also maintained a very realistic attitude:

> We don't know; we have the hope that this is going to be a lesson for him… He is reading the Bible, and he is going to church and he says he is pleading with God and knows that God is helping him a lot. "Now I am really going to change, I am going to become responsible for my children." Then it could be that he is going to come out fine… *Maybe he is only saying that because he is locked up.*

Even though they planned to live in the same house when the son becomes a free man,

Couple #1 had learned to create healthy boundaries: "Our life is apart, and his own life

is separated. He doesn't have to accept us; we had that problem previously." If the son

continues drinking or remains abstinent, the relationship between the partners won't be

affected. A new way of unity is developing, a different kind of respect.

It was easier for females than for males to use love as the main ingredient in the

new interactions. Trying to understand the experience of the addict also worked better

with the mothers than with the fathers. The void left by the disappearance of good old

respect was hard to be filled in and impacted the intergenerational relationships of those

who maintained contrasting worldviews. The following diagram (Figure 1) shows the

uniform processes followed by fathers, mothers, and children when there was absence of

intergenerational conflict. The constructions of *Work*, *Respect* and *Family Unity* are

shown as flowing into each other in a harmonious rhythm. The relationship with the

social systems seems stable.
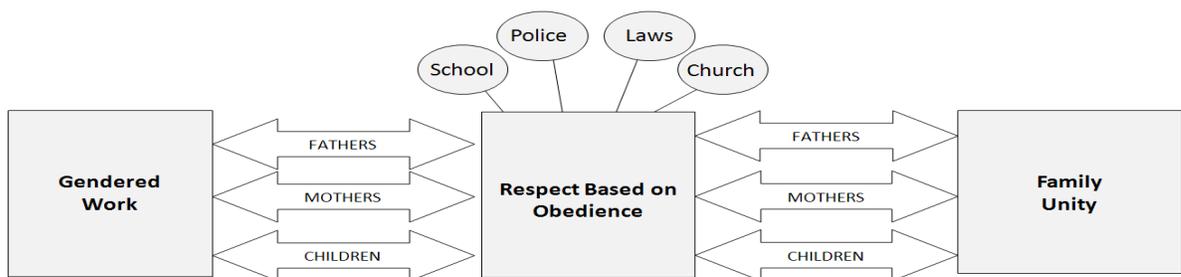
Figure 1. *Relational Processes with Obedient Adolescents*

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When the adolescents started using substances --rejecting the value of respect as it was understood by the parents-- *Family Unity* was threatened. This is illustrated by Figure 2. Even though the value of *Work* remains intact for the parents, it changes for the disobedient children. The new path toward *Family Unity* is only obtained through a novel, different kind of *Respect*. Mothers and fathers have disagreements, the crisis tests their gender roles, but, at the end, they compromise with the rebellious teenagers in order to remain together. Even the relationship with the larger systems changes.
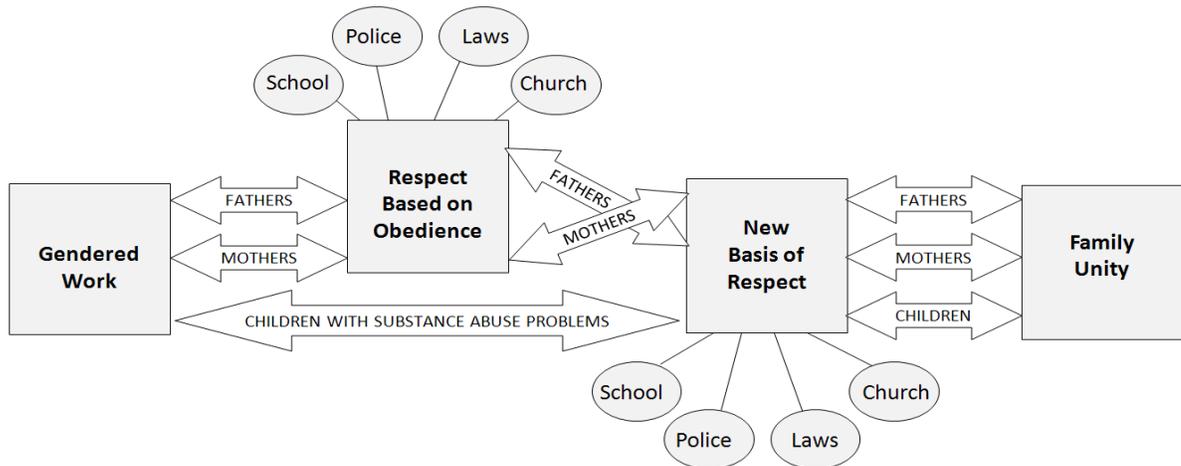
Figure 2. *Relational Processes with Disobedient Adolescents*

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The more positive news is that, even though the gaps within the family increase when the children continue using drugs, *all* the families in this study have remained together.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION

This study of Mexican families living in Mecca, Southern California, offers insight into a particular kind of transnational experience. The relative isolation of this community, and the homogeneity of its primarily Mexican population, makes the new local environment very similar in many respects to the immigrant's native communities. Its closeness to the frontier allows for daily trips to south of the border cities to visit with relatives, see a doctor or dentist, or buy merchandise. These circumstances make it easy to retain native values. It also makes the need to adapt to the host country less imperative.

In exploring how the crisis of adolescents' use of illicit substances impacts the relational processes and cultural values and beliefs of these low income rural Mexican couples, this analysis shows that while living in the midst of two different and sometimes conflicting cultures, the couples in this study continued to preserve and respect the traditional norms that have guided their lives in their country of origin, with maintaining family unit their overriding goal. However, responding to their children's use of drugs or alcohol brought new challenges to two primary cultural discourses: (1) gender and (2) respect, both within family interactions and across the social context in which they live.

Though the traditional portrayal of male dominance and female submissiveness in Latino populations has being challenged in the literature for some time (e.g., Vazquez-Nuttall et al., 1987; Falicov, 1998), this study showed that, in spite of functioning within a country sponsoring egalitarian views, both men and women

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appeared to receive satisfaction by fulfilling their culturally imposed roles: i. e., men

working hard outside the home, and women working hard taking care of their husbands

and children, in addition to performing outside work. These marital dynamics were

minimally altered as they responded to their children's substance use. The spouses

maintained their customary hierarchy levels. However, the relationships of the parents

with their children --who had adopted many of the more individualistic ideals of the host

culture and disregarded the respect required to honor parents through obedience--

changed considerably.

Because it provided the foundation for maintaining family unity, respect was the

construct informing couple and family processes. Latino discourses of respect include

the notion that disobedience means lack of respect and disrespecting parental authority is

not acceptable (Falicov, 1998). Thus, in order to maintain the unruly children as part of

the family nucleus, the couples interviewed in the Mecca area needed to find a new basis

for the discourse of respect.

Importance of Respect

Respect is one of the fundamental values determining hierarchy within Latino

cultures (Hirsch, 2003) and it is one of the first concepts that should be discussed when

trying to understand the structure of Latino families. Feeling respected goes beyond

being successful in attaining a high social or economic status (Falicov, 1998); for the

working men in this sample who believed they were easily replaceable in their jobs, it

included the need to feel they were valued and important at home. However, this is not

the experience of parents who feel powerless when their children defy them by using drugs or alcohol.

The fairly similar group of participant couples in this study (the only exceptions came from two unmarried and two undocumented pairs) presented comparable understandings of the importance of respect in the world of gendered work, respect in couple's relationships, respect in parenting and intergenerational relationships, and respect related to larger system institutions.

Respect in the World of Gendered Work

Work was the main source of respect for both men and women in this sample. The men learned to work hard from their fathers; the women were shown by their mothers how to protect their husbands so they could be able to work. Being able to provide for the family is the epitome of a successful man (Falicov, 1998). Men who are good providers are also the proof of their women being successful wives. Regretfully, immigrant parents have almost no control over the long hours they are forced to work due to the low pay they receive (Courney-Smith, 2006). In California, it is the grower, not the state or the federal government who decides work schedules. During the harvest seasons, some farmworkers work up to thirteen hours per days, sometimes seven days per week, without overtime pay (Lopez, 2007). There is very little family time during those months, and almost no monitoring done by the parents over the children's activities.

This research showed that for these men, more important that making a lot of money was to be able to go out early in the morning, perform their daily duties, and

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come back home tired, to rest and get ready for the next day. Even on the days when

they were called to work for only a few hours, the sadness related to the meager income

was relieved by the pride of having done their best.

No matter how many hours the women worked, male work was more respected.

Women's wages were considered by the husbands a welcome but not an essential

contribution to the household budget. Contrary to research that indicates that the women

who contribute financially to the households feel more powerful because their

socioeconomic status increases (Gonzalez-Lopez, 2005; Hirsch, 2003), the Mecca

women remained in their traditional subservient positions when they were employed,

and didn't report any changes in the way their husbands treated them.

Household Chores

These women wanted their spouses to help them with housework. However,

though contemporary research shows modern Latino men more willing to assist their

spouses (Hirsh, 2003; Falicov, 2010), husbands in this study only performed domestic

chores in cases of extreme need. Not even one suggested that the couple held joint

responsibility for domestic work. None of the husbands interviewed reacted as Hirsh's

(2003) men who talked about being "happy" to help with domestic chores "in order to

occasionally lighten their wives' burden" or "in the interest of increased marital

harmony" (p. 140).

Rather than empowering women, family responses to their new social

environment further disempowered them. Husbands told their wives to ask the children

to help, but none of the adolescents using substances provided this help, and only a few

of the younger siblings regularly rallied around. In order to avoid further conflict, the women preferred to avoid asking for assistance and carried the burdens alone. In doing this they endorsed the widely researched marianistic syndrome that claims that virtuous females are distinguished by their self-denial and abnegation, just as the Virgin Mary exemplified (Falicov, 1998). Thus, even though most of the contemporary literature indicates a fast trend to attain more individualistic outlooks, marianismo remains strong within this group of women (Falicov, 2007; Hirsch, 2003; Gonzalez-Lopez, 2005). However, it is very interesting that these mothers expressed happiness when they noticed more equalitarian signs in the relationships that their acculturated daughters developed with their boyfriends or husbands.

Courtney –Smith (2006) indicates that the combination of women working outside the home and men helping inside the home mixes up previous clearly defined gender patterns, baffles marital synergy, and confounds parental authority. For transnational couples living in the self-contained environment of Mecca, the first part of that statement, referring to the dyad, was partially true. Mothers took on additional burdens, but did not gain authority. However, in a number of the families, the second part relating to the changing nature of parent-child relationships was a reality that challenged foundational notions of hierarchical respect.

Respect in Couples' Relationships.

The main difference of these participants, compared to the egalitarian trend in the contemporary literature, refers to how unaffected their acceptance of traditional cultural patterns remains. The generalized idea is that immigrant Mexican women in the U.S.

attain more authority than they had in their homeland (Hondagnew-Sotelo, 1994). To

obtain power and to create egalitarian relationships didn't seem to be a female goal

among the women interviewed for this study: performing well their roles --being "good"

wives and "good" mothers- - was. Having adolescents using substances didn't qualify

them as either one.

Many times couples repeated in the interviews that they were "equal," but what

they really meant was that they were comfortable as "the man of the house" and "the

woman of the house." Overwhelmingly, the women accepted male authority, especially

regarding making difficult or important decisions. This was true even when the men's

choices went against the women's wishes. This demonstration of male power, and the

corresponding pattern of female acceptance, had an important part in the way the

responsibility for children's discipline was shared by the parents.

Wives and Respect

The literature on Latinas shows that the collective notion about being a "mother"

is highly respected (Falicov, 1998). However, having an addicted child made the women

in this study feel unfit and unappreciated, not only as mothers, but also as wives. Instead

of their position as mothers providing them with an elevated status at the eyes of their

spouses, the diminished self-worth brought upon by the crisis also lowered the female

expectations of success in negotiating new gender structures that could have empowered

them without threatening their husbands' (Maciel & Van Putten, 2009).

The issue of respect was present in all of the couples' daily exchanges. For

instance, contrary to studies that show that women's spatial mobility improves when

they arrive in the U.S., usually as a result of their greater economic contributions to the household (Gonzalez-Lopez, 2005; Hondagnew-Sotelo, 1994; Hirsch, 2003; Lopez, 2007), these women always asked the men for permission to go out. They showed gratitude when their wishes were granted and resignation when they were denied. Not being able to attend social functions because their husbands didn't want to go (the men had the excuse of being tired from working hard), was a common female complaint.

Nevertheless, the popular saying that "the streets belong to the men and the homes to the women" (Hirsch, 2003), seemed more symbolic than realistic for this group. Having to go to work, to school meetings, to doctor's appointments, and so on, put these immigrant women more on the streets that they wanted. Ironically, tiredness obliged the men to stay home after work instead of going out to drink with friends, as it is popular in other groups (Worby & Organista, 2007). Finances and the need to reserve energies for work reduced family outings to weekends of going to church, shopping, and doing laundry. Barbecuing in the backyard and watching television were the entertainments mentioned more frequently by the adults, only partially attractive to acculturated adolescents.

Even though the women would have liked to see some changes in the interactions with their spouses, those desires were mostly related to receiving more help with housework and child rearing. After that, the main complaints of some of the women were not about wanting more authority for themselves, but about feeling a little more respected by husbands willing to improve couple and family communication by sharing, listening, and understanding.

Husbands and Respect

Men's idea of respecting women, however, was not based on sharing, listening or understanding. In contrast to adaptations mentioned by some researchers, no men in this sample showed the desire to have the companionate marriages of immigrant couples that facilitate intimacy but de-emphasize hierarchy and respect (Harris et al., 2008; Hirsh, 2003). Companionate marriages demand men to be involved in children's rearing and to be equally responsible for the behavior of the offspring.

The Mecca's husbands possessed few of the communication and parenting skills their partners desired. The men believed they showed respect to their wives by not mistreating them and by granting some of their wishes, like allowing the women to visit their relatives unescorted. For men in this study, the best showings of masculine love were done through seemingly monotonous routines related to work and supervision that allowed them to provide for and protect their families.

Women in this study held varying levels of decision making and influence upon their partners. However, they acquiesced to the traditional authority learned from their parents not only as a demonstration of respect, but also as a way of keeping the peace and unity at home. For men, it was only after they were unable to control the disobedient children on their own that some of them accepted to listen to their wives.

Gendered Parenting and Intergenerational Respect

Obedience to parents is a characteristic ingrained in communal cultures, so much so that Latinos are expected to respect and obey their parents all the time, not only as children (Falicov, 1998). Even though the adolescents in this group were used to seeing

their own fathers or other relatives drink in excess, they grew up knowing that consuming alcohol and drugs were behaviors prohibited to minors. For parents, feeling disrespected by the disobedience of their children added to the shock of discovering that the adolescents were using dangerous substances. The children's defiance was understood by the fathers as a demonstration of the mothers' weakness, a result of their giving too much freedom to the offspring. Because mothers are traditionally in charge of the children, the women received the brunt of the blame and accept it without complaining.

Mothers and Respect

The mothers seemed to be less affected than the fathers by seeing their authority challenged by acculturated children, and believed they could relax some of the extreme rules that fathers imposed in their efforts of trying to protect their families. Mothers appeared to understand better the conflict their children had between the norms and values inside and outside the home, and at times kept their children's secrets from their husbands, subtly defying male authority.

Nevertheless, the women were forced to accept that their own efforts in helping the kids fit into the host culture had made the adolescents too independent and disobedient. At that moment they realized they needed the help of the husbands to bring back control. All the married women in this group believed that the fathers were better disciplinarians, and their commands were obeyed quicker by the children who had become oblivious to the constant maternal pleading and nagging.

At the same time, another paradoxical situation developed. Even though mothers

wanted husbands to be involved with the adolescents using substances, they were fearful

of demonstrations of violence between fathers and sons, and they found themselves

acting as mediators. These mothers also performed as communicators, counselors and

peacekeepers, with some attributing the success of their children quitting to their efforts

in understanding the meaning of the addiction, externalizing the problem, becoming

more familiar with the issue, and being patient and approachable. Very few of the men

interviewed tried even one of these approaches.

Fathers and Respect

With younger children, being somehow detached from their sons and daughters

meant that the fewer but stronger mandates of the fathers were promptly heard and acted

upon. However, fathers in this study didn't know how to interact with their more

acculturated and independent adolescents when their first interventions of yelling didn't

work. Unable to physically punish the culprits, their repertoires of ideas depleted quickly

and frustration took over. According to Pantin et al. (2003), in trying to restore the

conventional parent-child hierarchy, Latino parents end up provoking some normal

resistance in the youngsters that is construed by the parents as being deviant. Their

repeated attempts to make the children obey tend to backfire and instead push them

farther away, increasing the risk of drug abuse.

After the failure of their first efforts, the fathers in this study were careful

(sometimes guided by their wives and sometimes on their own) to maintain a healthy

distance from the adolescents using substances that allowed them to continue showing their disapproval but that also permitted the children to remain home.

Monitoring

Time dedicated to work was the explanation given by the men for not being involved in the lives of their children as much as the women would like. It was also the excuse they gave for not being aware of the problem of the use of substances of their children until it was too late. They recognized failing in what the literature shows as one of the most important protective factors for adolescents, parental monitoring, in the sense of being aware of the location and behavior of their offspring (Little et al., 2005; Romero & Ruiz, 2007).

Latino parents have been found to monitor their children more frequently and to be more protective than non-Latino parents (Halgunseth et al., 2006) but most couples in this group started checking closely the activities of their children only after the substance problem was exposed. By then, the adolescents had already learned skills from acculturated peers-- accustomed to hide from authorities-- that put them ahead of the inexperienced supervising progenitors. From the use of telephones to driving around town searching for their children, the majority of the couples were heavily involved in trying to monitor the activities of the teenagers at the beginning of the crisis. But most of the participants gave up after they found their efforts to be ineffectual. Missing hours of sleep meant less productivity at work the following day, a reckless move the family was not able to afford. Moreover, efforts to protect children by increasing surveillance that

decreased their freedom were not appreciated by the adolescents, and became a new point of intergenerational clash regarding the issue of respect (Halgunset et al., 2006).

Respect and the Larger Systems

Cultural values of respect were also demonstrated in the larger sphere in several ways, including obedience to authority, deference, decorum and public behavior (e g., Calzada et al., 2010). All these concepts became challenged when the crisis of the adolescents using substances began and the parents felt in the middle of what it seemed to be opposing forces. At times these law abiding, pro-education, religious citizens, needed to choose between defending their mischievous children or defending the less than perfect institutions that their children were disrespecting.

The most common complaint from the couples related to the lack of support from the government was about laws that made them responsible for the misbehavior of the children at the same time that tied their hands regarding the implementation of what they considered effective discipline. Since the adolescents had learned quickly the advantages that their age provided, many parents felt that the authorities should start protecting them from the children, and not vice versa. The idea of the Child Protection Agency (CPA) having the power of separating families for using what the parents viewed as normal discipline was considered absurd. Nevertheless, one of the few occasions when the men, willingly, interrupted their work was to attend the classes or programs ordered by CPS that would allow them to retain or gain back, the custody of their children.

The couples developed a gendered way to seek help for their adolescents. The men more often consulted with law enforcement agents; the women looked up to school personnel, church organizations, and mental health providers. Both, mothers and fathers checked with trusted relatives and friends. At times, the couples worked together and at times individually. Sometimes they were successful and sometimes no. The ones who saw their children quit rejoiced and remained grateful for the help received. The ones who continued suffering through the ordeal kept eagerly hoping for a positive intervention that could bring the desired change.

Couples' Process in Helping Addicted Children

The processes by which parents responded to their adolescents' substance use illustrate the tenacity of gendered family processes (e.g., Mahoney & Knudson-Martin, 2009; Walters et al., 1988). Escalations of male authority and female responsibility temporarily raised questions about the effectiveness of these previously taken for granted positions. Yet, ultimately the desire for family unity pulled most parent couples back toward the traditional gender hierarchy. In fact, the findings suggest that because problems with children tend to reflect on the performance of the maternal role, mothers experience less respect and lowered status in the family, especially at the outset. To the extent that the crisis stimulated changes in family hierarchies, they were initiated in parent-child relationships which, in some instances, also enhanced men's respect for their wives and facilitated a move toward somewhat more egalitarian communication styles.

As the Crisis Began

At the beginning of the problem, the men blamed the women and ordered them to talk to the children and *make them stop*. If this intervention was not successful, the fathers felt disrespected not only by their children who continued using, but also by their wives, who they felt had not followed their instructions correctly. As time went by and the defiance of the youngsters continued, the men believed they had more reasons to blame their wives.

The mothers also suffered from the lack of respect demonstrated by the children, but it seemed that it was the guilt produced by their husband's accusations that hurt them the most. Many of the wives internalized this feeling and became estranged from their husbands. Fathers asked mothers to become more strict and vigilant with the children, grounding them, and forbidding them from contacting risky friends. It appeared that the men were granting the women a new chance to redeem themselves as caretakers of the troubled children. Collaborative parenting was an option only considered after all the other interventions had failed.

As the Crisis Peaked

When children continued using, mothers started to resist accepting the complete responsibility for the problem. They wanted fathers to intervene more directly, and to get more involved in the lives of the children. For some fathers this was difficult; they commented about the example given by their own, distant fathers. Some husbands only got involved when they felt their wives were absolutely incompetent to solve the problem.

This was a period of high conflict for most of the couples. They talked about the problem and planned some interventions together, but the frustrations and disappointments pushed them into start looking for possible solutions on their own, sometimes hiding their thoughts and actions from their partners. Mothers sought services for the children, asking friends, religious leaders, and therapists. Fathers continued yelling, withdrawing privileges, and turning children's friends away. Some men tried to initiate dialog with the kids but found it very hard; fathers were not used to and could not bypass the lack of respect shown by their offspring. None of the adolescents in this sample opened up to their fathers. In contrast, some of the sons had revealing and honest conversations with their mothers. These mothers were not turned off as much by the children's disrespect (shown by insults and yelling) and accepted it as a consequence of the "illness" that had overcome them.

The couple's mutual blaming continued, with different intensity levels corresponding to the day by day behavior of the children. Mothers kept defending them longer, always trying to find other culprits. Blaming the adolescents took many different variations and it was always connected with the expressions of the influence of risky friends. Most parents didn't pay attention to their children's friends until after the problem was discovered, and few knew what to do afterwards. Some of these confused parents, under pressure from their kids, allowed them to continue the friendships (with or without the spouses' knowledge) with dubious peers who, in addition to promote drug usage, also provided protection from other dangerous youngsters threatening their children with physical violence.

As the Crisis Continued

As the crisis continued, couples developed different ways to cope with the problem and they worked up strategies with the purpose of supporting one another. This was true whether or not their children had stopped using substances or not. In the first outcome, the parents demonstrated certain level of contentment but they still remained vigilant, afraid of being hurt again. They made the effort to emphasize positive traits and tried to ignore anything that could be considered suspicious.

Parents whose children still used seemed to hold little hope that the situation would ever improve and kept trying to adapt to a new relationship with their offspring in which all the parties could rescue as much respect as possible. At this point husbands and wives appeared to realize that actively blaming each other would only further damage the marital relationship and family. Attending to each other's needs replaced the urge of taking care of the child, especially when the health (mental or physical) of the adults had been affected. However, none of these families claimed living happily now. Part of the effort they made in bringing some kind of normalcy to their lives was incited by their desire of protecting the younger siblings from the influence of the drug users.

All these couples believed they had fairly good relationships before the problem started, enjoyed normal lives, and were surprised by their children's attitudes. The participants increased their communication during the crisis, many times in negative ways which included blaming one another and keeping secrets. At the moment of the interviews, the couples whose children had quickly quit using had gone back to the way they related before the drama unfolded. The parents of the children who took longer in abandoning the drugs developed a new way of communicating with each other, more

honest and comforting, in which blaming was still present but had lost some of the initial

importance. Even though they wanted to believe in their children's present abstinence,

they kept monitoring their activities and praying. Couples whose older children refused

to stop using felt powerless, had little faith that the situation would improve, maintained

a limited communication with the addicted, and decided to focus in their own wellbeing

and the wellbeing of the rest of the family.

Overall, the desire to preserve family unity was paramount and worked

differently with husbands and wives than between parents and children. In the couple's

unit, women let go of their personal concerns and frustrations regarding their roles and

status in order to preserve the family unit. However, in some families the crisis spurred

realignment in how intergenerational respect was experienced. In these cases, fathers

began to take a somewhat more mutual approach to their children and to communicate

more openly with their wives.

Several important points stand out in this study of transnational couples. The

powerful structure provided by traditional cultural values seems to be protective in

maintaining Latino families of limited resources together in times of trouble; the culture

of hard work serves as a panacea for socio-contextual emotional adult hurts that can't be

expressed otherwise; and even in the midst of the turmoil of adolescence, and of

intergenerational conflict, most bicultural children choose to remain home, and continue

to be part of the family. Intergenerational conflict is thus resolved within the context of

the value of preserving family, and, if children are persistent, can be an impetus for a

gradual shifting of how family values are applied. Women tend to assume substantial

responsibility and sacrifice to insure that their families hold together; however the extent to which this might take a toll on them was not identified as a visible sustained concern.

This study raises interesting questions about the different kinds of power that the couples balance out in their relationships, and about the links between hierarchy, responsibility and authority. The fathers in this study complied with the responsibilities that culture assigned to them and attained the power that was ascribed to a fine performance of the role. Disobeying children may not have reduced their relational power, but surely made them lose authority. Mothers also had relational power, but even though they carried different and copious responsibilities, they never had the authority their husbands asserted. Therefore, the crisis of adolescent substance use impacted them differently.

Implications for Practice

Therapists would be wise in approaching rural transnational families with an open and hopeful attitude, expecting that their efforts not only will help the families, but will also enrich their own lives. Even clinicians who are aware that Latinos are not a homogenous group and stereotyping would only hinder positives outcomes of therapy (Miranda & Matheny, 2000), should notice differences within families. Research that indicates that Latinos believe that therapy is for "crazy people" and prefer other ways of counseling --such as consulting with priests or friends-- was not confirmed by this sample. Some of the members of the participants had been involved in different ways of counseling before, and most were eager to find professional help for their addicted children.

The Role of the Therapist

The population in this study gives therapists the same respect they give to police agents and teachers (who are perceived as having higher education, earning more money, and having more authority). But just as educators and government employees, therapists can lose the trust of clients if they are seen as abusing their positions of privilege. Behaving in a respectful, humble and honest ways works well in maintaining a good relationship with these clients.

The parents in this study were dealing with the constant contempt of their children at home, and were also being blamed by social institutions for the misconduct of their children. Participating in the interviews gave them the positive opportunity to be heard, and provided them with a sense of respect that can easily be reproduced in therapy.

Aggravated by their lack of proficiency speaking English, some of these couples needed help in learning how to navigate the sea of red tape that usually surrounds public institutions. Therapists can be helpful in preparing them in how to speak with authority figures, and even acting as advocates in their favor. Giving information about local resources can make a huge difference in the lives of these clients.

Respect in the Therapy Room

In working with couples whose relational options are organized around patriarchy and male work, the opportunities to expand those options are limited, especially in the way they relate to their children. Both genders are limited by the

cultural norms they learned from infancy. The following ideas can enhance the process

of therapy with this specific population:

Work as Identity

The results of this study showed the importance of work for the couples, and the

drawbacks that the long hours away from the home originate for the children. Unless the

therapist initiates the discussion over this point, there is a good chance that the fathers

would never understand that there are strategies they can incorporate to reduce the gap

created by their absence. Therapy can encourage a better perception of their masculine

responsibilities as providers and protectors, and develop a working identity able to bring

more happiness to themselves and to the whole family.

Work (and resting to able to work again) helped most fathers to reduce the stress

caused by the situation with the addicted children. It didn't have the same effect on the

mothers. Therapists can teach women techniques to reduce stress, and open dialog about

the advantages of self care and the possible benefits of taking some time for themselves,

without feeling guilty.

Parents First, Spouses Second

Just as for most transnational Mexican immigrants, for these couples to be good

parents was more important than enjoying marital bliss (Falicov, 1998). This may be a

concept difficult to grasp, not only by White therapists, but even by acculturated Latino

counselors. The base for family models effective with this population is described by

Falicov (1998): "Satisfaction is the goal and it is obtained by a traditional configuration that values children and family life over individual happiness and autonomy" (p.188).

These families were willing to do anything they could to help the adolescents who were using substances. In answering the questions during the interviews, they didn't elaborate on personal problems, or on couple's issues that were not directly related to the children's troubles. So, showing personal interest for the wellbeing of the adolescent and avoiding blaming the parents for the presenting problem, would engage the family more easily in the process of therapy. It is important that practitioners understand that some couples may decide to work on improving their own relationship (in issues like reducing the blaming, for example) only after they are convinced that it would benefit the offspring.

Family Unity is Paramount

Most of the parents set limits for deviant children's behaviors that marked the point when the adolescents would have to leave home. Fathers were the initiators of this intervention; mothers supported it with different levels of approval. For some parents, the moment that the child started stealing money was the point of decision; for others was the actual or perceived danger of physical violence.

The interesting part was that, once the kids kept reaching each established marker, the parents kept giving more opportunities. Only three adolescents were asked to leave, in the middle of a fight with the fathers, but only one of them actually did. And the couple sought him out after two days and brought him home. For Latino couples who welcome the presence of older children in their homes (even with their own wives

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and children), and who take care of elderly parents until they die (Falicov, 1998), maintaining the family together is a goal that at times may be difficult to grasp by therapists who promote individualistic values.

Parental Demonstrations of Affect

Other research highlights the importance of parental warmth in preventing alcohol use (Mogro-Wilson, 2008). This study shows that even detached fathers know that they can be effective in implementing high control over their children, but the family would benefit more if the parents were able to be more demonstrative of the love they say they feel for their children. Only a couple of the fathers in this study succeeded in having conversations that included talk about feelings. The rest only knew how to express their feelings through rage or silence.

Many therapists will be surprised by how hard it is for some Latino fathers to talk with their sons. Making the couples remember their childhoods and analyzing the way they related to their own parents, could be a good starting point for important conversations.

Traditional Cultural Values Deserve Respect Too

Empowering clients to expect positive outcomes in therapy should also include respecting their right to choose their goals, even if those were based on patriarchal values. Respect encompasses using genuine curiosity to learn what is important for the client, and knowing the limits between encouragement to change and acceptance of the clients' decisions.

Therapists should help clients see the different options they have when they feel confronted with conflicts presented by the clashing cultures. Some of the Latino adolescents were forced by the parents to attend mass every Sunday; many girls were forbidden to use make up; several husbands didn't allow wives to go out alone. Therapists trained in models highlighting egalitarism and independence may be tempted to think that they would fail unless the clients make those values part of their lives before the end of therapy. Raising these issues as topics of conversation is important, but they need to be understood within the cultural context.

Trying to empower women to speak up, for example, should not miss exploring with them all the possible cultural consequences of their actions, and prepare them according to their choices (Comas-Diaz, 2006). As a personal note, I need to add that female counselors would be wise to regularly check their own countertransference issues regarding patriarchal values in order to engage more effectively with these families in ways that enable them to redefine for themselves certain aspects of cultural values while retaining what is culturally salient to them (Moghadam & Knudson-Martin, 2009).

Engaging Clients in the Process of Therapy

Reports from the couples in this study confirmed that women were the catalytic force to engage the family in therapy. They actively sought information; they made the appointments for these interviews. Most Latino men got involved in mental health services either because the Child Protection Agency requested it or because the wives gave them an ultimatum.

The men in this study appreciated being commended for their hard work. Using comments such as: "I am so glad you accepted to participate in the interview. You are such an important part of the lives of your children", or "It must hurt you so much that your son doesn't listen to your advice," helped them to open up. Surprisingly, the more numerous and longer contributions to the interviews came from masculine voices, maybe because, culturally, they don't have many opportunities to talk about these issues.

The women had plenty of opportunities to express their opinions, and many offered different viewpoints. The main female complaint was not to be given enough authority in front of the children. Suggestions to the couples about the importance of presenting a united front and consulting each other before informing the children about house rules and consequences can enhance their parenting skills and bring positive changes at home.

Avoiding Models of Deficit

Overall, therapists are more likely to be successful when keeping away from models of deficit and, instead, using models of strength (Calzada et al., 2002). No matter how much suffering the family is going through at the moment of consultation, it is imperative that the clients develop stories of strength, creativity and resilience. For the couples in this study just to hear the researcher's simple comments of approval for some of their small victories in dealing with their adolescents, seemed to make a difference. Simple words of hope when their stories denoted failure can also be meaningful to them and make a positive difference.

Cultural Genograms

A model of strength can be improved by going back to the historical survival, resistance, and resilience of Mexican ancestors; by preparing cultural genograms to uncover examples of victories in the midst of adversity; and by opening dialog about any kind of oppression that could be impacting the use of substances, instead of keeping silent (McDowell & Jeris, 2004).

Relational Orientations Typology

Supporting research that indicates that parent-child relationships have to be understood within the larger socio-cultural context in which they exist, Tuttle, Knudson-Martin and Kim (in press) developed a relational orientations typology that could be very useful in working with Latino families. This framework can be helpful in contrasting communal and individualistic tendencies (focus) and pondering the meaning of being an immigrant (power), situating parents and children in different dimensions of relational orientations. This instrument provides an excellent basis for opening constructive intergenerational dialog and to explore the larger context.

In collectivistic cultures high parental control helps to socialize children to live protected in the midst of the various social networks that encompass the family's world. Obedience and respect for authority will keep the youngsters safe. Exploring relational processes that include the emotional attachment within the family *and* the influence of the larger systems upon the members will make possible to identify the social constructions that guide their lives (Tuttle et al., in press).

In sum, therapists who realize the importance of their contributions to the positive transitions that transnational families go through, will approach their job with humbleness and respect, and will recognize the strengths and resilience that those families demonstrate. Accepting that egalitarian marriages and juvenile independence may not be the goals of immigrant Mexican families, clinicians should be willing to listen attentively, inquiry respectfully, and present creative options that could help these clients enjoy the best of the various cultures impacting upon them.

Strengths and Limitations

This study was based on sixteen interviews with transnational Mexican families living in the town of Mecca, whose children have had varying kinds of experiences with drugs or alcohol. Even though this is a small group, it enabled the researcher to analyze the stories in depth and uncover processes that may have been difficult to detect in larger samples.

Strengths

Unique Location

Mecca is a small, isolated town, surrounded by agricultural fields that grow a variety of fruits and vegetables all year long. There is enough work to sustain a fairly large group of workers all through the year, not only during the intense months of the main harvests, as it happens in other places of the country. Being over ninety percent Latino, this location allowed for in-depth exploration of a understudied, underserved population. Just driving through can give one the feeling of visiting a poor Mexican city.

Being located so close to the border, making possible day trips to their native land, adds to the peculiar experience of this population, making their acculturation process different to other groups of immigrants.

Hispanic Researcher

One of the advantages of this study was that it was conducted by a bilingual and bicultural researcher, who had worked in the area for a few years and was involved in local activities that created trust. More confidence was attained by making good use of chit-chat during the visits. The forms were printed in Spanish, and the interviews conducted in that language. Invitations to participate were offered personally by the researcher at parenting courses, English classes, waiting lines for receiving free food, Alanon meetings, Familias Unidas assemblies, church services, health fairs, and on the streets.

Motivation of the Participants

The thank you gift ($25.00 gift card) was not the main incentive to participate in the project. Some of the families didn't want to accept it. Having a professional coming to their homes was felt as an opportunity to improve the sad reality they were living (even though the interviews were <u>clearly</u> advertised as <u>not</u> therapy sessions). The subjects were enthusiastic and only one couple rescheduled the interview, due to a medical emergency.

Interviewing Couples Together

In general, collecting information from both spouses simultaneously allows for more comprehensive narratives, adding details and multiple perspectives. Contrary to expectations of reserved men who might not share feelings easily, all male participants appeared open and some became emotional while telling their stories, not seeming to worry about losing face in front of their wives.

Seeing the spouses in interaction with each other was also an advantage, especially because one of the foci of this study was to understand the couple as a unit.

Limitations

Focus on Couples

Because this study involved only couples, it self-excluded those who were not willing or able to be interviewed together. This not only left out single parents but probably also those in highly conflictive relationships. Even when offered to have separated interviews for these hostile couples, the women (only one interview was scheduled by a man) declined, without giving an explanation for their decisions.

Other Exclusions

Interviewing only rural workers left aside the experience of other couples who lived in the same geographical area, had similar problems with their children, but obtained their income from other sources. Self-exclusions probably included couples who were substance abusers themselves (either both or one of them), who used methods

of discipline forbidden in the country, or who lived in the midst of domestic violence situations.

Some distinct populations may be absent or hidden in the area. Only one of the participants was non-Mexican, from El Salvador (the partner of a Mexican mother). None were homosexual or even mentioned the possibility of anything related to sexual identity in the lives of their children or their children's friends.

Undocumented Workers

Fear of the dominant culture, suspiciousness of the research process, or plain fright of giving information that could end up at the Department of Homeland Security or other governmental authorities may have dissuaded off certain individuals. Undocumented immigrants make up a large proportion of the workers receiving mental health services in the area but only two couples with that status accepted to participate in this study.

Because these immigrants were so similar to each other, and issues of gender and hierarchy vary greatly among and within cultures, the results of this study should be applied with caution to other Latino groups, including Mexicans with a higher level of education, class or locality.

Missed Relationships

In relation to the children, this study didn't differentiate between the gender of the adolescent children, missing the interesting aspects of mother/son, mother/daughter, father/son, father/daughter relationships, as well as observing differences in the parents

experience if the substances were used by female or male offspring. Also, the age of the adolescents wasn't a variable in this study but younger and older teens are in dissimilar developmental stages, and usually parents relate differently to each group.

Measures of Substances Used

Another limitation refers to the lack of information over the kind of substances the adolescents used (alcohol, marijuana, etc.) or the length of time (days, weeks, months, years) and the quantity used (sporadically, social, abuse, dependency), which may have made a difference in the parents' expectations for recovery.

Levels of Acculturation

Lastly, even though acculturation is an important part of the experience of transnational immigrants, length of time in the country wasn't measured in this study. The families that had arrived recently would likely have a dissimilar experience than those that have lived for decades in the U.S.

Transferability

It is not clear to what extent the relational and gender processes found in this study would apply to persons of Mexican heritage living in other settings such as urban areas; to immigrants from other countries; for couples without children; or for families of financial means.

Future Directions

As the Hispanic population in California continues to grow at higher rates than the rest of the country, more research that benefits the Southern California immigrants would be of special interest to the therapists working in rural areas. The following points, flowing from the experience of this investigator, are suggested as focus of future research.

New Models Needed

Any new transnational rural Mexican model should incorporate ideas such as: marriage is for life; extended family is important; abortion is not an option; large families are preferable; grown children are always welcome in the home; work brings dignity; obedience to parents implies respect; and performing well each member's role -- with a communitarian purpose instead of individualistic pursue-- will maintain the family united. This should be done in a way that is respectful for the culture at the same time that avoids gender and power abuses.

Models Focusing on Strengths

If it is done well, this kind of framework will involve more strengths than deficits. It should aim to maintaining the couple complementing each other's positions in order to raise children who feel safe and protected, who are respectful, and who will become good parents in the future. To work with this group it is vital to develop interventions, designed to match the culture of the clients (Muir et al., 2004).

Parenting Courses

There are serious challenges in evolving strategies for preventing Latino adolescents from using drugs or alcohol, and for instructing the parents about successful methods and intense monitoring once the problem started. Professionals should attend to the urgent need to prepare helpful parenting programs to improve the skills of the traditional couples who feel lost when their good intentions don't give the results they expected in dealing with their modern children.

Because respect is one of the most important assets that Latino parents want their children to acquire, it is surprising that most parenting models only mention this value implicitly, reducing the priority that the Mexican parents believe it deserves (Calzada et al., 2002). It may be that the issue of intergenerational respect based on obedience to elders, can easily conflict with the American inclination on independence, open communication and exploration which is not priority for this population. Teaching Hispanic parents to negotiate with their children and to avoid using spanking as a way to reinforce blind obedience should be important parts of the curriculum, but all parenting skills need to be discussed within the context of respect.

Materials in Spanish

Initiatives should also offer additional social support in relation to schools, police and political leaders, and resources to parents (Wagner et al, 2010) and should take into consideration the limited availability of handouts and other materials in Spanish. The reading levels of this population vary, with a considerable percentage of adults unable to read and write.

Couple Therapy

This study was done with couples whose main problem was the adolescents who were using substances. The stories of the spouses who did not survive the stress of the crisis and separated is not represented. Research contrasting the experiences of both groups could advance the field of couple's therapy.

Interviewing the couples separately could give another dimension to the issue of power within the dyad, having the possibility of eliminating the chance of female intimidation during joint interviews that could lead to the withholding of important information, such as possible domestic violence. No provision was made in the present study for individual time with the participants, even though none of the married women felt they had equal or more authority than their husbands.

Adolescent Substance Abuse

Interviewing the children would be a good way to determine not only which parents' interventions they felt were more helpful, but also to obtain information regarding the meaning of the conflicting cultural social constructions in which they exist, including how the addictions of their progenitors affected their own.

Gender and Age of the Children

It would be interesting to see how the mothers and the fathers relate differently to the daughters or sons' addictions, exploring the differences between father/son and father/ daughter, as well as mother/son and mother/daughter relationships. The differences in the way in which traditional principles impact on the couples' interactions

when the parents defend or attack the offspring according to cultural gender ideas could be a fascinating study. It has been noticed that these mothers want to implement the value of obedience in their daughters, at the same time that they desire more egalitarian relationships for them.

Kind of Substances

The experience of children drinking alcohol may be different than the ones using drugs, or the ones using both. How the parents may react differently to adolescents who are just experimenting and to the ones who are addicted, could generate useful studies. The use of marijuana or cocaine, for example, may bring up different reactions from the progenitors. Parents who are active users or who have quit in the past will surely see the actions of the children with different eyes. It would be useful to distinguish the gender differences in the couples confronting these various scenarios.

Older Children

The majority of the first-borns in this group used substances, and only two families had additional addicted adolescents. This might confirm research that shows that the older children of immigrant often experience extra burdens due to faster acculturation, and to the need to help unskilled parents and younger siblings to sort the difficulties of adapting to the new culture (Leidy et al, 2010). Falicov (1998) explains that, due to the loneliness that the immigrant mothers feel for the emotional separation from their husbands, Latinas develop a special relationship with the older child that doesn't include the father. Further inquiry and publications between the correlations of

those experiences with the use of substances would enrich the body of research

regarding Latino juvenile substance abuse.

Extended Family

The literature abounds with references about the importance of the extended

family for Latinos. Strangely enough, none of the couples in this study had their parents

living with them. They were showing hospitability, on a temporary basis, to other

relatives, but all their living parents resided either in Mexico or with other children.

How the dynamics of surviving in the new world affect the bond with the extended

family (that recursively affects how they raise their children) would also extend the body

of research about the Latino family.

Family Resilience

Even though the gaps within the family increase when the adolescents continue

using drugs, it is worth mentioning that every one of the families in this study has

remained together. Studying the mechanisms that allow the fathers to put aside their

authoritarian beliefs and adapt to live under the same roof with their disobedient

children could advance the field of family resilience.

Social Justice

The American media daily reports confirm different local or national movements

to curtail Mexican immigration. However, the need for agricultural workers is not

expected to diminish in the near future. Filling workers quotas, with or without governmental action, will probably maintain the immigration door open.

The advantages of having a large enough body of farmworkers who are settled in their own homes, earning enough to provide for their families, and ready to supply the demands for labor when the crops require it, should be seen as an advantage by investors and politicians as well. To be ready to serve this population in an effective way, helping them settle, learn, and adjust, should be a goal of mental health workers in rural areas. Appropriate cultural programs to prevent adolescent substance use, and to rehabilitate addicted individuals, should be prepared.

Providing information free of stereotyping to authorities at the federal, state and local levels could help in developing projects to help these families. The plea of the undocumented workers whose voices are being kept quiet by the threat of deportation should also be heard; their work habits have the potential of becoming an even more effective asset for the economy of the nation.

A New Basis for the Value of Respect

Couples who have been bonded by the respect derived from the principles of obedience and dignity --obtained and maintained through hard work-- feel lost when they see those values being despised in the new generation. In order to preserve the family intact and to be able to help their adolescents who use illegal substances, Latino immigrant parents seem to be forced to start seeking for a new base for respect. Unconditional love and full understanding through empathy (parenting skills very popular in the host country) are been tried with limited success.

Because the children were not interviewed in this study, on what they base their idea of respect can't be said with certainty, but according to their parents' comments, the youngsters seem to feel respected only when the parents "leave them alone" and don't interfere with their decisions. For many Latinos, love without respect is unthinkable. The void left by the disappearance of good old respect is hard to be filled in and impacts the intergenerational relationships of those who maintain contrasting worldviews.

Conclusion

The shift to a relational perspective of self in which fathers, mothers and the disobedient children could understand and respect each other, is not an easy task, and it can't be accomplished without growing pains (Fishbane, 2001). For transnational immigrants living in a secluded rural area that invites to maintain the invisible loyalty due to ancestors, the conflict created by the crisis of use of substances means that the adolescents become disconnected from the values that hold the family together.

A relational view that shows conflict as a normal part of the development of the filial bond should help these grieving relatives in finding ways to stay connected, getting rid of the win/lose mentality that affects close relationships so negatively. When parents understand that the consumption of drugs and alcohol is not a personal rejection of their authority, but a challenge that can lead to honest dialogue and create empathy, they are able to consider the experience of their children. The relational perspective indicates that their interactions are reciprocal, and the experience of the children changes the parents also (Fishbane, 2001; Tuttle et al., in press).

This study shows that the social constructions influencing the lives of transnational couples living in the isolated rural town of Mecca keep fluctuating around the traditional norms of their native culture. As the influences of the social context impact on them, this process seems to oscillate slowly for the spouses and faster for the children. Husbands and wives continue living the same interactions they have been used to, since the beginning of their relationships. The conflicts with the addicted children create havoc in their lives at onset, and turns into resignation and sadness as time goes by and the children continue using.

It is important to notice that the interactions with the social environment also create relationships of mutual influence. The way the couples react now to the discourses of gender, racism and discrimination, among others, may be a product of the present power differential, but those reactions, over time, will be the source of change for the institutions (Kondrat, 2002).

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INFORMACIÓN SOBRE CONSENTIMIENTO

Estudio sobre Parejas Contemporáneas

Procedimiento

Las parejas modernas enfrentan muchos desafíos en nuestra sociedad que cambia con rapidez. Usted está invitado(a) a participar en un estudio de investigación sobre experiencias de la vida real de parejas. Nuestra meta es reunir una colección de historias para obtener un mejor entendimiento sobre cómo piensan las parejas y cómo están manejando su relación. Esta información nos asistirá en futuros estudios sobre las familias.

Su participación requerirá una entrevista de aproximadamente hora y media. La entrevista se realizará a modo de conversación sobre su matrimonio—qué es importante para usted y cómo usted maneja asuntos cotidianos. El propósito de la entrevista es que podamos aprender a través de sus experiencias. No se evaluará la calidad de su relación ni se ofrecerán consejos o sugerencias. La entrevista será grabada en forma oral. Según le habíamos informado, su pareja también será entrevistada.

Riesgos

Su único riesgo será la posibilidad de que algunos asuntos en nuestra conversación le haga sentir incómodo y no desee tratarlos.

Beneficios

Aunque la participación en este estudio no pueda tener beneficio personal para usted, el potencial para la sociedad es grande; lo que aprendamos de usted ayudará a otras parejas a mejorar sus relaciones y poder resolver sus problemas de una manera más efectiva. Sin embargo, muchos participantes en estudios previos han reportado que el sólo hecho de hablar sobre su relación con una tercera persona fue una experiencia interesante y útil para ellos.

Derechos de los Participantes

Su participación en este estudio es completamente voluntaria. Usted está en libertad de escoger la información que desea revelar. Usted puede declinar contestar una pregunta, detener la grabación o terminar la entrevista en cualquier momento. Detener la entrevista no afectará en ninguna manera cualquier consejería que esté recibiendo o

pueda recibir a través del Departamento de Consejería y Ciencias de la Familia.

Iniciales_____   Fecha_____

Confidencialidad

Toda información personal revelada en esta entrevista se mantendrá en estricta confidencia. Su nombre no aparecerá en las transcripciones de las grabaciones. Después de haber transcrito, los audio-casetes serán destruidos. En nuestro análisis de las entrevistas, usted solamente será reconocido por un número o pseudónimo. Todo dato que le pueda identificar será eliminado al usar citas o ejemplos de casos en la presentación o publicación de los resultados del estudio.

Costo

Usted no incurrirá en ningún costo por participar en este estudio.

Compensación

Cada pareja recibirá una tarjeta de regalo de $25.00.

Contacto de una Tercera Persona Imparcial

Si necesita información o asistencia, puede ponerse en contacto con una tercera persona imparcial, no asociada con este estudio, comunicándose con la Oficina de Relaciones con los Pacientes [*Office of Patient Relations*], Loma Linda Medical Center, Loma Linda, CA 92354. Teléfono: (909) 558-4647.

Información sobre Consentimiento

He leído el contenido de este documento de consentimiento y he escuchado la explicación verbal dada por el investigador. Mis preguntas han sido contestadas satisfactoriamente. Por lo tanto, doy consentimiento voluntario para participar en este estudio. El firmar este documento de consentimiento no retira mis derechos ni libera al investigador, su institución o los promotores de sus responsabilidades. Si necesito información o asistencia adicional, puedo comunicarme con la Dra. Carmen Knudson-Martin al teléfono (909) 558-4547.

Se me ha entregado una copia de este documento de consentimiento.

Firma del Participante_____

Fecha_____

He revisado el contenido de este documento de consentimiento con la persona que

firmó arriba. Le he explicado los posibles riesgos y beneficios del estudio.

Firma del Investigador_____

Fecha_____
        Mes / Día / Año

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Contemporary Couples Study

Each interview should address all of the following general questions, followed by probes to expand and clarify meaning and to pursue topics raised by the respondents. Elicit specific examples. Ask "why?" The order and wording of the questions may be altered to fit the flow of the conversation.

<u>Getting Started</u>
1. Begin with a few moments of "small talk" to engage the respondents and help them feel comfortable. Use clues from their surroundings (if interview is in their home) to connect with them in a personal way or ask about their drive (if they come in for an interview).

2. Review the purpose of the study and the informed consent document, stressing <u>confidentiality</u> and eliciting their questions. Obtain the informed consent of <u>each</u> participant.

3. Tell couples that they are participating in a <u>directed conversation</u>; that you are interested in how they think about their relationships; that you are NOT evaluating them, but learning from them. Remind them that they may decline to answer any question or shut off the tape or conclude the interview at any time. Ask if there are any other questions.

4. Complete personal data sheet.

<u>Brief History of the Relationship</u>

5. Begin by sharing your "story." How did you meet?
- Probes: What attracted you to each other? Why this person?
- Reiterate how long they have been married and ask about major changes over time; i.e., birth of children, moves, job/career changes

- **Additional questions about their migrating experience such as:**
- How is it for you living in the United States?
- What made you move to the U.S.?
- Who decided? Were you two in accord?
- How did the children react?
- How did the family of origin react?
- How did you come (together, separated)?
- Tell about the experience of crossing the border?

- How did you adapt at the beginning?
- How was your experience of working in the fields?

Comience compartiendo su "historia." ¿Cómo se conocieron?
- *Sondeo: ¿Qué les atrajo el uno hacia el otro? ¿Por qué esta persona?*
- *Reiterar sobre el tiempo de casados y preguntar acerca de los cambios más importantes que han tenido a través de los años. Por ejemplo, el nacimiento de los hijos, mudanzas, cambios en el trabajo o carrera profesional.*

- ***Preguntas adicionales sobre su experiencia de migración tales como:***
- *¿Cómo se siente viviendo en los Estados Unidos?*
- *¿Qué le hizo mudarse los Estados Unidos?*
- *¿Quién decidió?¿Estaban los dos de acuerdo?*
- *¿Cómo reaccionaron los niños?*
- *¿Cómo reaccionaron los familiares?*
- *¿Cómo viajaron (juntos, separados)?*
- *Cuéntenme como cruzaron la frontera.*
- *¿Cómo se adaptaron al principio?*
- *¿Cómo fue su experiencia trabajando en el campo?*

Relationship Ideology

6. What to you constitutes a "good" relationship?
   - Probes: What do expect from your partner? How do you view your responsibility to the relationship?
   - In what ways might your relationship ideas be influenced by your gender experience as a man or a woman?
   - How have your expectations changed over time?
   - Probe for definitions and examples

   Additional questions
   - Who has more authority at home and how do you know it?
   - Do you ask permission from your husband to go out?
   - Do you inform your wife when you are going out?
   - How do the children respond to the parents orders?
   - If you want to eat Chinese food and he wants tacos, what do end up eating?
   - If you want to paint the living room white and she wants it beige, what color will the room be? Why?

   En su opinión, ¿qué constituye una "buena" relación?

- *Sondeo: ¿Qué espera de su pareja? ¿Cómo percibe usted su responsabilidad en cuanto a su relación?*
- *¿En qué manera sus ideas sobre la relación son influenciadas por su experiencia como hombre o mujer?*
- *¿Cómo han cambiado sus expectativas con el paso del tiempo? Solicite definiciones y ejemplos.*

Preguntas adicionales
- *¿Quién tiene más autoridad en el hogar? ¿Cómo lo sabe?*
- *¿Pide usted permiso a su esposo para salir?*
- *¿Le informa usted a su esposa cuando va a salir?*
- *¿Cómo responden sus hijos a las órdenes de los padres?*
- *Si usted quiere comer comida china y usted tacos, ¿qué terminan comiendo?*
- *Si usted quiere pintar la sala de blanco y usted de cremita, ¿de que color va a quedar? ¿Por qué?*

7. How would you know if there was a problem in your relationship? What might be signs that it wasn't working the way you wanted it to? (a hypothetical question)

   Si hubiera problemas en su relación, ¿cómo se daría cuenta? ¿Cuáles podrían ser las señales de que no estaba funcionando de la manera que usted quería? (una pregunta hipotética)

8. How do you determine if a relationship was fair to both persons?
- Is equality important to you? Why or why not? In what ways?
- How has your experience regarding fairness changed over time?
- What do you do to preserve fairness in the relationship?
- Which issues are particularly difficult?
- Are there on-going fairness issues that you have not really been able to resolve? How do you deal with them?
- Be sure to get perspectives of both partners.

   Additional questions:
- How does it feel helping your wife washing dishes?
- How does it feel helping your husband in the garden?
- When was the last time you went dancing?
- Who attends the meetings at your children's school?
- If you have a day off and he wants to go watch a soccer game and you want to go shopping, what do you end up going?
- How much of your parenting style are you copying from your parents?

¿Cómo determina usted si la relación es justa para ambas personas?

- *¿Considera usted la igualdad algo importante? ¿Por qué sí o por qué no? ¿De qué maneras?*
- *Con el correr del tiempo, ¿cómo ha cambiado su experiencia con relación a la igualdad?*
- *¿Cómo conserva igualdad en su relación?*
- *¿Qué áreas o asuntos son los más difíciles?*
- *¿Existen algunos asuntos de igualdad que todavía no han podido solucionar? ¿Cómo los enfrentan?*
- *Asegúrese de obtener las perspectivas de ambas personas.*

Preguntas Adicionales:
- *¿Cómo se siente cuando ayuda a su esposa a lavar los platos?*
- *¿Cómo se siente ayudando a su esposo en el jardín?*
- *¿Cuándo fue la última vez que fueron a bailar?*
- *¿Quién se hace presente en las reunions de la escuela de sus hijos?*
- *Si tienen un día libre y usted quiere ir a ver un partido de fútbol y usted quiere ir de compras, ¿dónde terminan yendo?*
- *¿Cúanto está copiando usted de sus padres en cuanto a educar a los niños?*

Relationship Structures and Behaviors

9. How much time do you spend apart and together?
- How do you decide? Who? When? Doing What? Why?
- How well is this balance working for each?
- How has this changed over time?

¿Cuánto tiempo pasan alejados y cuánto juntos?
- *¿Cómo lo deciden? ¿Quién? ¿Cuándo? ¿Haciendo qué? ¿Por qué?*
- *¿Qué tal funciona este balance para cada persona?*
- *¿Cómo ha cambiado esto con el pasar del tiempo?*

10. How do you divide household responsibilities?
- How did you decide? Who? When? Doing What? Why?
- How well is this division working? What interferes? What causes problems?

¿Cómo se dividen las responsabilidades del hogar?
- *¿Cómo lo deciden? ¿Quién? ¿Cuándo? ¿Haciendo qué? ¿Por qué?*
- *¿Qué tan bien está funcionando está distribución de responsabilidades? ¿Qué interfiere? ¿Qué causa problemas?*

11. How you do divide time and responsibilities with your child(ren)?
- How did you decide? Who? When? Doing What? Why?
- How well is this division working? What interferes? What causes problems?
- What do you see as your role as mother? Father?
- How have these changed over time?
- *How has the substance use problem of your child affected you? The relationship?*

¿Cómo dividen el tiempo y las responsabilidades con los hijos?
- *¿Cómo lo deciden? ¿Quién? ¿Cuándo? ¿Haciendo qué? ¿Por qué?*
- *¿Qué tan bien está funcionando está distribución de responsabilidades? ¿Qué interfiere? ¿Qué causa problemas?*
- *¿Cuál cree usted que es su papel como madre o padre?*
- *¿Cómo ha cambiado esto con el correr del tiempo?*
- *¿Cómo le ha afectado el problema de uso de substancias de su hijo/a? A la relación?*

12. How is the emotional work in the relationship divided?
- Who notices the needs of the other? How? When? Why?
- How do they respond top each others needs and issues?

¿Cómo está dividido el esfuerzo emocional de la relación?
- *¿Quién observa las necesidades del otro? ¿Cómo? ¿Cuándo? ¿Por qué?*
- *¿Cómo responden a las necesidades y asuntos de la otra persona?*

13. How do you stay emotionally connected to each other?
- Be sure to probe each partner
- How has your sense of connection changed over time? What factors influence this for you?
- How is physical affection and sexuality part of your relationship together?
- Has your way of expressing sexual closeness changed over time?

¿Cómo permanecen unidos emocionalmente?
- *Asegúrese de preguntar a ambos participantes.*
- *¿Cómo ha cambiado su sentido de unidad con el pasar del tiempo? En lo personal, ¿qué factores han influenciado esto?*
- *¿Cómo forman parte el afecto físico y la sexualidad en su relación?*
- *¿Ha cambiado su forma de expresar intimidad sexual con el pasar del tiempo?*

14. Traditional relationship models gave men power and authority in relationships. How would you say that power plays out in your relationship?

- Probe for hidden power, ie, changes schedules to fit the other? doesn't do something because partner doesn't like it? Limits choices?
- How did you decide about power and authority? Who? When? Doing What? Why?
- What, if anything, have you given up to be in this relationship? What made you willing to do this?

Additional questions:
- How has the problem impacted the way you relate to each other?
- Who has more responsibility for the lack of obedience of the children?
- Do you believe that having done something different in the past would have made things different today? What? How?
- How often do you talk about the problem and decide together about possible interventions?
- What things do you do differently now?
- How do you support each other while confronting this crisis?

Los modelos tradicionales de relaciones de pareja le han otorgado poder y autoridad al hombre. ¿Cómo diría usted que este poder se manifiesta en su relación?
- *Pregunte sobre poder escondido. Por ejemplo: ¿Cambia de horarios para complacer al otro? ¿Evita hacer algo porque a la otra pareja no le agrada? ¿Limita sus elecciones?*
- *¿Cómo decide sobre poder y autoridad? ¿Quién? ¿Cuándo? ¿Haciendo qué? ¿Por qué?*
- *¿Hay algo a lo cual usted haya renunciado o dejado de hacer por esta relación? ¿Por qué lo hizo?*

Preguntas adicionales:
- *¿Cómo ha impactado el problema la forma en que se relacionan el uno con el otro?*
- *¿Quién tiene más responsabilidad por la desobediencia de los hijos?*
- *¿Creen ustedes que si hubieran hecho algo distinto en el pasado las cosas serían diferentes hoy? ¿Qué? ¿Cómo?*
- *¿Cuán a menudo hablan sobre el problema y deciden junto qué hacer?*
- *¿Qué cosas hacen diferente ahora?*
- *¿Cómo se apoyan mutuamente durante la crisis?*

Decision-Making and Conflict Resolution

15. What kinds of decisions have you had to make during your relationship?
- How did you deal with them?
- Examples?

- Which decisions are the hardest? Easiest? Why?
- How have economics influenced your decisions?

¿Qué clases de decisiones ha tomado a lo largo de su relación?
- *¿Cómo las ha manejado?*
- *Pida algunos ejemplos.*
- *¿Cuáles decisiones son las más difíciles? ¿Las más fáciles? ¿Por qué?*
- *¿Cómo han influenciado los problemas económicos en su relación?*

Substance Abuse Concerns

16. Think of a time when there was a conflict between the two of you related to your child's substance use? Did you solve it? How?
Probes: Do you know how to obtain help for your child's problem with use of substances?
How may your use of substances be influencing your child?
Do you have health insurance? Have do you obtain medical care?

Additional questions:
- Tell about the beginning of the problem, how did you found out?
- What has been done to solve it?
- What has been successful?
- What have been the consequences for your child?
- What have been the consequences for the family?
- What do you think is going to happen?
- How has your faith in God helped you during this crisis?

Piense en un momento cuando ambos enfrentaron un conflicto relacionado con el uso de substancias de su hijo/a. ¿Lo resolvieron? ¿Cómo?
Sondeo: ¿Sabe cómo puede obtener ayuda para el problema de uso de substancias de su hijo/a? ¿Cómo puede su propio uso de substancias estar influenciando a su hijo/a? ¿Tiene seguro de salud? ¿Qué hace cuando necesita ver a un médico?

Preguntas adicionales:
- *Cuéntenme del inicio del problema,¿cómo se dieron cuenta?*
- *¿Qué han hecho para tratar de solucionar el problema?*
- *¿Qué ha sido efectivo?*
- *¿Cuáles han sido las consecuencias para su hijo/a?*
- *¿Cuáles han sido las consecuencias para la familia?*
- *¿Qué cree que va a suceder?*
- *¿Cómo le ha ayudado su fe en Dios durante esta crisis?*

Issues of Culture and Social Justice

17. Spirituality

   How do your religious values influence the way you live?

18. Legal Status
- How would your life change if you could obtain legal status in this country?
- Do you believe undocumented workers are treated just like residents and citizens?
- Do you feel you have ever been discriminated?
- Tell me about any incidents with the Border Patrol you might have had.

19. Institutions
- How has been your experience with the Police Department?
- What is your opinion of the California's laws regarding physical punishment?
- How has been your experience with your child's school?
- Do you think schools could do more to help families like yours?

Asuntos de Cultuta y Justicia Social

17. *Espiritualidad*

   ¿ Cómo afectan su vida sus creencias religiosas?

18. *Situación Legal*

   ¿Qué cambios habría en su vida si usted pudiera obtener permiso legal para permanecer en este país?
- *¿Cree usted que los trabajadores indocumentados son tratados igual que los residentes o ciudadanos?*
- *¿Ha sido alguna vez discriminado?*
- *Cuente algún incidente que haya tenido con la Patrulla de la Frontera (Border Patrol).*

19. *Instituciones*
- *¿Cómo ha sido su experiencia con el Departamento de Policía?*
- *¿Cuál es su opinión de las leyes de California sobre castigos corporales?*
- *¿Cuál ha sido su experiencia con las escuelas de sus hijos?*
- *¿Cree usted que las escuelas pueden hacer más para ayudar a familias como la suya?*

Couple #	Married	Years together	Legal Status	Years in U.S.*	# of children	Present age of user	Gender	Years using	Still using?
1	No	6	No	19	5	17	M	3	No (Juvenile Hall)
2	Yes	26	Yes	21	4	15	F	1 day	No
3	Yes	27	Yes	25	4	18	M	6	Yes
4	Yes	21	Yes	29	5	17	F	2	No (Pregnant)
5	Yes	30	Yes	26	5	21	M	3	Not sure
6	Yes	23	Yes	30	2	19	M	1	No
7	Yes	24	Yes	34	5	20	M	4	Yes
8	Yes	25	No	15	3	15	F	1	No (Shelter)
9	Yes	26	Yes	20	4	18	M	1	Yes
10	Yes	34	Yes	47	4	21	M	4	Yes
11	No	6	Yes (Wife)	20	4	17	F	3	No
12	Yes	34	Yes	47	4	19	M	5	No
13	Yes	27	Yes	30	2	23	M	8	Yes
14	Yes	34	Yes	32	6	18	M	?	No
15	Yes	34	Yes	24	7	26	M	11	Yes
16	Yes	40	Yes	39	2	36	M	10	No

- Date of first arrival was used

APPENDIX D

INTERVENTIONS USED BY PARENTS

FATHERS	OUTCOMES
As the crisis began:	
Ordered wives to talk to children to make them stop using	Limited success. All women obeyed husbands but few were successful in making children stop using
Yelled to children	Unsuccessful. It closed communication
As the crisis peaked:	
Monitored children activities	Limited success. Most children became skillful in hiding
Decided whose friendships should stop	Limited success. Most children continued seeing friends.
Asked risky friends not to come to the house	Limited success. Most children went to friends' homes
Some talked to the parents of youngster suspicious of supplying drugs	Limited success. Children found other suppliers
Stopped giving money to children	Limited success. Older children were working; it wasn't mentioned that younger children needed money to buy drugs
Accused child of making mother sick	Limited success. Fights stopped but child continued using
Consulted with law enforcement agents	Limited success. Children were not afraid of police
Sought advice from friends	Limited success. Most of friends' suggestions were either unpractical or unlawful
Asked children to leave home if they didn't stop	Successful for some; limited success for others. Only one child left, temporarily. It stopped fights, even if some adolescents continued using
Tried to talk with children	Unsuccessful. Children resisted fathers' efforts to communicate with them
As the crisis continued	
Started listening more to mothers	Successful in bringing the couple closer together and opening communication
Accepted possibility of children continuing using	Limited success in reducing anxiety

Protected other children	Unknown yet for younger siblings
MOTHERS	**OUTCOMES**
As the crisis began	
Listened to fathers and started asking children to stop using	Unsuccessful. Children continued using.
Became more vigilant with children	Limited success. Most children did not listen to mothers
As the crisis peaked	
Asked fathers to become more involved	Successful in getting fathers involved
Obtained information about substances	Successful. It made mothers more empathic and resourceful
Asked help in schools	Unsuccessful. Lack of funds had reduced the number of counselors and programs
Sought mental health providers	Limited success. There were few resources in the area
Permitted children to break some of fathers' "excessive" rules and kept secrets	Unsuccessful. Children took advantage of mothers' softness
Checked children at night; slept on staircase	Limited success. Children learned quickly how to escape through windows
Became mediators and peacemakers	Successful. It reduced violence between fathers and children
Prayed for children	Unknown results
As the crisis continued	
Decided to become more open with husbands and not to keep secrets for the children	Successful. Reduced conflict within the couple and opened door for acting together
Continued talking with addicted children, emphasizing love and empathy	Successful with some; limited success with others
Protected other children	Not yet known with younger siblings