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Mexican American Mother's Socialization of Prosocial Behavior and Emotion

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Education

by

Remi Alyssa Torres

2022

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Mexican American Mother's Socialization of Kindness and Emotions

by

Remi Alyssa Torres

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2022

Professor Jennie K. Grammer, Chair

Research examining how Mexican American mothers socialize emotions and prosocial behavior has frequently been conducted in lab-based studies in which they are often compared to Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich and Democratic (WEIRD) samples (Rogoff, 2003). Quantitative investigations examining Mexican American mothers' parenting practices have ranked them low on parental sensitivity or high on harsh discipline, without an investigation of the beliefs and goals behind their parenting behaviors (Lugo-Candelas et al., 2015). Yet often these assessments to do not correlate to their children's behavior, in contrast to theories about parental sensitivity and children's social and emotional skills (Pintar-Breen et al., 2018; Eisenberg et al., 1998). Over two decades of research has demonstrated that social and emotional skills are important for children's academic achievement and social well-being (Durlak et al., 2011). Children with stronger social and emotional skills tend to succeed academically, have stronger interpersonal relationships, and fare better in long term health and mental well-being outcomes (Greenberg et al., 2017). Given the relevance of these skills for children's school readiness, there is interest in understanding the factors that lead to differences in SEL skills at school entry. Evidence from past ecocultural work in this area has linked Mexican cultural values such as *familismo* and *respeto* as protective factors to Latinx families (Calzada et al.,

2012; Knight et al., 2016). This dissertation study investigates how Mexican American mothers socialize emotions and prosocial behavior through semi-structured interviews that gather information about mothers' upbringing, beliefs, and values. Five meta themes emerged from the data: Shifting perspectives in parenting practices, teaching children the meaning behind kindness, gendered expectations of kindness and emotion expression, the importance of giving back to the community, and mother's self reflections. Results discuss each meta theme and subtheme, discussing variances in mothers' beliefs and practices by generation status and educational attainment. Implications of this study may inform school-based social and emotional learning programs and parenting programs targeting Latinx families.

The dissertation of Remi Alyssa Torres is approved.

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For Grandma Janey, "Se vale mucho una persona ser bondadosa"

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Children with strong social and emotional skills make long-lasting relationships with peers and adults, succeed academically, and in the long term, show gains in physical and mental health (Greenberg et al., 2017; Durlak et al., 2011). Due to these associations, there has been increased interest in social and emotional learning (SEL) programs in schools across the country. SEL programs aim to help children develop knowledge and skills in three primary competencies: cognitive regulation, emotion regulation, and prosocial skills (Jones et al., 2021). These programs have proven effective in improving children's social and emotional skills, with some interventions showing the greatest gains for the most disadvantaged children (Domitrovich et al, 2017; Durlak et al., 2011).

Parenting practices, including warm responses to children's emotions, discussions about emotion, and parental self-regulation, are associated with children's SEL development (Eisenberg et al., 1996; Hajal & Paley, 2020). In contrast, according to the parental emotional socialization theoretical framework (Eisenberg et al., 1996), parental dismission of their child's emotions, typically labeled as *non-supportive parenting*, is associated with poorer child social and emotional competencies, including aggressive behaviors and challenges in emotion regulation (Johnson et al., 2017).

Latinx children tend to enter school with social and emotional skills on par with their White peers coming from higher-income households (Galindo & Fuller, 2010, Guerrero et al., 2013). However, research on Latinx mothers finds that they tend to be more dismissive of their child's emotions (Lugo Candelas et al., 2015; Pintar-Breen et al., 2018), consistent with behaviors characterized as *non-supportive*. Thus, in contrast to dominant theoretical accounts of emotion socialization, for Latinx children, the development of SEL skills does not appear to be

associated with parenting practices that would be categorized as *non-supportive* (Galindo & Fuller, 2010). This contradiction to the parent emotion-related socialization literature reveals the need for further exploration of how cultural resources impact mothers' socialization of social and emotional skills. Indeed, Latinx caregivers may have cultural strengths and engage in under examined socialization practices that uniquely prepare children for the social and emotional competencies needed for school readiness such as valued parenting practices and frequent social engagement in family settings.

In addition to a need to understand the role of parental socialization in children's development within the Latinx families, understanding how caregivers can best support children's development also has implications for the development of school-based SEL programs. Given that many school-based SEL programs build on the parental emotion socialization framework, a predominant critique of SEL is that its research base, guiding frameworks, and standards have not been developed to reflect the assets and experiences of the cultural backgrounds of their students. Understanding the range of practices that support children's development has the potential to strengthen recommendations for the development of school-based SEL programs, parenting programs serving the Latinx community, and researchers investigating parental emotion-related socialization behaviors.

A critical area of inquiry for understanding family socialization practices comes from ecocultural theory, which posits that children learn cultural norms about social interactions, emotion regulation, and expressions of kindness from their everyday lives, at home, with their family, and in their community (Weisner, 2002). This dissertation study takes an ecocultural approach to explore Mexican American mothers' socialization goals, specifically pertaining to prosocial behavior and emotion, two primary subjects in SEL programs. This research aims to

examine how cultural pathways impact how Mexican mothers socialize prosocial behavior and emotion. To gain greater insight beyond quantitative and lab-based assessments and explore the experiences, beliefs, and values that shape Mexican mothers' goals in teaching their children about prosocial behavior and emotion.

Theoretical Framework

This dissertation is guided by ecocultural theory (Weisner, 2002) and participation theory (Rogoff, 2003). Ecocultural theory asserts that the family context is the most influential factor in child development, which lies within a cultural ecology (Weisner, 2002). Participation theory describes culture as *"the ways of life of generations of people in communities (including their ways of thinking and orienting) that are shared in a community"* (Rogoff, 2018, p.6). In both ecocultural and participation theory, child development is viewed a process intertwined with participation in cultural pathways, such that culture is not an external factor that the child internalizes, in contrast to Vygotsky's theory of internalization (1978). From this point of view, children's participation in cultural values and practices shapes their development, particularly in the family context.

Within the family context are mother-child interactions that are value-based, that reflect cultural goals and ideologies. Mothers have specific socialization goals that they teach their children to embody. Values are formed within cultural communities, which shape beliefs and socialization goals, represented by cultural scripts (i.e., ways of behaving and engaging with others) (Weisner, 2002; Rogoff, 2003). Cultural pathways can consist of going to church, visiting family, caring for siblings, or helping in the house. Weisner (2002) defines these as "stepping stones" that children cross on cultural pathways. By exploring the stepping stones in children's cultural pathways, researchers can better grasp the contextual and cultural beliefs that inform

them. Take, for example, that while evidence may suggest that prosocial behavior is universally valued, when making cross-cultural comparisons, particular aspects of prosocial behavior are valued differently, such that Mexican American mothers value behaviors that may not include a direct benefactor, such as good manners and respect (de Guzman et al., 2012). Ecocultural theory posits that child development is not universal; therefore, developmental researchers must investigate the cultural pathways that parents and children engage in.

Applying Ecocultural and Participation Theory to Explore the Socialization Practices of Mexican American Mothers

Within this theoretical framework, this dissertation study aims to explore Mexican American mothers' socialization values and goals related to emotions and prosocial behaviors through a semi-structured interview that will probe their beliefs, lived experiences, and everyday activities. Parents socialize children's emotions and prosociality in overt and covert ways. For example, Latinx parents have been found to value children's help around the house and more deliberately scaffold helping behaviors than European American mothers (Coppens et al., 2020; Koster et al., 2016). This finding has been attributed to Mexican American parents' expectations of children's involvement in everyday helping (Rogoff, 2014).

Additionally, culture is not static and can change depending on the environment, migration, and living in new cultural environments. Rogoff (2003, p.10) defines cultural processes where *"Humans develop through their changing participation in the sociocultural activities of their communities, which also change*." This change in cultural participation may be reflected due to a multitude of factors, including generation, migration, religious involvement, and language environment (Suizzo et al., 2018; Perez-Rivera & Dunsmore, 2011; Marquez et al., 2022). An essential next step to supporting Mexican American families is to better understand

their lives at home and the continuity and change of cultural values as they relate to children's development of social and emotional skills.

Dissertation Aims

This research aims to explore Mexican American mothers' beliefs, practices, and everyday activities related to the socialization of their 4-to-8-year-old child's emotions and prosocial behavior. Through the use of semi-structured interviews, specific aims were to explore:

1. Mexican mother's experiences and beliefs regarding the socialization of prosocial behavior, how they express prosocial behavior, and how they encourage prosocial behavior
2. Mexican mother's experiences and beliefs regarding the socialization of emotion expression, emotion regulation, and how they respond to their child's emotions
3. Factors that contribute to variation within Mexican mother's beliefs and practices related to emotion and prosocial behavior socialization

Literature Review

Mexican families in the U.S.

Mexicans are the largest population origin group of the U.S. Hispanic/Latinx population. As of 2019, Mexican-origin children also make up the largest Hispanic/Latinx-origin group in the U.S. child population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). Mexican families span generations, 31% of foreign-born Mexicans are U.S. citizens, and nearly half of all Mexican immigrants have lived in the U.S. for over 20 years (Pew Research Center, 2017). As of 2017, 69% of Mexicans are U.S. born, 20% live in poverty, 34% completed at least a two-year degree/some college, and 17% achieved a Bachelor's degree or higher (Pew Research Center, 2017).

Mexican Cultural Values. Mexican families tend to value interdependence, where behaviors that increase family cohesion and unity are encouraged, rather than promoting individuality and autonomy (Halgunseth et al., 2006). Past research on Mexican parental socialization goals emphasizes the following cultural values: *familismo, respeto, bien educado,* and *simpatico*. As outlined below, each of these cultural values has been shown to relate to children's SEL skills but deserve further exploration in the development of prosocial behavior and emotion-related socialization.

Familismo is a term that means to value and promote family unity above and beyond individual needs. The family is considered the primary source of support, and family members are expected to be loyal and committed to family needs above personal desires. Caring for a younger sibling is a type of familism-oriented behavior, where young children may begin by supporting parents with simpler tasks, like helping with feeding, and as they mature, take on more responsibilities (Alcalá et al., 2014). This socialization practice not only instills familism but gives children opportunities to practice the social and emotional skills needed to engage in helping behaviors (Knight et al., 2011; de Guzman et al., 2012).

Respeto translates to respect in English; however, in Mexican families, the notion of *respeto* implies recognition of hierarchy within the family (Calzada et al., 2010). *Respeto* is reflected through obedience to authority, politeness, and proper public behavior. Latinx parents report children's observation of *respeto* as especially important with elders and in public, seeing children's behavior as a reflection of the entire family. Research has consistently shown that Latinx parents value *respeto* as a part of maintaining their culture; however evidence shows that the traditional ways of teaching *respeto* have changed across generations, *"What was good about how our parents raised us, we will pass on to our children. What was bad, we will not pass on"*

(Calzada et al., 2010, p. 83). Additionally, past research has found that when describing prosocial behavior, Mexican mothers frequently cite the importance of *respeto (*de Guzman et al., 2012).

Simpatico connotes a person with the following characteristics: kind, approachable, and personable. *Simpatico* fits into the Latinx cultural values of hospitality, courteousness, and harmony (Holloway et al., 2009). Evidence from a study of Latinx adults, found that Latinx participants who value *simpatico* had higher perceived quality social interactions with another same-sex participant than non-Latinx participants (Holloway et al., 200). Although this study examined adults, this evidence may demonstrate how Latinx cultural values may predispose children to have rewarding social skills.

These values of *familismo, simpatico,* and *respecto* may be a few of the many culture-related mechanisms that influence children's SEL development. When parents emphasize and engage in *familismo* and *simpatico* for instance, they set up a context for children to participate and learn about what it means to be respectful, how to care for others, and how to cooperate with family. These cultural practices in turn, may predispose children to enter school with stronger SEL skills.

Cultural Continuity and Change

While cultural practices may have been consistently found in Mexican American families, various factors can impact the continuity and change of certain cultural practices. Intergenerational change, sociopolitical movements, social class and maternal educational attainment are just a few factors that can impact the maintenance or change of cultural practices (Rogoff, 2003).

The presence of grandparents living in the household can also affect the maintenance of cultural values as well. Studies show that the presence of grandparents in the household helps maintain cultural values, however when a second generation mother wants to practice a parenting style different from that of their parent this may result in conflicts (Rangel & Shoji, 2020). Children of immigrant parents must also navigate two cultural contexts. They are taught to value their culture but to also know how to confidently engage in a new cultural environment. This often means taking on the role of linguistic and cultural brokering between their parents and the dominant culture which can lead to undue pressure on the child and cultural conflicts within the family (García Coll et al., 1996).

Social class and educational environments can also impact mothers' cultural practices. Increased interest and attention to the development of children has impacted how parents raise their children, not just in Mexican American communities but across the U.S. For example, the popularity of parenting books has risen rapidly since the 1980's and the emergence and study of parenting styles is taught in many child development classes. Colleges and universities not only educate but they are contexts that provide resources and interaction with cultural communities that often do not match your home culture (Rangel & Shoji, 2020). Given these reasons, maternal educational attainment is often examined as a factor that impacts mother's parenting practices and modification of cultural practices.

Social media and the internet have also introduced a new way of learning and understanding your community. This can be seen in the popularity of social media and the emergence of parenting influencers and parenting groups where advice and resources for raising young children are shared (Nieuwboer et al., 2013). Some parenting groups are targeted to cultural groups or parenting styles, such as groups like "Latinx Parenting" or "Conscious

Parenting." These new digital spaces offer increased access to resources and knowledge, that otherwise might only be offered in a classroom setting. This availability of free parenting resources provides greater access to mothers who do not have access to higher education spaces and resources. Mother's participation in digital parenting spaces may also impact how they socialize SEL skills with their children and how they continue or modify cultural practices.

The Development of SEL Skills

SEL is an umbrella term that encompasses several different competencies, given the scope of this dissertation, I will focus my literature review on two primary SEL skills, prosocial behavior, and emotion regulation. In each section I will discuss the development of these skills as well as the literature on the parental socialization of these skills.

Prosocial Behavior

Development of Prosocial Behavior. Children begin to show prosocial behaviors as early as infancy, engaging in simple helping behaviors such as helping tidy a room and noticing and responding to others' distress (Zahn-Waxler et al., 1992; Hoffman, 2007). Prosocial behavior is broadly defined as any type of voluntary behavior enacted to help another which includes helping, sharing, cooperating, and comforting (Eisenberg, 1986). The development of prosocial behavior occurs at the nexus of cognitive, physical, and socioemotional development and increases in complexity as children mature (Eisenberg et al., 2007; Dunfield, 2014; Flook et al., 2019). For example, in a study on sharing decisions, younger children tended to share equally across all recipients. In comparison, older children made sharing decisions based on the merit and characteristics of the recipients (Flook et al., 2019). Children's prosocial behaviors positively predict academic achievement, socioemotional skills and later positive outcomes (Garner et al., 2014; Izard et al., 2004; Greenberg et al., 2017; Durlak et al., 2011).

Sociocultural Context and Prosocial Behavior. Sociocultural context can be defined in various ways, but here the term is used to refer to the knowledge and practices of doing within a particular community that can be dynamic and varies by generation and historical changes (Jahoda, 2012). Evidence shows that children develop prosocial behaviors through culturally specific pathways shaped by participation in and observation of everyday interactions with primary caregivers (e.g., helping with household tasks, sharing toys during play, and comforting during difficult emotions) (Callaghan & Corbit, 2018; Hepach & Herman, 2019; Rogoff et al., 2003; Blake et al., 2016). The degree to which cultural communities involve children in helping tasks and encourage children's prosocial behaviors has been shown to be related to developmental differences in the emergence of both helping behaviors and in the frequencies of prosocial responses (Giner Torrens & Kartner, 2017; Corbit, Callaghan, & Svetlova, 2020). For instance, evidence consistently demonstrates that children living in traditional and interdependent communities tend to show more prosocial behaviors than children living in urban, individualistic contexts (Rochat et al., 2009; Scharpf, Paulus, & Worle, 2017; Callaghan & Corbit, 2018).

As children develop more advanced SEL skills (i.e., perspective-taking and emotion understanding), they show preferences for prosocial behaviors that are aligned with their cultural values and goals (Kartner et al., 2010). This process contributes to prosocial developmental pathways that are differentially defined by cultural practices. Prosocial behaviors are fundamentally social and occur within cultural contexts, supporting the need for further examination of culturally specific developmental pathways (Rogoff, 2003). Although children's prosocial skills are shaped by experiences with their caregivers, there is little research that

examines how parents socialize children's prosocial behaviors, and even less has focused on Mexican American families.

Prosocial Behaviors in Mexican American children. Most research that examines Mexican families' socialization of prosocial behavior focuses on toddlers and adolescents (e.g., Knight et al., 2016; Davis et al., 2018; Coppens et al., 2020), however, very few investigations have focused on socialization during middle childhood. In the 1970s Knight and colleagues observed the prosocial behaviors of Mexican American and European American children during resource-allocation games (e.g., sharing with an anonymous partner) and found that Mexican American children were more likely to share equally in the game compared to their counterparts. Within-group differences in Mexican American children were also found, where higher-generation status children tended to share less, indicating that generational change may have impacted children's inclinations to share, such that children who had recently immigrated were more likely to share than their peers who were born in the U.S. (Knight & Kagan, 1977). In a later study, these results were replicated, however Knight and colleagues also measured ethnic identity, and found that generation status and stronger ethnic identity was positively related to prosocial behavior (Knight et al., 1993). These results demonstrate that prosocial behaviors- in particular, sharing, are strongly promoted in Mexican cultural practices. Additionally, in a cross-ethnic study of beliefs about prosocial behaviors with first generation Mexican American mothers and White European American mothers, researchers found that *respeto,* and education goals were most frequently discussed by Mexican American mothers. They also found that both Mexican and European American mothers emphasized discussions about the religion and the needs of others (i.e., poverty and homelessness) (de Guzman et al., 2012).

When examining child social competence and mother-child interactions during a parent-child task, Guerrero et al. (2013) found that Mexican American children entered school with similar social skills as White, higher income peers, and their mothers were observed to be less strict and harsh than White parents. Mexican American mothers also offered significantly less praise and "cognitive facilitation" (encouraging the child to discuss their thinking) during a parent-child task. Interestingly, despite the presence of differences in parent and child interactions between Mexican American mothers and White mothers, both Mexican American and White children entered school with similar levels of social competencies. This finding contradicts theories of specific types of parental behaviors as promoting children's prosociality and demonstrates that they are additional factors at play in the relationship between parent-child interactions and child social outcomes (Fabes et al., 1989).

Research has also examined how gendered beliefs of prosocial behavior may be present in Latinx families. Latinx parent's reports of children's prosocial behaviors have shown that daughters were rated as significantly more prosocial than sons (Weimer et al., 2020), demonstrating that Latinx families pay socialize girls and boys differently regarding expectations for prosocial behaviors. This evidence shows that Mexican cultural values and practices impact how children learn about prosocial behaviors. This also demonstrates that parenting behaviors are complex, context dependent and may not always fit neatly into categories of parenting behaviors (Rogoff, 2003).

Emotion Development

Emotion Understanding. Emotion understanding refers to children's abilities to recognize emotions from facial and bodily expressions, recognize the physiological sensations of different emotions, and to have emotion vocabulary, such as labeling their emotions or the

emotions of others (Eisenberg, 2010). Children’s emotion understanding advances as they age, such that older children are more skilled in noticing and labeling emotions while younger children (two-year-old's) can label happiness, sadness, anger, and fear (Denham, 1986, Denham, 2003; Widen, 2013; Pons et al., 2004).

Starting around age four, children begin to understand that others can have different emotional states and desires in various contexts, also known as Theory of Mind (Wellman et al., 2001; Eggum et al., 2011). For instance, that two children can have different reactions to a clown at a birthday party, one child may be excited and happy, while another could feel scared. At around age four and older children also begin to understand that the beliefs of another person, false or true, will determine how they respond to a situation. This is most famously depicted in the classic False Beliefs Task created by Wimmer and Perner (1983), where a child is shown two puppets standing next to a box of crayons, and while Puppet A leaves the scene, Puppet B replaces the crayons with chalk, and hides the crayons. Then Puppet A returns, and the researcher asks the child, “Where will Puppet A look for the crayons?” If the child responds that Puppet A will look for crayons in the box, then the child has demonstrated that they can distinguish between theirs and Puppet A’s perspective. Theory of Mind abilities in children have been linked to children’s social competence, such that they are able to better understand peer’s emotions and thoughts and effectively modify their social interactions (Eggum et al., 2011). However, cross-cultural examinations of the False Beliefs Task have found contradictions to the notion that Theory of Mind is universally developed at age four, see (Vinden, 1999; Nawaz et al., 2015; Molina et al., 2014), demonstrating the need to examine the cultural context that which children live in and examine development beyond lab-based measures (Rogoff, 2003).

As children advance in age and enter school at around five years old, they begin the understand that emotions can be mixed, and that you can experience multiple emotions at the same time (Pons et al., 2004). Furthermore, children begin to show understanding of social rules in emotional display in different contexts. For instance, they are able to show happiness and pleasure when receiving a disappointing gift (Tobin & Graziano, 2011).

Emotion Regulation. From age six and beyond, children increasingly gain stronger emotion regulation skills (Reilly & Downer, 2019). Emotion regulation is the ability to employ various strategies to modulate emotions from external or internal sources (McClelland et al., 2015). As children grow older, their emotion regulation abilities become more advanced and less reliant on caregivers. For instance, a younger child might seek or need an adult's help to regulate a difficult emotion, while an older child might employ cognitive regulation strategies, like singing a song or shifting their gaze while waiting in line. Researchers have categorized emotion regulation strategies as “adaptive” and “maladaptive” strategies referring to the ability to experience and express emotions in a way that meets an individual’s goals and contextual demands (e.g., safety, positive social interactions) and maladaptive strategies refer to strategies that do not reach these goals. Despite these categorizations, some researchers describe all emotion regulation strategies as adaptive (Bridges et al., 2004).

Parent Emotion-related socialization Behaviors. Parental emotion-related socialization plays a crucial role in children’s emotional development (Eisenberg, 1998; Thompson et al., 2020), yet it has rarely been examined in Latinx samples. Parent emotion-related socialization behaviors (ERSBs) include how parents express emotions, react to their children’s emotions, and support emotion regulation. ESRBs have been shown to be strongly related to children’s emotion

understanding and prosocial behaviors (Denham, 2003; Brownell et al., 2013; Ornaghi et al., 2015; Thompson et al., 2020).

Children's emotion understanding is a critical underlying skill needed to act prosocially. For example, emotion understanding helps one first notice and understand that a person in need is feeling sad and needs help (Denham et al., 2003). Parent's socialization goals and their beliefs about emotions and prosocial behavior shape how they teach their children about emotions and prosocial behaviors (Dunbar et al., 2017). Parents that respond warmly to children's emotions, use emotion labels, and help children regulate their feelings promote children's abilities to self-regulate and recognize others' emotions and needs (Hajal & Paley, 2020; Eisenberg et al., 1998; Fabes et al., 2001).

Research on parent's ERSBs and children's emotion understanding and prosocial behavior has largely focused on the contrast between *supportive* and *non-supportive* parental reactions to children's negative emotions (Eisenberg et al., 1998; Morris et al., 2017). Supportive parental reactions include acknowledgment, comforting, and teaching constructive ways to cope with emotions. In contrast, non-supportive parental responses include punitive reactions, minimizing, and showing parental distress. Supportive parental responses are linked to greater child social and emotional competence, including emotion regulation and prosocial behavior (Eisenberg et al., 1998). Alternatively, non-supportive parental responses to children's emotions are linked to greater challenges in child emotion regulation, poorer social competence, and higher rates of psychopathology throughout adolescence and adulthood (Eisenberg et al., 2010; Morris et al., 2007; Katz et al., 2012).

One major limitation of this research, however, is that most parental emotion-related socialization research has been conducted with primarily White, middle-class, educated, mothers

and their children. As discussed previously, culture and family context drive socialization goals related emotions and prosocial behavior. Despite the increasing interest in the role of culture and parents' socialization of emotion and prosocial behavior, very little research has examined Mexican American families ERSBs. In the following section, I will review the existing literature on Mexican American parents' socialization of emotion.

Mexican American Parents' Socialization of Emotion. After Eisenberg's heuristic of parents' emotion-related socialization behaviors was published in 1998, there was greater interest in exploring non-White/European American samples. Eisenberg (1998) described parents' emotion-related socialization practices as reflective of their larger cultural values and the desired behaviors within unique ecological contexts (Eisenberg, 1998). For example, in some cultural contexts, parents may believe that negative emotions (i.e., anger and sadness) should be concealed and ignored, while other parents may encourage their child's open expression of emotions (Cole & Tan, 2007). While it is clear that culture informs parental practices, to date, relatively little of this research has examined the emotion-related socialization behaviors of Mexican American parents.

Work that has been conducted with Mexican American parents and children has revealed differences in emotion-related socialization behaviors, such that Mexican American parents are more likely to minimize children's negative emotions than European American parents. However Mexican American parents ignoring reactions were not associated with increased child externalizing problems as they were for European American parents (Lugo-Candelas et al., 2015). Pintar-Breen et al., (2018) replicated these results by examining whether the dimensions of supportive and non-supportive emotion-related socialization behaviors were relevant to Mexican and Dominican immigrant mothers and found that while "supportive"

responses to children's emotions were related to emotion understanding, "non-supportive" responses were not negatively associated with emotion understanding.

These studies contrast past research on Mexican American parents' beliefs and emotion-related talk practices. Perez-Rivera & Dunsmore (2011) found that more enculturated (second generation Mexican American parents) were more likely to guide children's emotions, although this was negatively related to children's emotion understanding. Cervantes (2002) interviewed Mexican immigrant and Mexican American mothers and found that overall, both groups engaged in rich conversations about emotions; however they found that second generation Mexican American parents used more emotion labels than first generation mothers. These results demonstrate that the paradigm of supportive versus non-supportive parental ERSBs in children's social and emotional outcomes may not always replicate in Mexican American families. These factors also point to the need for more research on Mexican American parents' beliefs about their socialization practices and the variability of parenting practices within ethnic groups.

Current Study

This dissertation explored how Mexican American mothers of children between ages four and eight years old socialize emotions and prosocial behaviors in a semi-structured interview. Using a semi-structured interview approach, my goal was to expand upon the past literature to learn more about Mexican American mothers' experiences and understand how beliefs and practices relate to their socialization of emotion and prosocial behavior.

Chapter 2: Study Methodology

Context. Participants were recruited as a part of a larger, mixed-methods investigation of Mexican American mothers' socialization of kindness and emotions funded by the UCLA Bedari Kindness Institute. In the larger investigation, mothers were invited to complete a demographic survey, and questionnaires about emotion-related socialization and acculturation/enculturation. After completing the surveys and questionnaires, mothers and their child were asked to complete two brief parent and child tasks, and the mother completed the interview. All procedures were completed virtually. The current study includes the mother's interview data from a smaller sample of 31 mothers.

Recruitment. Recruitment for the study began during the Covid-19 pandemic and was primarily conducted through social media (i.e., Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp), email listserves, or word of mouth. Spanish and English versions of IRB approved virtual flyers included a description of the study procedures and payment of a $70 Amazon e-gift card and children's book. Inclusion criteria for study participation consisted of the following: 1) mothers identify as having Mexican heritage, 2) are the parent/guardian of a child between four and eight years old, 3) are 18 years and older, 4) live in the state of California, 5) have internet access and, 6) have a laptop that can access video calls. Interest in the study was high, with over 120 mothers filling out a Google form linked to the recruitment flyer. One source of recruitment garnered exceptionally high interest, a Facebook group and Instagram account called "Latinx Parenting" with the following mission statement: *"A bilingual organization rooted in children's rights, social and racial justice and antiracism, the individual and collective practice of nonviolence and reparenting, intergenerational and ancestral healing, cultural sustenance, and the active decolonization of oppressive practices in our families"* (Latinx Parenting, 2022). In total, 50

mother-child dyads completed participation in the larger investigation. A total of 31 mothers were purposefully sampled for this dissertation study.

Participants. Written consent and oral assent for children seven years and older were obtained before study procedures began. Mothers were given the option to provide verbal consent if they wanted increased privacy protections. For the analyses presented here, 31 mothers were purposefully selected from the larger sample. The larger sample of 50 mothers had a large proportion of second generation, highly educated, and high socioeconomic status mothers. Mothers who were sampled to be in this dissertation study were targeted with the aim of having a diverse representation of household income, maternal educational attainment, languages spoken, generation status, and age of their child. With this approach, the subsample represented in this dissertation had a balanced representation of these demographic variables.

Within the subsample of 31 mothers, 14 mothers identified as first generation (born outside of the U.S.), 14 mothers as second generation (born in the U.S. with at least one parent born outside of the U.S.), and three mothers as third generation or higher (born in the U.S. with both parents born in the U.S.). Reported household income ranged widely across participants, from less than $5,000 a year to $150,000 or more. Half of the sample reported a household income of $75,000 and higher; Table 1 shows income descriptions. Mothers' ages ranged from 25 to 46 years old, and child age is distributed across four to eight years old with some overrepresentation of five and six-year-olds with fewer four and seven-year-olds. Children's gender representation is almost even higher in boys, with 16 boys and 15 girls—all mothers in the subsample identified as women. Most mothers in the current study reported being married or living with a long-term partner, with three participants having never married and two divorced or separated. Reported household compositions were predominantly two parent nuclear households;

eight participants reported that another adult lived and cared for children in the home (e.g., grandparents and aunts and uncles), and two mothers reported being single parents. Maternal educational attainment in this sample also ranged widely.

Mothers reported years of educational attainment from one to 20+ years, where elementary/middle school= one-8 years, high school= 9-12 years, community college= 13-14 years, college/university= 13-16 years, and graduate school= 17-20+ years. Mothers in this study reported years of educational attainment ranging from 12 to 22 years, with a third of the sample reporting 12 to 15 years of educational attainment, eight mothers having attained a Bachelor's degree or higher, and thirteen mothers having attained a Master's degree or Doctorate (see Table 1 for information regarding maternal education attainment). When examining educational attainment by generational status, second generation mothers had attained more doctorate degrees, however, most first generation mothers attained a Bachelor's degree or higher. Overall, the subsample represents a balanced distribution of generation status, primary language (Spanish or English), a diverse representation of reported household income, and maternal educational attainment. In the current study sample, 11 mothers were interviewed in Spanish and 20 were interviewed in English, although Spanish words and phrases were frequently used intermittently in the English interviews.

Procedures

Demographic Survey. Mothers completed an online demographics survey as part of the larger investigation and for the current study. The survey included items that asked mothers to describe maternal and paternal racial/ethnic identity, report maternal and paternal educational attainment, annual household income, family immigration history, family composition, and language use at home and with their child. For the purposes of this dissertation, the following

demographic variables were examined: mother's age in years, child's date of birth, child's gender, maternal education attainment, annual household income, household composition, marital status, generation status, and primary language spoken at home.

Remote Tasks. After mothers completed the demographic survey and questionnaires as part of the larger investigation, I invited them to schedule a virtual meeting to complete the parent and child tasks and parent interview. The parent and child tasks that are a part of the larger investigation include an 8-minute drawing task of an online version of the Etch-a-Sketch, the ESO task (Oliver, 2020), and a 10-minute prosocial story task where mothers and children read stories about prosocial scenarios. After completing these tasks, the child was thanked for their participation, and the mother was invited to find a private space where they would be comfortable to conduct the parent interview. If mothers could not complete the parent-child tasks and the parent interview in one session, we scheduled a second meeting with them. Only two participating mothers chose this option.

Interview Protocol

Pilot Phase. The interview protocol was developed and refined through piloting that was conducted prior to the start of the investigation. The interview protocol was piloted with six Mexican, Spanish speaking mothers and one Kindergarten teacher in a predominantly Latinx community. The goal of piloting was to ensure that our interview questions gathered the information to meet the aims of this study and to ensure linguistic translation was culturally accurate. Furthermore, I wanted to see if mothers and the teacher thought we asked appropriate questions or had suggestions for new questions. One challenge that we confronted during the pilot phase was the lack of familiarity with the term "prosocial behavior."

Piloting revealed that the term ‘prosocial behavior’ is not commonly used in conversation in both English and Spanish speaking families, therefore we used the word kindness and prosocial behavior interchangeably. We provided the definition of prosocial behavior *“as any behavior that benefits another person, which can include helping, sharing, and many other actions. Not everyone defines prosocial behavior and kindness the same way. I am interested in your beliefs and practices related to these things.”* While some may argue that the definitions of prosocial behavior and kindness are distinct, they have substantial overlap. The definition of kindness is described as when *“individuals are kind with the purpose to provide support to one another without the expectation of a reward and at a certain cost”* (Youngs, Yaneva, & Canter, 2021) and the definition of prosocial behavior is, *“any act intended to benefit other”* (Eisenberg, 1986). During the pilot phase, special attention was focused on the linguistic translation of kindness from English to Spanish as there are many words to describe kindness in the Spanish language. After much time discussing and piloting with Spanish speaking mothers and one teacher, we decided to use the Spanish word, *“bondad”* which is often used to describe others who are kind, caring, good-natured, and gracious. The word “*bondad*” is often used in a sentence to describe someone, for example, “*Su maestra es tan bondadosa con sus estudiantes*” (translation, “*Her teacher is so kind to her students*”).

Final Interview Protocol

Format. Interviews were scheduled for one 2-hour session that included the parent and child tasks. All interviews were conducted by myself or one of two bilingual graduate research assistants over Zoom, in the mother’s preferred language, and on average, lasted between 1 and 2 hours. After completing the parent and child tasks, mothers were asked to find a private and comfortable space to be interviewed. Most mothers completed the interview privately, while a

few mothers completed the interview with their children present or near other family members because they needed to be with their child or felt comfortable speaking in front of others. We let mothers know that we would not keep the video recordings of the interview, so if they wanted to turn off their camera they could do so. The interview began with reminding mothers that some of the questions in the interview may bring up difficult emotions or memories and that they can skip any questions or answer them in a different way. We also reminded mothers that they may stop the interview at any point without repercussion, and that the interviews would be transcribed, with all identifying information removed. All mothers in the current study completed the full interview.

The interview began with asking the mother to self-describe her racial or ethnic identity, tell us a little bit about her child, to describe their daily routines during the week and weekends, and describe what family traditions and celebrations look like. Then the interview continued in the following format: 1) interview questions related to Mexican mothers' beliefs and practices regarding prosocial behavior, 2) interview questions related to Mexican mothers' emotion-related socialization practices, with specific questions about happiness, sadness, and anger, and 3) concluding questions about strengths and challenges in parenting and future directions for SEL programs serving Mexican families.

Prosocial Behavior Questions. To explore how Mexican mothers socialize prosocial behavior, we first provided a standard definition of prosocial behavior *("Any act intended to benefit another"*, Eisenberg, 1986) and offered to use a familiar word, kindness. Mothers were asked to define prosocial behavior/kindness, describe how they learned about prosocial behavior/kindness when they were a child, and describe how they teach their child about kindness. Questions were phrased to elicit stories and mothers were encouraged to share real life

examples. Sample questions included, *"When you think of kindness and/or prosocial behavior, what do you think of? What does it look like?"* (See Appendix A for full interview protocol).

Emotion-related socialization Questions. After completing the prosocial behavior interview questions, mothers were reminded again, prior to emotion-related socialization questions that some of the questions may bring up difficult feelings or memories and that they may skip questions or discontinue the interview at any point. The emotion-related socialization questions were divided into three sections that mapped onto three primary emotions: 1) happiness, 2) sadness, 3) anger (e.g., *"What was it like when you were a child and you or someone in your family was feeling happy?"*), questions asking how the mothers expresses the emotion and what they do to cope with their feelings (e.g., *"When you are feeling sad, what are some of the ways that you cope with your sadness?")* and finally, how they respond to their child when they experience that emotion and what they want their child to know about the particular emotion (e.g., *"Can you share a story of a time when (child's name) was angry? What did they say and/or do? How did you respond?").*

Closing Questions. To conclude the interview, mothers were asked to describe what they perceive to be their greatest challenges in parenting and what they perceive to be their greatest strengths (e.g., *"Are there any stressors, challenges, or obstacles that get in the way of responding to your child's emotions the way you would like to?"*). To understand generational differences between mothers and their parents, we also asked them to describe how their parenting practices are similar and different to their parents' (e.g., *"Throughout the interview, I have asked you to reflect on your own childhood and on your parenting style. After answering these questions, as a parent, how do you raise your child differently and similarly to your parents?"* Finally, we asked mothers what kind of supports SEL learning programs should

provide to Mexican American families (*e.g., "If someone were to offer an SEL program targeted to a predominantly Mexican American/Latinx community, what would be important for them to be aware of? What are some considerations they would need to make?"*)

After the interview was completed, the mother was thanked for her time, compensation was sent, audio files were saved to a secure server, and the interview was transcribed by a research assistant. All Spanish language interviews were transcribed by a native Spanish speaker and all English language interviews that included Spanish language were reviewed by a Spanish speaker for accurate transcription. A subset of interviews was transcribed by Sonix, an artificially intelligent transcription service available for Spanish and English audio. All Sonix transcripts were checked and cleaned while listening to the audio by native English and Spanish speakers.

Analysis Plan

Demographic survey data was entered into an Excel spreadsheet and double checked by a research assistant. Thematic analysis was utilized to examine the interview data to answer my research questions. Thematic analysis is a useful method for exploring interview data for common themes, finding differences in perspectives, and discovering unanticipated insights (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis occurred in five phases informed by Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach as well as Nowell and colleagues' (2017) approach for a trustworthy thematic analysis. Nowell and colleagues' (2017) builds upon Lincoln and Guba's (1985) trustworthiness criteria and Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis model by outlining a step-by-step approach to conducting a thematic analysis. A trustworthy thematic analysis includes steps such as extended engagement with the data, researcher triangulation, note

taking, record keeping, reflecting on researcher perspectives and biases, and describing the coding and analysis process in detail (Nowell et al., 2017).

Data were coded by a team of three coders including myself. The two primary researchers that supported me in this dissertation study were graduate students. One of these researchers is Mexican American, and a native Spanish and English speaker, the second researcher is from Colombia and she is a native Spanish speaker and an advanced English speaker. I am Mexican and Guatemalan American and I am a native English speaker and speak Spanish at a conversational level. Researchers conducted interviews in the mother's preferred language, such that all mothers were interviewed by a researcher with native proficiency in their preferred language.

Thematic Analysis

Phase 1. In the first phase of analysis, researchers conducted interviews and became familiar with the data by taking notes during interviews, listening to audio recordings of interviews we did not conduct, reviewing our notes, and meeting biweekly to discuss our initial thoughts. All interviews were transcribed by a research assistant in the same language spoken in the interviews. Spanish interviews were transcribed by native Spanish speaking research assistants and English interviews were transcribed by English speaking research assistants. In the event that an English interview included Spanish, a bilingual research assistant reviewed the transcript. Transcripts were checked for accuracy prior to Phase 2. Research assistants who transcribed also shared their notes about the interviews. Combining all our notes, during our biweekly meeting we compared notes, shared our honest thoughts, reflected on our perspectives, and documented our thought process in preparation for Phase 2.

Phase 2. In the second phase, after familiarizing ourselves with the data, we utilized an inductive and deductive approach to writing up the preliminary codebook. Deductive codes were determined from the literature on Mexican American families, emotion socialization and prosocial behavior. Deductive codes related to Mexican American families included the following: *familismo* (discussion about the value of family), *respeto* (discussion about the importance of respect), *affection* (describing affectionate behaviors toward child), *manners* (when manners and decorum are emphasized as prosocial behaviors) and *helping* (describing the importance of helping others). Deductive codes for emotion socialization and prosocial behavior included: *empathy and perspective taking* (describing the need to understand other's emotions and perspectives), *emotion talk* (discussions that include emotion vocabulary), *teaching child emotion-regulation strategies* (when mother describes teaching her child strategies to regulate emotions), and *challenges to responding to child's emotions* (when the mother describes a challenge when responding to their child's emotions).

To develop inductive codes, we collated our notes and observations and decided on the following codes: *accepting emotions* (coded when the mother emphasizes that all emotions are valid), *hiding emotions* (coded when the mother describes needing to hide emotions from others as a child and as an adult), *Machismo, Marianismo and gendered aspects of emotion expression* (coded when the mother described gendered expectations in prosocial behavior and/or emotion expression), *role models as teachers* (when mothers described the importance of role models to their child's prosocial behavior and emotion regulation), *boundaries/ caution with kindness* (applied when the mother describes needed to teach their child to be careful about being kind to others), *connection to religion* (coded in any instance the mother described how religion influences her perspective on prosocial behavior and emotions), *generosity/charity* (when the

mother described acts of generosity and charity), *shared challenges* (when the mother describes a shared challenge or difficult experience within the Latinx community) *apologizing* (when the mother described apologizing to her child), and finally, *mental health* (when the mother discussed the importance of mental health resources).

With our deductive and inductive codes, we began consensus coding three interviews at a time and met to discuss coding reliability and disagreement. We utilized Dedoose, a mixed-methods platform that has useful tools for coding qualitative data. When encountering disagreements or confusions about codes we would discuss our interpretations and come to consensus on how to move forward. This would require greater clarification of the code's boundaries and determining how particular are codes are distinct, noting when it would make sense to have passages coded for multiple codes. We continued to code random samples of three interviews, meeting to discuss our questions or thoughts and determine if we needed to add additional codes or combine codes together. After we consensus coded 30% percent of the data (about 11 interviews) we determined saturation of codes after no longer observing new codes emerging from the data. Next, we finalized the codebook and completed coding of all interviews, continuing to check in biweekly. While we coded the interviews, we met weekly to discuss passages that we had questions about, refining particular codes, or adding new codes. When we added new codes we returned to all of the transcripts to be re-coded.

Phase 3 and 4. After coding all the interviews, we each reviewed the code counts and co-co-occurrences and discussed potential themes. We identified preliminary themes and discussed the scope and content of each theme. We decided to combine particular codes that co-occurred or separate codes when we found variances in mother's perspectives in a particular code. For example, we condensed two codes, *hiding emotions* and *controlling emotions,* as they frequently

co-occurred in excerpts. We also expanded particular codes to highlight observed variances, such as *respeto* (refers to discuss about the value of respect) to *respeto/childism* (refers to discussion about childism and respect) Themes were also drawn from co-occuring codes across passages. The codes *connection to religion, generosity/charity,* and *shared experiences and challenges* were organized into a theme, *The Importance of Giving Back to the Community.*

Phase 5. After finalizing and reviewing themes, each theme was given a descriptive title. I utilized Dedoose to examine variances within themes by years of maternal educational attainment, household income, and generation status. I calculated the proportion of participants in each group that discussed a sub theme to determine variances. Please see Table 2 for a description of meta and sub themes in the interviews and Table 3variances by generation and maternal educational attainment (no patterns of themes varying by household income were observed).

Chapter 3: Overview of Themes

Five themes emerged in analyses of the data: *Shifting Perspectives in Parenting Practices, Teaching Children the Meaning Behind about Kindness, Gendered Expectations of Kindness and Emotion Expression, The Importance of Giving Back to the Community,* and *Mother's Self Reflections*. Within these themes are subthemes that will be discussed in each chapter (see Table 2 for a description of themes and subthemes).

Shifting Perspectives in Parenting Practices, discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5, was a predominant theme across all aspects of the interview. Mothers were asked to describe how they learned about kindness and emotions in their families when they were children and how their approaches to parenting are similar and different from those of their parents. Mothers highlighted similarities with their parents but more frequently discussed how their perspective on parenting has differed in notable ways from that of their parents. Subthemes within this meta theme include: *Modifying how respeto is taught to children, Hiding emotions to validating emotions*, and *Teaching children emotion regulation strategies*. These subthemes highlight how Mexican American mothers determined what is important in their parent practices and how they want their children to learn about kindness and emotion.

Discussed further in Chapter 6, *Teaching Children the Meaning Behind Kindness* is a meta theme that captured Mexican American mother's goals when teaching children about kindness. This required a reflection on how they learned about kindness as a child and what they want to continue to instill in their children. Sub themes include: *Discussing Empathy and Perspective Taking, Manners are Kind* and *Having Boundaries and Caution with Kindness*. These subthemes reflect how important it was for mothers to teach their children the *why* behind kind behaviors. However, some mothers also emphasized that children must learn to be kind to

themselves as well, which includes having boundaries and teaching children when it's okay to not be kind to someone.

The next meta theme, *Gendered Expectations of Kindness and Emotion Expression* included discussions of how gender stereotypes and cultural scripts, *machismo* and *marianismo* impacted how mothers were raised to learn about kindness and emotion expression and how they want to avoid having their children learn about these gendered expectations. Mothers describe the challenges of avoiding stereotypical presentations of gender in emotion expression and kindness in the context of family settings.

The fourth theme, *The Importance of Giving Back to the Community* was a prominent theme that mothers discussed observing and experiencing when they were children and a practice they are actively maintaining with their children. Sub themes include: *Connection to religion, Helping others* and *Shared experiences and challenges*. Mother's most frequently discussed giving back to the community in the context of the church or through reading biblical stories. They also shared personal stories of giving and receiving help from others. Finally, they reflected on what made giving back to the community especially important to Mexican Americans and the subtheme of *Shared experiences and challenges* emerged, such that shared experiences such as migration, entering a community with little to no resources or contacts, and the emphasis on religious proverbs and beliefs to "Do good onto your neighbor."

The fifth and final theme, *Mother's Self Reflections* illustrates the complexity of being a mother to a young child. Subthemes include: *Role modeling as a primary teacher, Mother's challenges with emotion regulation, Apologizing,* and *The importance of mental health.* The subthemes discussed in this chapter describe mothers' acknowledgment and awareness that children learn best from role models, yet the self-awareness and emotion regulation skills that are

required to be a positive role model are challenging to achieve. Mothers shared stories of instances when they responded to their child's emotions successfully and times when they struggled with their own emotion regulation. The subtheme of *Apologizing* emerged when mothers described how they approached repairing their relationship with their child when they might of "lost their temper" or yelled at their child. Finally, mothers discussed the importance of mental health resources for themselves, their children, and the larger Latinx community.

Chapter 4: Shifting Perspectives in Parenting Practices

Parenting beliefs are shaped by the cultural contexts in which they reside and are demonstrated in parenting practices (Rogoff, 2003). Mexican American mothers in intergenerational families and who have experienced migration to a new cultural community experience a change in cultural context. They are confronted with navigating a new culture while also maintaining their heritage culture and may make decisions regarding which parenting beliefs to maintain and to modify. These decisions can be informed by various factors, including exposure to a new culture, acculturation, neighborhood setting, and educational attainment (Halgunseth, 2019). In this investigation, mothers were asked to describe how, as a parent, they are similar and different from their parents and reflect on how they learned about kindness and emotions when they were a child. Many mothers described this conflict, detailing the tension between their desire to maintain cultural beliefs while also modifying parenting practices. The theme, *Shifting Perspectives in Parenting Practices,* was most salient when mothers discussed how they want to teach their children about *respeto,* emotion expression, and emotion regulation. The following subthemes will be addressed in this chapter, *Modifying how respeto is taught to children, Hiding emotions to validating emotions*, and *Teaching children emotion regulation strategies.*

Modifying how *Respeto* is taught to children

Respeto directly translates to respect, and many mothers highlighted the importance of *respeto* when discussing how they learned about prosocial behavior when they were children. *Respeto* is a cultural value that has long been documented in Latinx families (see Calzada et al., 2010) and, as mentioned in the literature review, is a way of interacting with other children and adults that is polite, obedient, and deferent to elders (Gonzales-Ramos et al., 1998, Calzada et al.,

2010). Latinx parents especially value *respeto* when in public settings (Calzada et al., 2012). Past research in *respeto* in Latinx families has found mixed outcomes in children, such that the adoption of *respeto* socialization practices was linked to more child behavioral problems (Calzada et al., 2012). In contrast, in an investigation of mother-daughter relationships, Latina mothers and their 8-year-old daughters who adopted *respeto* parenting practices showed greater respect to each other through responsive listening practices (Dixon, Graber, & Brooks-Gunn, 2008). These findings demonstrate that the ways in which Mexican American parents socialize *respeto* varies, which may explain the contradicting outcomes in child behavior.

The mothers in this study highlighted this variance, that teaching *respeto* is a valuable parenting practice, however, traditional ways of teaching *respeto*, for instance, through corporal punishment, are outdated and harmful to children. When describing how they were taught about *respeto* when they were children, mothers described it as "being obedient," "well-mannered," "sharing toys and food," and "being respectful of elders." They explained that respect was *expected* of them when they were children, regardless of their comfort level, and if they did not act respectfully, mothers often described being disciplined. For instance, Yaretzi, mother of a six-year-old boy, describes how respect was taught to her when she was a child,

> *"Respect is earned, not given… You have to earn respect. …like it doesn't matter if the adult is rude or not, if they're older than you, you have to respect them. That kind of mentality. So I feel like, Mexican households tend to be more strict and narrow on how kindness should be given."* (Yaretzi, mother of 6-year-old boy)

Several mothers (17) described that some of the ways that they were taught about respect emphasized *childism,* the view that children are inferior to adults (Young-Bruehl, 2012). For instance, the use of corporal punishment or yelling as a one of the ways their parents taught them

respect. Mothers described these practices as instilling fear and blind obedience, and they did not want their children to feel this way toward them. When describing what Mexican cultural practices she wants to change Cristina, mother of a five-year-old girl discussed childism,

> *"This idea of like childism. This idea that kids aren't supposed to speak their minds and opinions and things and you're just supposed to do with the adults say... is so ingrained in our culture. I think in society in general, in varying degrees. But it's definitely part of our culture."* (Cristina, mother of a 5-year-old girl)

Yaretzi later describes how she does not want to practice using harsher parenting practices to instill *respeto*, like the "*chancla*" (a slipper used for corporal punishment) to discipline children.

> *"The views of a parent in the old times compared to now, is a lot different…I don't believe in, you know,…the "chancla." I don't want him [my child],…to be scared of me. I want him to be able to come to me, and speak, you know, talk to me about anything. That's not something that I grew up [with,…it was like in a little bubble, you couldn't talk about certain things… without feeling that we were gonna get in trouble. So [for my child] I am just like, 'I want you to be open, even if it's something that you think is going to get me upset.'"* (Yaretzi, mother of 6 year old boy)

Mothers shared a new approach to teaching *respeto*, where children's developmental stage, comfort, and needs have greater importance. One mother explained that respect also includes being respectful to yourself,

> *"So, the most important things, for me, and this is very clear to my children, is being respectful. Um, respectful to others and respectful to yourself. So respecting yourself and, in turn, respecting others." (Jessica, mother of an 8-year-old girl)*

Additionally, many mothers underscored the importance of teaching their children the reasons behind respectful behaviors and why being respectful is a type of prosocial behavior. For example, in the following quote Selena emphasizes that her child must have respect for elders but she also talks to her child about the reasons why she must be respectful,

> Interviewer: *"So, if you ever saw your child act unkindly how would you respond?"*
>
> Selena: *"I would pull her to the side. And a perfect example- She has gotten upset and she's like yelled at me and said, you know, "No!" So, we do four minutes of timeout because she's four years old... and we have her sitting on a chair so she can...think about why she's on timeout. And then, when she comes out of time out, my husband and I will have a conversation with her, and we'll ask her do you know why you were on timeout? Do you know what you did? And if she tells us yes, that's what you did, and this is how you made a mommy feel. You hurt mommy's feelings because you should not yell back, you need to respect mommy, you don't yell back at mommy… So, I do it that way, I make it more of a learning opportunity for her and saying, 'Hey this is your consequence of you not respecting me...'"* (Selena, mother of 4-year-old girl)

Mother's responses highlighted a cultural shift in beliefs about *respeto*, and how this can be a potentially challenging shift for mothers to make as it contrasts with the way they were raised. In this investigation mothers who discussed teaching *respeto* differently from their parents varied by generation status and maternal educational attainment, such that second generation or higher and more highly educated mothers more frequently discussed this shift in parenting practices (see Table 3 for proportion of variation by generation and education). This cultural shift of perspective of *respeto* has been found in past research, where generation status influenced mother's emphasis on manners and maternal educational attainment on obedience (de

Guzman et al., 2012; Suizzo et al., 2019). This reflects the impact of ecological shifts in parenting behaviors, second generation mothers typically have had longer exposure to different cultural views and for this reason reject traditional methods of instilling *respeto*. Similarly, educational spaces provide new contexts and perspectives for raising children that often may reflect opposing views to traditional notions of *respeto*, for instance.

It should be noted that not all mothers described having different perspectives on parenting from their parents. For instance, Cristina shared how she is similar to her parents,

> *"My parents are very loving. Showed up for us both physically and emotionally as a team. They were able to meet our needs in that way and I'm able to do that for girls. So just showing love, being supportive, encouraging and just words of affirmation and just our worth. Parents were always good about instilling a good self-esteem in us and in confidence and trying to build that up. And so, I feel like we do that for our girls. I think being similar in terms of our values of kindness and valuing that and communication."* (Cristina, mother of 5-year-old girl)

Stemming from the conversation of shifting perspectives in teaching *respeto*, many mothers shared the goal of establishing an open and communicative relationship with their child. To establish this, they emphasized the need for *respeto* to go both ways, such that the mother should respect the child's needs as well. This view shifts the perspective that children must defer to elders. Mothers reflected that as children, they didn't feel comfortable or encouraged to share their emotions with their parents. Having a close and communicative relationship with their child would help their child would feel comfortable and safe discussing any emotions or personal issues with them. This aim frequently originated from the next subtheme, where mothers wanted to shift from hiding emotions to validating emotions.

From Hiding Emotions to Validating Emotions

The subtheme of *From Hiding Emotions to Validating Emotions* emerged as mothers shared how they learned about emotions when they were children. Mothers frequently noted that they hid their emotions from their parents because they didn't feel they would be supported or they would upset their parents. In contrast to way they were raised, mothers stressed the importance of having open discussions about emotions with their children. They emphasized that they did not want their children to feel that way, and that they want their child to know that all emotions are valid and acceptable, a view that often contrasted their childhood experiences.

Hiding Emotions. Given that many mothers were raised under traditional notions of *respeto,* hiding their emotions from adults was a frequent practice as emotional displays were considered disrespectful and disruptive (Calzada et al., 2010). As described in the literature review, parents responses or lack of responses to children's emotions are called emotion-related socialization behaviors (ERSBs) (Eisenberg, 1998). In the emotion socialization literature, parent ESRBs are categorized into "supportive" (e.g., warm and responsive behaviors) and nonsupportive (e.g., ignoring and dismissing behaviors) categories (Eisenberg, 1998). Past research with Mexican American families has found that mothers are more likely to dismiss or ignore childrens emotions (Pintar Breen et al., 2018) however second generation and more acculturated mothers engage in more frequent discussions about emotions (Cervantes, 2002). While there is mixed evidence on the impact of ESRBs on child externalizing behaviors in Latinx samples (see Pintar Breen et al., 2018), there is emerging evidence on the impact on internalizing behaviors in Latinx children (Calzada et al., 2017). Calzada and colleagues (2017) linked parenting practices to child internalizing problems and found that Mexican families who had a higher adoption of *respeto* socialization and authoritarian parenting (described at low

responsiveness and highly demanding) showed higher levels of child internalizing problems such as anxiety and depression.

In this study, 27 mothers described the need to hide and control their emotions. When asked about their experiences as a child, or when someone in their family was feeling sad or angry, *"Talking back"* to parents or adults, having a "*berrinche*" (tantrum), or being a "*chillón*" (cry baby), were among the behaviors mothers described as *"not allowed."* Mothers often recounted that if they felt sad, they hid it. One mother recounted that when showing sadness her parents would tell her that she was *"bored"* or *"ungrateful,"* responses that would be categorized as dismissive in ERSB frameworks (Eisenberg et al., 1998). Lupita shares her experience,

> Interviewer: *"Can you describe a time when you were a child when you or someone in your family was feeling sad and what that was like?"*
>
> Lupita: *"Uh, well you wouldn't talk about it, you would just be... like there is no reason to be sad. So, you kind of had to take it. If you're feeling sad you just take up all those emotions and you just put them down. Put them in a box."*
>
> Interviewer: *"So, if you weren't looking happy what was the response that you would get?"*
>
> Lupita: *"Oh, like 'What's your problem?" Like, 'What's going on?' You know like, 'why you sitting there.' Gosh, 'con la cara de fuchi' (with a yucky look on your face). You know? (laughs) And so, it was like, 'Oh well I don't know…' [so] 'Well take it off your face' You know? …There is people out there who, it was always like 'You know there is people out there who have it way worse than you, like you have a roof over your head.'"*
>
> (Lupita, mother of 6-year-old boy)

Soccorro describes her experience of her emotions being dismissed and this leading to hiding in her room,

> *"See I have like this, um, label in my family that I was a 'chillona' (cry-baby) when I was little, so like I feel like I cried all the time... I also think maybe it was because I cried so much, they were kind of like, I don't know, she's always crying. I don't know…I think at some point I tried to hide it, um, because either they didn't respond or they were kind of like, "why are you crying?" so I think at some point, once I got a little older, I started trying to hide. I would just go to my room."* (Socorro, mother of 4-year-old girl)

After mothers illustrated how they learned about emotions as a child, they were asked how they express emotions in the present time. While many mothers described the goal of accepting emotions, some mothers still hid their emotions out of fear of making their child sad or worried. Some mothers highlighted how challenging this was and, in some ways, made it harder to cope with sadness,

> *"Pero trato de, trato, porque igual no siempre puedo de que mi tristeza no los afecte a ellos, como de no pasar mi tristeza a ellos. La mayoría de las veces trato. Entonces creo que eso es más difícil, como uno estar triste y guardarlo. Creo que es, si es más difícil. Al tratar de no afectarlos a ellos, creo que nos afectamos más nosotros." (But I try…because I can't always make sure that my sadness doesn't affect them, like not passing my sadness on to them. Most of the time I try. So, I think that's more difficult, to be sad and hide it. I think it is more difficult. By trying not to affect them, I think we affect ourselves more*." (Karime, mother of 5-year-old girl)

In instances where they were unable to hide their sadness, mothers emphasized that they would explain their feelings without too much detail and would let their child know that "*everything was going to be okay*."

> *"Sometimes I say like 'Mommy's sad and I need to cry,' and you know that's okay. Or 'Mommy's sad and she doesn't want to talk right now,' or she needs some time because she's sad. But I'll be okay. I usually let them know like I'll be okay."* (Jessica, mother of 8-year-old girl)

Accepting Emotions. Given that many mothers in this study (26) depicted hiding emotions as a child, as parents they felt strongly about teaching their children that all emotions are valid. When asked about how they respond to their child's emotions, mothers frequently began with a statement that acknowledged or validated their child's emotions. Mothers were asked to share a story of a time when they responded to their child's emotions, here Jocelyn describes her response to her son's emotions,

> *"¿Cuándo él está triste? Pues buscar la manera en pues ayudarlo ¿no? No ayudarlo en que se le vaya la tristeza sino ayudarlo a el a que entienda porque está triste, y que busque pues alternativas para salir de allí, ¿no? Es como, o sea digo, ay pobrecito, no sé, digo pobrecito porque no sabe como manejarlo, digo pobrecito está chiquito. ¿No? Es lo que digo, pobrecito está chiquito, pero pues tiene que aprender ¿no? O sea, en mi mente, así tiene que aprender, y yo le voy a enseñar como." (When is he sad? Well, find a way to help him, right? Not helping him to get rid of his sadness, but helping him to understand why he is sad, and to look for alternatives to get out of it, right? It's like, I mean, I say, oh poor thing, I don't know, I say poor thing because he doesn't know how to handle it, I say poor thing, he's small. right? That's what I say[think], poor thing, he's*

small, but he has to learn, right? I mean, in my mind, that's how he has to learn, and I'm going to teach him how.) (Jocelyn, mother of 6-year-old boy)

What's notable about Jocelyn's quote is that rather than *"get rid of his sadness"* she emphasizes helping her son understand and manage his emotions. Here, Silvia describes how she tries to normalize emotions by discussing her own emotions,

Silvia: *"I will talk to her and I'll just say, like, I'm feeling sad, but it's going to be okay. I'll be all right. But right now I feel sad, you know?"*

Interview: *"You tell her that because..."*

Silvia: *"Because I want her to know that it's okay that other people feel sad and it's okay I'm okay that I feel sad, and that it's going to pass. You know, it's… I want to just… normalize it for her, having different emotions*." (Silvia, mother of 7-year-old girl)

When describing the need to accept emotions mother's gave examples of when their children would show anger or sadness because *"of something little"* like losing a game, not getting to watch another TV show, or not getting an ice cream, but they reflected that their child's emotions *"were not little to them."* Mothers stressed the need to let their child know that their emotions are valid and that it is okay feel them.

"So, both he and his dad, and this was last night, already when he was in his pj's, lights were off, music was playing because they sleep with music and he just he was on his bed and like [mother mimics a frowny face of child]. We were both kind of caught off guard because there was no particular event that happened in that moment to prompt that…and we said, 'What's wrong? What happened?' And he didn't respond. So, we both came down to his level, kneel down, and said 'What's going on?' And it's usually not this easy, by the way, but he said, 'I just miss my friend' and I was like, 'Oh honey…' and it kind

of… like really hurt me... So, we told them that we understood that he was sad, especially because we did expect (his friend at school) to come back yesterday and he didn't. But we reassured him that he, you know, we talked to his teacher and his teacher did say that you know, he was scheduled to come back this week. And you know, and he kind of was pretty good and then moved on from it after that. But, that's um I guess trivial is a mean word when going about something… but for him and his mind, it's not insignificant." (Carol, mother of 4-year-old boy)

The accounts the mothers shared about teaching their children accept their emotions would be categorized as "supportive" ERSBs in Eisenberg's framework of parent emotion socialization (1998). What's striking about mother's reflections (further discussed in Chapter 7) about the importance of accepting emotions rather than hiding emotions, is that it demonstrates a distinct change from their childhood experiences. Few investigations have examined the emotion socialization practices of Mexican American mothers (see Pintar Breen et al., 2018 and Cervantez, 2002) however, this intergenerational change in how emotions are accepted is an underexamined shift. Interestingly, there were no variances in this theme by generation status, but mothers with lower levels of educational attainment more frequently emphasized accepting emotions, compared to nearly 80% of more highly educated mothers. This might be explained by the increased focus on social and emotional learning in public schools, therefore, more mothers are aware of supportive responses to children's emotions. Past research on Latinx mothers has also found that while they tend to be more strict, they are also highly affectionate and more emotionally expressive than other cultures (Bornstein et al., 2012). This may demonstrate one of the many ways parenting practices are complex and often do not fit neatly into categories.

Teaching Children Emotion Regulation Strategies

The subtheme of *Teaching Children Emotion Regulation Strategies* was most often observed when mothers described how they respond to their child's emotions. Mothers reported several different strategies for supporting their child's emotion regulation, from "taking deep breaths" to getting a hug to getting space. Providing self-regulation strategies like these have been found to be supportive ways to promote children's emotion regulation skills (Hajal & Paley, 2020). Variances in this theme were found by generation, such that first generation mothers less frequently described offering emotion regulation strategies to their children. Interestingly, the value of accepting emotions varied by education but not by generation, and mothers' reports of providing emotion regulation strategies varied by generation only. Similar to the cultural value of *respeto,* it is possible that mothers can have the same values but instill them differently in their children. Suizzo and colleagues examined parental socialization practices among three generations of Mexican American mothers and found that parenting values were surprisingly similar yet maternal education attainment and generation status differently influenced particular aspects of parenting (2019). It may be the case that all mothers have shifted their perspectives in parenting practices such that they are more responsive and accepting of children's emotions. However, teaching explicit emotion strategies to children may be something that second generation mothers are hyper cognizant of than first generation mothers. For instance, first generation mothers value accepting emotions, but perhaps they see others forms of socialization (e.g., role modeling emotion regulation) as a form of teaching that is more valuable than teaching explicit emotion regulation strategies.

The emotion regulation strategy mothers most frequently described was "*talking it out*" when responding to their child's sadness or anger. Many mothers would wait until the child had

"*calmed down*" or regulated their emotions before having a discussion about their child's feelings. Mercedes offers an example of how she and her child discuss emotions:

> *"Lo dejo un ratito y ya después ya voy y hablo con él de por qué se enojo o si yo se por qué se enojó, yo le digo, entiendo porque te enojaste y trato de hablar nada más con él."(I'll leave him for a little while and then I'll go and talk to him about why he got angry or if I know why he got angry, I tell him, I understand why you got angry and I just try to talk to him."* (Mercedes, mother of 8-year-old boy)

One mother described an approach that she has followed and has taught her 6-year-old son to avoid saying hurtful things when angry,

> *"Se lo digo. 'Ahora estoy muy enojada. Ahorita no quiero hablar con nadie. Estoy muy enojada.' Mira cuando estoy muy enojada, ni quiero que me hables (risa), ni te me acerques porque te voy a decir algo que no te voy a querer decir en ese momento ¿no? …Entonces mejor no me hables". Y él igual, si él está muy enojado dice "sabes que, no quiero hablar, estoy muy enojado". Entonces si estás muy enojado vete a tu cuarto, aléjate un poco, y después vuelves ¿no? Entonces si, ah, y así nos da tiempo para como pensar a todos de lo que está pasando, y ya, no volvemos. Igual "apodo del niño" si está muy enojado pasa lo mismo "estoy muy enojado", "entonces ve y tranquilízate, respira profundo y vuelves". ("I tell him. 'I am very angry now. I don't want to talk to anybody right now. I am very angry. ...I don't want you to come near me because I am going to tell you (laughs) something that I don't want to tell you at the moment, right?...So you'd better not talk to me.' And he* (her son) *does the same, if he is very angry he says, 'You know what, I don't want to talk, I am very angry.' So if you are very angry, go to your room, go away for a little, and then come back, right? So yeah, and so it gives us all time*

to kind of think about what's going on, and that's it, we come back. 'So go and calm down, take a deep breath and come back.'" (Jocelyn, mother of 6-year-old boy)

Socorro described how she has discussions with her about daughter how to express emotions in a healthy and safe way,

"We had a conversation about it, um, another thing I am trying to teach her is that when she's angry to grab a paper and rip it and then throw it away. Um, and I always tell her, like it's okay if you're angry. And I try to teach her, like if you need space, tell us. So, I'm trying to teach her little things she can do to not actually like, I don't know how... like it's okay to be angry but like in a 'healthy way angry kind of thing'. Without hurting anybody... She usually will just be angry and won't really talk... Sometimes I'll give her like little reminders, 'Hey remember if you're angry you can go grab a paper. You can rip it.' Um, 'If you need space you can go to your room.' Um, just like little, I try to prompt her but if anything, I just walk away and leave her alone, until she comes back." (Socorro, mother of 4-year-old girl)

Catalina, who identifies as Mixteca, shared the indigenous practices she shares with her child to practice emotion regulation,

"A practice that I mentioned about danza (dance) and about sweat lodging. Even though we haven't… been part of that community because it's always in groups of people, it's that when you're in these ceremonies, it's all about releasing your feelings that you don't longer need, or like dancing them out, or singing them out, or like… sweating them out. It is like part of like the practice of letting go, but not… to let go of all the emotions that we have… but it's just a practice that we want our children to carry on, because this is part of the medicines (healing practices), and also being connected to the fire… It gives us the

most happy feelings, so those practices are part of our emotional management, you could say." (Catalina, mother of 5-year-old boy)

Mothers also frequently described "talking it out" when coping with their own emotions and having talks with their children when they experience strong emotions. Variances in this theme emerged as a function of education, such that mothers with higher levels of educational attainment reported having discussions about emotions with their children more frequently. Parents discussions about emotions are one of the three primary forms of emotion-related socialization behaviors (ERSBs) and are considered supportive ERSBs that are positively linked to children's emotion regulation and social competence (Mirabile et al., 2015, Hajal & Paley, 2020). In contrast, as many mothers described in their childhoods, ignoring and dismissive parental responses to children's emotions have been linked to poorer child self-regulation and increased aggressive behaviors (Mirabile, 2015). This theme illuminates that the mothers in this study are actively working against their childhood experiences and aiming to build close and safe relationships with their children to build open lines of communication.

Chapter 5: How Children Learn About Kindness & Emotions

"So, the most important things, for me, and this is very clear to my children, is being respectful. Respectful to others and respectful to yourself. It's important when there's an interaction that we're always mindful of being kind. And kindness doesn't necessarily mean that we don't advocate for ourselves, but it does mean that we do it in a way that is positive, and assertive.... We need to speak up for others, so if we see others being treated unkindly, it's okay, for us to advocate for others... I definitely provide opportunities for my kids to, outside of just our world... see like a larger sense of... need within communities. So... providing opportunities for them through church... we've done things like help with food kitchens. Different drives... like sock drives or nets for children in Malaysia. So they have an awareness because I want them to have a larger context of- not just [the] kind of kindness with the people that look like us or that are from the same community as us...but kindness towards people that don't have what we have, and that aren't like us, don't look like us, or don't live like us. We need to be kind to them as well... It's easy to be kind to people that we like and it's easy to be kind to people that look like us. But the true test of kindness is when...we can be kind across the board, not just to people that live like us, and look like us." (Jessica, mother of 8-year-old girl)

Jessica's quote about how she teaches her daughter about kindness encompasses several subthemes found in *How Children Learn about Kindness and Emotion*. In this chapter, I will discuss the subthemes of *Discussing Empathy and Perspective Taking, Manners are Kind,* and *Having Boundaries and Caution with Kindness.*

Discussing Empathy & Perspective Taking

Nearly all mothers described the importance of empathy and perspective taking in being kind. In fact, the mothers described creative ways of weaving in discussions about empathy and perspective taking into daily conversations. Mothers described using conflicts with siblings or peers as points of discussions, and a few reported using books and children's media. As discussed in the literature review, parent discussions about emotions and perspective taking are related to children's social and emotions skills when they enter school (Johnson et al., 2017). There is also evidence to support that children's empathy helps motivate prosocial action, such that helping children notice and label the emotions of others may help them act prosocially (Denham et al, 2007). Across the 26 mothers that discussed empathy and perspective taking, variances by generation and maternal education attainment were not found, contradicting past research on ESBRs in Latinx mothers discussions of emotions (e.g., Perez Rivera & Dunsmore, 2011; Cervantes, 2002). In the current study, all mothers highlighted the importance of empathy and perspective taking. Here Adelita describes the importance of empathy,

> *"Yo les enseño mucho la regla, la regla dorada que es, trata a otros como quieres que te traten. So ellos tienen, eso muy presente, si quieren ser tratados de buena manera, por lo tanto tienen que ellos a sembrar eso, para poderlo cosechar, entonces. Igual, la empatía es muy importante, porque como les digo yo, no necesariamente tienes que sentir lo que están sintiendo, pero imaginarte lo que están sintiendo. Y creo que es muy importante tener empatía, y esa primer regla que le digo, que traten a otros como quieren ser tratados. So, es algo que es muy importante en nuestro hogar." ("I teach them a lot about the rule, the golden rule that it is, 'treat others as you want to be treated'. If they have that very much in mind, if they want to be treated in a good way, therefore they have to sow that, in order to reap it. Likewise, empathy is very important, because as I tell*

them, 'You don't necessarily have to feel what they are feeling but imagine what they are feeling.' And I think it is very important to have empathy, and that first rule that I tell you, that you treat others as you want to be treated. So, it is something that is very important in our home.") (Adelita, mother of a 6-year-old boy)

Perla describes how she talks to her son about his little brothers' emotions to help him empathize with his brother and feel intrinsically motivated to share, describing explicitly how she tries to encourage perspective taking and empathy,

> *"I really try not to say, oh 'You have to share.' Not that I don't say that, but sometimes it just comes out. But I really try not to do that. What I try to do, is like with his brother, he struggles with sharing with his brother. Obviously, they are around each other so much, you know. It's like their stuff is intertwined, so if he has something and his brother wants it, I kind of just try to get him to think about his brother. 'Oh, brother is crying... He is sad that he wants that toy that you're playing with... umm how do you think that makes him feel?' or 'How do you feel hearing him crying?' You know, instead of forcing, oh 'You have to share.' So I try to kind of get him to think about how that other person is feeling or what that other person might need and it might be what he can do to… help in that circumstance. I don't think I do that 100%, but I definitely try to um, because I really want his kindness to stem from his willingness to be kind."* (Perla, mother of 5-year-old boy)

These types of opportunities for explicit practice of empathy and perspective taking were seen in other interviews as well. Here, Karime describes how she discusses social problems with her five-year-old daughter to help her practice taking other's perspectives,

"Me gusta mucho preguntarle, preguntarle cómo se siente y se ve a otros. Y me dice ah, me platica cosas de la escuela, de sus compañeras y le digo, 'Y qué piensas?' Como que ella tal vez piense, qué más puede hacer, como ir un poquito más allá... A ella todo el tiempo le gusta que le esté contando historias. Me dice …lo que pasa a veces en la escuela, ella quiere que yo se lo platique como si fuera una historia. Um, ella me dice, 'Platícame la historia de lo que pasó, cómo se resolvió, o como quedó?'" ("I really like to ask her, ask her how she feels and looks to others. And she tells me, oh, she tells me things about the school, about her classmates, and I say to her, 'And what do you think?' Like, maybe she thinks what else she can do, like going a little further... She always likes it when I tell her stories. She tells me...what sometimes happens at school, [and] *she wants me to tell her about it as if it were a story. Um, she tells me, 'Tell me the story of what happened, how was it resolved, or how it turned out?'"* (Karime, mother of a 5-year-old girl)

Additionally, some mothers described using stories from books or TV shows to discuss kind or unkind behavior and perspective taking. We found that mothers with higher educational attainment were slightly more likely to report using books and TV shows. This difference could be attributed to mothers with higher educational attainment having greater access to books and children's media (Neuman & Moland, 2016). Andrea describes how she asks her 6-year-old daughter about unkind behavior in TV shows,

"Sometimes when, so she does like to watch TV... if I'm there... and I hear something, or they were mean...and they were not very nice to each other and I said, 'What do you think about that?' And she says, 'That's not okay, that's not okay to do,' I go, 'Um, and why is

it not okay to do?' And she'll say, 'Oh, because it hurt their feelings' or something like that." (Andrea, mother of 6-year-old girl)

As mentioned earlier, mothers stressed the importance of teaching their children to feel empathy and understand other's perspectives. Mother's emphasis on empathy and perspective taking demonstrated that it was important to them that prosocial behavior is intrinsically motivated and that children understand why behavioral expectations like greeting others, sharing make others feel good. Mothers encouraged their children to practice empathy and perspective taking through discussions about social problems or emotion labeling. Mothers characterized these moments as opportunities to "sneak in" discussions about empathy and perspective taking, with the goal of their child being empathetic and able to take other's perspectives. Interestingly, the theme of empathy and perspective taking often did not show up when mothers described how they learned about prosocial behavior when they were a child. Mothers were more likely to share that they learned about prosocial behavior through observation of their parent's behaviors and not from explicit conversations about emotions or empathy. Additionally, all mothers cited the importance of empathy and perspective taking and variances by generation and education were not found. This may highlight a growing understanding of the underlying skills that support children's prosocial development through wider adoption of SEL in public schools or easier access to parenting resources through social media (Lasecke et al., 2022).

Having Boundaries and Caution with Kindness

A smaller subset of the sample described the importance of having boundaries with kindness and even being cautious with who you are kind to. This theme is very much related to shifting perspectives in parenting, such that while the mothers that discussed the value of kindness, but they also emphasized the importance of their child's comfort and needs.

Furthermore, some mothers explained that being kind without boundaries can be risk the well-being of the actor. Perla describes how she instills *respeto* with her son but also gives him the freedom to have boundaries and choices particularly when a behavior involves physical affection,

> *"(We were taught that) You have to you know, hug and kiss people, particularly your elders, um when you are saying hi or you're coming across them. And I teach my child that, of course you want to say hi and acknowledge someone that's important. But the physical touch is something that I don't require of him, like I don't require him to hug or kiss... If Grandma is asking for a kiss and he might not want to, I say, okay you can tell her maybe later, or high five, or whatever he might feel comfortable with."* (Perla, mother of 5-year-old boy)

Similarly, Cristina underscored the importance of manners and respect, but also of her daughter having boundaries and feeling safe,

> *"I mean, I expect politeness with people when we're guests in other people's houses or when we're guests at a party. I can say that. I guess with her friends or some of the family... I expect the respect or politeness with strangers or acquaintances. But I also... in this day and age, I have to teach her how to feel safe with her own boundaries too. So, it's okay to be unkind in those situations if she feels like she's not safe. That's a fine line to walk because it's very different than the way we were raised, you know, where you respect elders regardless. I feel like that's not something we can do anymore. You have to have a boundary and be okay to say no and maybe do something that isn't what you would think is polite, you know?"* (Cristina, mother of 5-year-old girl)

Some mothers gave examples of family members pressuring them into giving money that they do not have or making requests that were overbearing. Cristina describes how being prosocial can be confused with having no boundaries,

> *"Having good boundaries...People often confuse being kind with not having boundaries. And I think boundaries goes along with having pro-social behavior and being kind. It's kind to have boundaries... I guess this would be the most important…I think like when you don't have boundaries, I think it can...be hurtful to somebody else because it might be enabling them or it might be sending an ambiguous message to them. And then I think it's also kind for your yourself."* (Cristina, mother of a 5-year-old girl)

Mothers emphasized the importance of having boundaries, so that their children did not grow up to learn that being prosocial means being a "pushover" or sacrificing your well-being. Susy discusses the importance of prioritizing your well-being when being prosocial,

> *"I feel like a lot of people look at an act of kindness, or maybe even like an act of being prosocial, whether it be like, some people feel like they must go out of their way in order for something to be an act of kindness. Or maybe sometimes it's something that they are not quite, don't feel too comfortable with. And they're like 'Well I'm trying to do this kindness for somebody else so I'm going to put myself on the back burner'. So, I feel like you can be kind and you can still be in your bubble of comfort and making sure that you're not causing yourself harm*." (Susy, mother of 5-year-old daughter)

As Susy and Cristina explained, not having boundaries with kindness can be harmful and it is important to teach children about their own boundaries. A few mothers brought up pressures to help family and shared that they needed to practice having boundaries family members asked for help. Although most research on *familismo,* links the cultural value of familial support to

greater well-being and as a protective factor (Corona et al., 2017), there is growing evidence that pressures of *familismo* can be a risk and protective factor (Calzada et al., 2012). While there is not a lot of literature specifically on the practice of teaching children about boundaries, helping children identify their boundaries and prioritize their well-being requires teaching self-awareness of emotions and emotion regulation. These practices would fall under supportive ESRBs as outlined by Eisenberg (1998). Furthermore, although not a prominent theme, mothers especially highlighted this theme as important for their daughters, such that women and girls in Mexican culture are expected to be kind, accommodating, and gracious to others regardless of how they treat them. This is in line with mothers' discussions of *marianismo*, discussed in the next chapter on *Gendered Expectations of Kindness and Emotion Expression.*

Chapter 6: Gendered Expectations of Kindness and Emotion Expression

> *"Children were not allowed to be angry. Women were not allowed to be angry. Men, when they were angry became aggressive and violent that was like just a pretty broad description, but that was the angle that was in our house or my family in general... so yeah for me, not allowed, stop. That's it."* (Camila, mother of 5-year-old boy)

Gender was a prominent theme across mother's depictions and discussions of kindness and emotions. When describing how they observed their family member's expressions of emotions there were often clear differences between the depiction of men and women, as show in Camila's quote. Gender came up most frequently when discussing anger as Juana shares,

> *"Es que en mi casa el único que se podía enojar era mi papá. Era el único que se podía enojar. Nadie más se podía enojar. Entonces…podríamos enojarnos pero teníamos que disimularlo. Porque si se enojaba mi papá, no nos iba nada bien. Entonces, mi papá no era como el mejor ejemplo a seguir cuando se trataba del enojo. O sea, le teníamos miedo." ("Well, in my house, the only one who could get angry was my dad. He was the only one who could get angry. Nobody else could get angry. So...we could get angry but we had to hide it. Because if my dad got mad, it didn't go well for us. So, my dad wasn't like the best role model when it came to anger. I mean, we were afraid of him*." (Juana, mother of 6-year-old girl)

Machismo

Machismo is a sociocultural script of men in Hispanic/Latinx cultures, where men are expected to be masculine, dominant, aggressive, and have reserved emotions (other than anger) (Nuñez et al., 2016). As described earlier, mothers most frequently discussed their fathers when discussing anger. They described hearing their fathers shout, act violently, and several mentioned

corporal punishment. This theme, of gendered aspects of emotion expression and kindness, continued throughout the interview and only slightly varied such that immigrant mothers were less likely to discuss *machismo* or gendered aspects of emotion. Most mothers recounted how their mothers' hid emotions, yet their fathers' showed anger. Additionally, they observed differential treatment when their brother's experienced sadness and when they felt sad. Here, Perla describes how her brothers were treated differently when they experienced emotions,

> *"So I think that one of the biggest things for me is like the machismo or like the masculine gender roles. Although the gender roles are also very implicit. Some things that are like really, really, hard for me. Like gender roles, I think it's in American culture too, it's not just Mexican culture, it's more in Mexican culture obviously. I grew up with really, really, strong gender roles. The way they treated my brother was different from the way they treated me. But you know like the things like boys crying. Like I am not going to tell them they can't cry. That's not right for me, so… I really want him to know it's okay to cry, and feel sadness, especially being a Latino male"* (Perla, mother of 5-year-old boy)

Variances within this theme were small but found on the basis of generation and educational attainment, such that second generation and more highly educated mothers discussed *machismo* more frequently than first generation mothers and mothers with lower levels of education. The variances observed are in line with past research on the adoption of *machismo* (Nuñez et al., 2016). Many mothers emphasized that they did not want their sons and daughters to grow up adopting the *machismo* aspects of Mexican (and Latinx) culture. Some mothers reported experiencing challenges with *machismo* in their households and described having disagreements with their husbands or grandparents about shifting away from *machismo* beliefs.

Mothers stressed that this is not an aspect of Mexican culture that they want to pass down to their children, and that they are actively striving to build open communication and promote the acceptance of their child's emotions regardless of their gender. The concerns the mothers voiced about *machismo* in this study are warranted, as studies have shown that men's adoption of *machismo* beliefs are frequently associated with mental health challenges, such as anxiety and cynical hostility (Nuñez et al., 2016).

Marianismo

Marianismo is the female counterpart of *machismo*, a religion-based gendered expectation women, such that women must always be good, a devoted daughter or wife, God-fearing, self-sacrificing, and hospitable to others (Castillo, et al., 2010). *Marianismo* takes its name from the Virgin Mary of the Roman Catholic church. Camila describes,

> *"It's a concept that women, um a good woman...is the one that most directly reflects Maria (Virgin Mary) and for her choices and her lifestyle meaning like virginity, purity, obedience to her man, um… dedication to the child and to the husband and nothing outside of that. Not questioning anything that she's told to do...stuff like that. Yeah, I was definitely taught (that), but I don't want (my child) thinking that... even though he's a boy...I don't want him to be taught those things about women."* (Camila, mother of a 5-year-old boy)

One mother described how her father raised her in a large family with mostly brothers and treated her and her sister differently,

> *"I was complaining, like, why is he going out (her brother) and I can't, and (what he told me), "Mis gallos los tengo sueltos y mis gallinas las tengo encerradas." (I have my roosters loose and my hens locked up… He was very traditional, like, 'No, women can't*

do that, like, men can do whatever they want, so yea I would never teach her (her child) that"

Although not a prominent theme separate from *machismo*, eleven mothers highlighted that they did not want their children to learn about *marianismo*. Mothers did not vary by generation or educational attainment. Similar to *machismo*, the adoption of *marianismo* beliefs has been linked to poorer psychosocial outcomes such as anxiety and depressive symptoms (Nuñez et al., 2016).

Together, the discussion of *machismo* and *marianismo,* proved to be a salient topics in mother's discussion of cultural scripts they would like to avoid. While ERSBs are understudied in Latinx mothers, it would be a worthy study to examine the adoption of *machismo* and *marianismo* in Mexican American families to see if they impact how emotions and kindness are socialized and how they impact the mental health of the family.

Chapter 7: The Importance of Giving Back to the Community

The Importance Generosity and Giving Back to Your Community most frequently emanated from mothers' illustrations of learning about prosocial behavior when they were children. They described observing their parents helping others, giving to those in need, and supporting the immigrant community. Mothers reported wanting to continue to instill this value with their children, by encouraging them to practice gratitude and by recognizing that many children do not *"have the same blessings"* as they do. Mothers described the ways in which they involve their child in giving back through charity organizations or by their own actions. Interestingly, first generation mothers in this sample cited the importance of generosity and giving back more frequently than second generation and higher mothers. Although there is little prior literature to draw in to interpret this finding, the differences seen in this theme could be attributed to having greater religious participation than second generation and higher mothers. The association between religious participation and generosity has been found in past literature, as for many Mexican and Latinx immigrants, the Catholic church is where they go first to find community and resources (Smith & Adamczyk, 2021). In general, there is also evidence that Latinx families are frequently a source of charitable giving in the U.S., and similar to this study, are especially compelled to give back to religious-based charities, such as the Roman Catholic Church (Marx & Carter, 2008).

Connection to Religion

For eighteen mothers, religion was top of mind when describing prosocial behavior. It is difficult to find accurate reports on what percentage of Mexican Americans are religious, however it is well known that religion is an important part of Mexican culture and has been identified as being relevant for health and well-being within the Mexican-origin Latinx

community (Pew Research Center, 2013; Lerman et al., 2018). While we did not specifically request that mother's report their religious beliefs, several mothers described the importance of religion to encourage children's prosocial behavior. As found earlier in *respeto*, mothers often approached how they use religion to teach their children differently from their parents. Carmen describes a proverb that her mother always told her,

> *"Mi mama... es muy creyente...con la religión, Entonces ella siempre hablaba de 'hacer el bien y no mires a quien'. Siempre lo decía, 'Haz el bien y no mires a quien'. Nos hablaba mucho del término, que se hace el bien, te irá muy bien. También nos habla del término que las mentiras tienen piernas cortas. Y nos decía que por ejemplo, dices una mentira para salirte con la tuya, pero son tan cortitas sus piernas que te van atrapar. Entonces, te van alcanzar y entonces te va ir super mal. Entonces, mejor era no mentir y no hacer mal porque se iba toda regresar. Entonces yo creo que el término no era el correcto pero su mensaje tal vez era el miedo a no ser bueno...el que si eres malo pues te va ir mal." (My mom...she is a big believer, in religion...So she always talked about 'Do good, regardless of who it is'.. She always said it, 'Do good, regardless of who it is.' She talked to us a lot about the proverb that 'If you do good, you will do very well.' She would also tell us about the proverb that 'Lies have short legs.' ...For example, you tell a lie to get away with it, but its legs are so short that they will catch you. Then, they will catch up with you and then you will do very badly. So, it was better not to lie and not do wrong because it would all come back. I'm not sure if the proverb was not correct, but perhaps its message was the fear of not being good...that if you are bad, then you will do badly."* (Carmen, mother of 7-year-old girl)

Carmen’s example of her mother’s proverbs illustrates how religion was connected the way that she learned about being prosocial. Camila continues to describe how she has some conflicts with using religious sources with her son but still sees them as valuable resources.

> *“I like to find elements...within a story or...um you know, an aspect of the culture that I can connect to, what I'm trying to teach him. Like the values that I'm trying to teach him. I remember my mom talking to him about Noah's Ark and about how it was a story about obedience and how children should always be obedient to their parents and never question adults. I was like, “I don't agree with that...”, but you know, there are other things from that story that I think that we could learn about helping and...you know the environment.”* (Camila, mother of a 5-year-old boy)

As Camila described, mothers had different views from their parents about the function of religion in supporting their child’s prosocial behavior. Some mothers described that religion was almost used like a weapon, such that children would fear that bad things would happen to them if they were unkind. Mothers in this sample reported using religion to help children learn about prosocial behavior through Sunday school, religious books, and discussions about Jesus. Some mothers cited the Catholic church and the beliefs of being charitable and generous to others in need. More frequently, mothers described how observations of their parents’ involvement in the church and giving back to others taught them about prosocial behavior. Mothers only varied slightly in this theme, such that second generation mothers and mothers with lower levels of education discussed religion more frequently, while this contradicts the research, it be that several other factors needed to be gathered to better assess how mother’s prioritized religion in their socialization practices. Questions related to religiosity and frequency of church attendance would have given us a deeper understanding of how religion plays into

prosocial and emotion socialization. Given the popularity of religiosity in Mexico and it's historical connections to culture (Gil & Vazquez, 2014; Pew Research Center, 2013), it is also possible that mothers might discuss religion but not actually be religious.

Generosity and Charity

When the mothers were asked how they learned about prosocial behavior as a child, almost all mothers said that they learned it from observing their caregivers or teachers at school. Mothers highlighted that they learned from role models, not from explicit conversations, and that they distinctly remembered acts of generosity and charity from their parents. The code "generosity and charity" was most often applied when mothers described their family members supporting or giving back to someone in the community who needed help. Here, Marisol recounts how her mother frequently helped others in her community,

> *"My mom's like, very religious... and... charity rights is such a big thing in like Catholicism, to just help people, so I remember growing up, my mom, like, would give people rides, like, all the time. She'd like pull over and be like, 'Do you need help? Can I help you?', you know, [see someone and say] 'I know that person, let me see if they want a ride home.' So we were always picking up people, like they were random to me, but I think my mom knew them or like, recognized them from the neighborhood and was like, 'No, no, that person is right, a block away, I'm going to help them, I'm going to give them a ride.' Things like that... I remember that, um like, recent immigrants would call my parents, I guess people would like give them my parents number to be like, 'Hey, I just crossed into the US like, we have your number, like, we were told that you could give us food or something like that'... A couple times that like, people came to our home, that had no other place to go or any other... connection here. So yeah, I think that was a big thing*

that I remember growing up, like, always wanting to show neighborly, like, love and connection and support to each other." (Marisol, mother of 6-year-old girl)

First generation mothers were more likely to discuss generosity and charity than second generation and higher mothers, no differences were found in educational attainment. First generation mothers may have described generosity and charity more frequently as they may have closer proximity to communities in need. However, to my knowledge there is not any evidence of a relationship between generation and generosity to others.

Shared Experiences and Challenges

Shared experiences and challenges seemed to be important motivators to giving back to the community. Mothers emphasized that giving back to others in need was an essential part of being in the Mexican community and some mothers cited this because they had experienced what it was like to be on the receiving end. Here Angela describes how she was helped when she immigrated to the U.S.,

> *"I moved here when I was in high school... And you know, my neighbor would give me rides to school 'cause I didn't know there was transportation to school. So my neighbor, one of them would volunteer to drive me to school…um they would buy me [and] my parents things. You know little things…things that I needed, I should say. Those things you don't forget*." (Angela, mother of 8-year-old boy)

As Angela described, factors such as immigration, impacted how mothers have experienced receiving and giving generosity in the Mexican community. Many of these mothers described having proximity to or witnessing extreme poverty in Mexico, which motivated them to give to charity and volunteer in community organizations. One mother, who did not grow up in poverty, described that her father would take her to impoverished neighborhoods in Mexico,

and reminded her to be "grateful for her blessings." Marisol continues to describe how having shared experiences of immigration or poverty or having proximity to these experiences of others, tightens the Latino community and underscores the value of giving back to others who have less than you,

> *"I think the culture is very much about... community and family and like, supporting each other. And it's not like the opposite of like, the US, you know, [the] culture of... individualism and like, you work hard and you get you get by. Whereas I think with, Latino culture, it's very much like, we support each other, we lift each other up. For the most part... I don't think that's the case, in all aspects, but, um, yeah, just sort of, like, doing things in a community and communally... I feel like there's...that level of like, support and kindness and... especially like [when] so many... people who are immigrants, right? And have struggled, like, you know, are coming to this country because of economic hardship. I feel like... that...creates a bond for you know, other people to really just like, 'Oh, yeah, we're similar.' Like, we struggled, we had that immigrant experience, like not knowing the language. So, just sort of like sharing that, sharing the resources, sharing the like, whatever opportunities are there for other people. To...have what they need to get by, things like that. So, I feel like that is where, what I take from the culture... my understanding of like community and supporting each other, and not just like, keeping your head down, and... moving on, it's like... no, we watch out for each other, we support each other. It's like a neighbor, you know, like, literally sharing fruit from the tree. Just in that way."* (Marisol, mother of a 6-year-old girl)

Rosa, a mother who immigrated to the U.S., mentioned struggling to teach her 6-year-old son to be grateful for the things they have, especially when he has so much more than she had.

She described using discussions with her child about poverty in Mexico, even showing videos about child street vendors in Tijuana,

> *"¿Qué pienso? Pues lo primero que se me viene a la mente cuando me dices eso es ayudar a al necesitado.Eso. Eso es algo que. Que yo le he puesto a mis hijos en videos para que vean. Porque. Bueno, la manera en que yo crecí es muy diferente a la que ellos están creciendo. ¿Yo crecí con carencias en México y ellos pues absolutamente cero carencias, no? ¿Entonces cómo? ¿Cómo logro que ellos vean que no todo es como ellos han crecido? Les enseño videos, medios pequeñitos, pues la verdad de niños pidiendo o vendiendo chiclets en las esquinas en México y o en el semáforo…Entonces les enseño cosas y para que vean que que ese niño que tiene la misma edad que ellos pues no tiene la misma bendiciones que nosotros tenemos. Entonces para que sepan que no todos tienen la misma, la misma situación, entonces es importante que ellos reconozcan para. Primero para valorar. Y segundo, pues para ayudar a los que no lo no tiene las mismas circunstancias que ellos. ¿Y así, por ejemplo, una de las cosas que he de sus juguetes y les les digo a veces que ya cuando quieren algo nuevo o que quieres algo nuevo, pues tenemos que deshacernos de algo, no este y que no? Bueno pues de hecho ahorita aquí en mi pasillo tengo bolsas llenas donde yo sé que las puedo llevar a Goodwill, pero no quiero hacerlo. Si sabes, prefiero cruzar a Tijuana porque sé que allá lo van a valorar más o lo necesitan más y dejar que lo valoren, que lo necesiten y eso es lo que trato de que ellos vean que …hay alguien que le va, no lo va a usar más que ustedes y va a estar más agradecido" (What do I think? Well, the first thing that comes to mind... is to help the needy...That is something that I have show my children with videos for them to see. Because well... the way I grew up is very different from the way they are growing up. I*

grew up with poverty in Mexico and they, well, absolutely zero poverty, right? Then how? How do I get them to see that not everything is how they grow up? I show them videos, little clips, because the truth is that there are children begging or selling chewing gum on the corners in Mexico and or at traffic lights... So I teach them things and so they can see that that child who is the same age as them does not have the same blessings that we have. So for them to know that not everyone has the same, the same situation, then it is important that they recognize [it] to value [what they have].... And second…to help those who don't have the same circumstances as them. And so, for example, one of the things that I have of their toys and I tell them sometimes that when they want something new or that you want something new, well, we have to get rid of something, not this one and what not? Well, in fact, right now here in my hallway I have full bags where I know I can take them to Goodwill, but I don't want to.ou know, I prefer to cross to Tijuana because I know that they will value it more or need it more, and let them value it, that they need it, and that is what I try to make them see that... they will use it more than you and they will be more grateful." (Rosa, mother of 6-year-old boy)

Chapter 8: Mother's Self Reflections

"I definitely have those feelings of. Yeah, like, can you just get it together? Can you not go 0 to 60? And I'll definitely be like. Yeah. Stop. I wouldn't say it's a realistic expectation given her age, but I do have the expectation at times. (laughs) But I know it's not productive (laughs), wishful thinking. But that's what was expected, right, (of) me (when I was) growing up. So it's a hard pattern to break." (Cristina, mother of 5-year-old girl)

Mothers' Emotion Regulation and Challenges

As highlighted in this excerpt, many mothers described confronting challenges with emotion regulation when responding to their child's emotions. Some mothers described pausing and making sure that their own emotions were "in check" before responding to their child's emotions. They explained the need to do this to be a good role model for their child,

"Mainly for me it's just a reminder to be patient with her and be understanding. Just because she's little, it doesn't mean she can't have these complex emotions. I think adults often have that kind of reaction of, 'You're a child there's, there's no reason that you should be feeling like this.' Or maybe there's not that understanding of they can have disappointment or anger frustration... We have to be a little more patient with them, because they don't know how to handle it the way an adult would. And some adults don't even handle it well, either. So, I think there's always that reminder to be patient." (Susy, mother of 5-year-old girl)

Mothers admitted that this wasn't always easy. Contextual factors, like needing to get "out of the door" to go to work, for instance, and simply when mothers felt stressed and tired, made emotion regulation challenging for them.

"I mean, it triggers me I get very frustrated. I get very um I don't know. I think it's just like, I sometimes feel like, I'm failing. Like, I'm not doing a good job. Like I'm not teaching her the right things and all of the work that I'm doing to like, improve my parenting and improve you to be a more conscious parent is not working, it's not even having an impact with her and my other kids. So I think it like I take on a lot of the, the responsibility and the shame of just like, it's my fault that she's behaving this way, and I haven't modeled it for her. I don't always model like healthy behaviors, and I'm not always good at regulating my emotions." (Marisol, mother of 6-year-old girl)

Apologizing

Sometimes mothers confessed to losing their temper and yelling or reacting, and described feeling remorse after the event, some mothers mentioned apologizing to their children, and underscored that it was important to let their children know that adults make mistakes too.

"Sometimes it's hard to remember that she is still a little girl, and that you know those reactions are normal. And sometimes I have to remind myself like no, this is part of a growing process, this part of the learning process and I have to remember to stay calm. And sometimes I forget. So sometimes we do have those battles, you know those were like arguing with each other. And then I just have to remember like okay well If I'm not angry she'll come down too. But it's them the first reaction is like okay, here we go." (Estela, mother of 6-year-old girl)

Other factors also impacted how prepared mothers felt about responding to their child's emotions, for instance, being in a public space or with family. Some mothers felt pressured to parent in a particular way that they didn't agree with or felt judgment from others.

"The stressor is I guess that on top off living with my mom, living with other people's expectations of our kids should be or like what I don't like is she she's about like 'Oh, you have to eat your whole plate because he's on the thin side,' and so she's 'Like well you guys aren't feeding him enough', and so it's like that's another stress... but I don't want to hear it, and so it would be like lack of respect towards my kids in that, in that sense that I feel my parents don't always give or you know. What else, so that is a stressor like I want to interact with my parents, but they don't want to model, the same parenting that I do because they're set in their ways" (Catalina, mother of 5-year-old boy)

Some mothers conceded that they also struggle with emotion regulation and feel like they are learning how to manage their own emotions while also teaching their child to manage their emotions. These mothers highlighted their childhood experiences, and how they are working to break the cycle of trauma and the challenges they have faced working towards this. When discussing how they cope with emotions, a few mothers discussed seeing a therapist or having seen a therapist for their child.

"I think, for me, when I had (my son), and I say and I'm still learning with my daughter too, but it was learning how to be a parent, unlearning the behaviors that I've known my whole life, calling myself out on it, um...getting mad at myself for doing stuff if I, if I didn't do it right in that moment, and then knowing how to apologize. That's what I had to do. I really had to, uh, I had to like learn how to apologize to (my son) if I acted like in a certain way, you know?" (Gloria, mother of 6-year-old boy)

When describing how they respond to their child's emotions, nearly all mothers acknowledged feeling a level of frustration or irritation, particularly when their child was angry or upset over something that they didn't believe they should be upset about (for example,

wanting to wear a summer dress in the winter). Mothers described trying to find ways to regulate their emotions before responding to their child, by taking space, or taking a deep breath. Many mothers illustrated that this was very challenging, especially in contexts around other people, including family members who have different beliefs about parenting. As described earlier, other factors, such as gendered expectations of emotion expression also impacted added more pressures to mothers. Variances were found in this theme on the basis of generation and maternal educational attainment, such that mothers who immigrated to the U.S. and mothers who attained lower levels of education were less likely to discuss regulating their emotions before responding to their children's emotions.

Happiness with Family

When discussing happiness, mothers frequently smiled and illustrated the ways in which they learned about happiness, express happiness, and how their child shows happiness in several, visual ways. Notably, mothers most frequently illustrated experiencing happiness with their families. Silvia describes how she remembers happiness in her childhood,

> *"Like at some kind of family gathering, which could have just been a Sunday at my grandparent's house to Christmas or something. But like. All my parents, my aunts, uncles, my grandparents, my cousins, like just everyone in the room, just laughing and teasing and playing, you know, just having a good time sitting around in a circle and just. Just talking and having fun, you know?"* (Silvia, mother of a 7-year-old girl)

Mothers frequently recounted family gatherings where music was playing, people were laughing, and relaxing. Mothers laughed and described themselves as "*una gritona*"(a loud mouth) "*haciendo bromas*" (making jokes) and "*muy cariñosa*" (being very loving and affectionate).

"I'm just, I'm smiling, or I'm hugging, or I'm kissing... I am kind of expressive I should say. I'll have, like, music on, or I'll be really loud, or like I'll be really excited about something." (Andrea, mother of 6-year-old girl)

Expression of happiness in Mexican families was depicted as openly expressed, demonstrating that mothers in the current study felt comfortable and free to show happiness with family. Mothers also described their children as expressive when feeling happy and how they acknowledged and encouraged their expressions of happiness.

> *"(She's) Jumping up and down and like "Ahh". She's one of those that she'll be like [waves hands] or she'll be like, "Yes!" And she'll high five or she'll like give us a hug. But she's more of a jumper, like she'll jump up and down and it's like "Yay mommy, I did it, I did it!" That's her form of happy."* (Selena, mother of 4-year-old girl)

Affection was a frequent subject that mothers portrayed when feeling happy. They highlighted the joy they felt when their child randomly displayed acts of affection toward others. In some cases, as Alejandra describes below, children needed to learn about boundaries and asking before giving others affection,

> *"En la escuela tuvimos… la maestra nos hizo comentarios de que abraza a sus compañeros, de que mi hijo abraza a sus compañeros y, y los toca mucho, o sea de, el contacto personal… yo decía, [risa] pues, este, para mí era normal porque entre nosotros, así somos, pero, este, pero ahí si ya no, como ese espacio, espacio vital o el, el no rebasar a los demás. Entonces, tuvimos que platicar con él, compré un libro especial para el espacio vital [yo digo] 'Mi amor yo entiendo que estás muy emocionado, que estás muy feliz, que los quieres abrazar, pero a*

veces la gente no se siente cómoda. Entonces, solo respira y pregunta, 'Oye, me siento muy emocionado y luego digo… puedo abrazarte porque estoy muy feliz? (risa)" (At school we had a… the teacher make comments to us that he hugs his classmates, that my child hugs his classmates and, and touches them a lot, and that is, personal contact… I said, [laughs] well, this, for me it was normal because between us, that's how we are, but in that [situation] no…, like that private space, or not to overwhelm others. So, we had to talk with him, I bought a special book about private space [and I said] 'My love, I understand that you are very excited, that you are very happy, that you want to hug them, but sometimes people do not feel comfortable. So, just take a breath and ask, 'Hey, I feel very excited and then say … can I hug you because I'm very happy? [laugh])
Alejandra, mother of 5-year-old boy

In sum, nearly all mothers described expressing happiness openly and most frequently with family. *Familismo,* the emphasis of unity, commitment, and support to the family, was a theme expected to emerge in the interviews in the context of emotions (Calzada et al., 2013). While only a few studies examine the expression of positive emotions, past research has found that "positive emotional climate" in Mexican families help build emotional bonds (Halberstadt et al., 1995). Given that mothers described themselves and their children as openly expressing happiness, expression of positive emotions could be a pathway to a closer family unit and one way that Mexican mothers show love and affection towards their children.

Chapter 9: Discussion

The aims of this dissertation study were to 1) explore Mexican mother's experiences and beliefs regarding prosocial behavior socialization practices, 2) explore Mexican mother's experiences and beliefs regarding emotion-related socialization practices, and 3) to explore which factors contribute to variation in Mexican mothers' beliefs and practices related to emotion and prosocial behavior socialization. These research aims were investigated through semi-structured interviews in which mothers were asked about their experiences with prosocial and emotion-related socialization growing up, as well as how they consider these processes concerning their children. Results from this investigation expand our current understanding of parental socialization practices in Mexican American families and have implications for informing SEL programs in schools and shaping future research on parental socialization.

Mexican American Mother's Socialization of Prosocial Behavior

When discussing prosocial behavior, several themes emerged from the mothers' responses. Central to their definition of prosocial behavior and kindness was someone who is respectful and empathetic to others. When recalling how they learned about prosocial behavior as a child, mothers recounted their parent's behavioral expectations of *respeto* and memories of their parent's acts of helpfulness and generosity. Mothers drew connections to religion but also stressed the importance of teaching their children about empathy and perspective taking. Finally, a subset of mothers underscored the need for their children to establish boundaries with prosocial behavior, to avoid being taken advantage of or sacrificing one's well-being.

Similar to past research on Mexican mothers' rearing practices (Calzada et al., 2010, Halgunseth et al., 2006), there was a distinct shift in mothers' beliefs about *respeto* when comparing their beliefs to those held by their parents, such that most mothers in this study did

not endorse the belief that children should give unquestioning obedience to elders. Mothers described how their approaches to *respeto* deviated from those of their parents and explained the importance of their children having choices, their voices being heard, and prioritizing their feelings of safety. While not all mothers viewed *respeto* in the same way in this study, this pattern of results highlighted a clear difference between how mothers were raised with *respeto* and how they want to instill *respeto* values in their children.

Mothers also provided illustrative examples of their parent's heartwarming acts of kindness and generosity to the community. Mothers often connected these behaviors as rooted in the philosophies of the Roman Catholic church but also as a cultural value in the Mexican community. The shared history of immigration, poverty, and language barriers are experiences that the Mexican American community has lived through and what draws people together to support and care for each other. Mothers described how they learned about kindness by observing the acts of their parents, often helping others within their community, when they were growing up. They also explained how they involve their children in helping others through religious activities and charity work to teach them about people in need. Mothers emphasized that giving back to the community was a highly regarded cultural value and wanted to continue to instill in their children.

To encourage children's prosocial skills, many mothers described the importance of role models and discussing empathy and perspective taking. Mothers described inculcating a sense of curiosity about others' feelings and thoughts by discussing social problems with their children and using books as resources. This approach of having conversations about others' emotions and thoughts has been well documented in the literature as a practice that helps support children's

emotion understanding, an essential predictor of prosocial behavior (Ensor et al., 2010; Ornaghi et al., 2015).

Mexican American Mother's Socialization of Emotion

Mexican American mothers' past experiences recounted childhood experiences that shaped how they learned about emotions. They reported that happiness was valued and openly expressed, especially in the family context. However, when discussing sadness and anger, mothers described needing to hide and control their emotions when they were children. This led mothers to emphasize that this was not how they wanted to raise their children. Most mothers want their children to know that all emotions are acceptable and valid, but there are appropriate and inappropriate ways to manage them. Mothers described encouraging discussions about emotions and teaching their children healthy ways to cope with emotions. Naturally, mothers were honest about this not being easy and that their own emotion regulation was central to supporting their child's emotion regulation. Across all of these themes, mothers highlighted how they are different from their parents.

Most poignantly, mothers did not want their children to learn about gendered stereotypes in Mexican culture, *machismo,* and *marianismo* culture, especially for their sons. Mothers wanted their sons to feel okay with feeling sad and expressing it openly. As mothers frequently discussed how they differ from their parents, they also described confronting challenges in the face of judgment from other family members.

Finally, mothers shared self-reflection about their emotion regulation skills and how they are working towards being more mindful of how they are role modeling these skills to their children. This involved sharing stories when they were not successful in managing their emotions, which may have resulted in yelling or a lack of patience. Mothers highlighted the

importance of repairing their relationship with their children by apologizing and acknowledging that they yelled or reacted in a way they didn't want to. Mother's described this as a powerful way to build a closer relationship with their child.

Implications

The current study revealed some themes that have been identified in past research and some that have yet to be examined. The theme of *respeto* was clear throughout this study, however mothers distinguished their beliefs about *respeto* from their parents. This finding demonstrates how a qualitative approach provides nuance to quantitative measures of parenting beliefs. While all of the mothers valued *respeto* in this study, the ways in which they taught their child about respect varied. Increased qualitative and mixed-methods research on Mexican and Latinx families would help further parse out how Mexican parents make decisions on cultural values to keep, what to change, and how they practice this with their children. Mothers are reported that this was a challenge for them, given that they have been "hard-wired" to parent in different ways. This finding demonstrates a unique challenge that Mexican mothers face, the desire to instill cultural values in their child but the challenge of re-designing the practice of the values, often in the face of familial judgment.

The Importance of Mental Health

Mother's responses to questions about how they learned about anger and sadness revealed a lot of pain and childhood traumas. Nearly two-thirds of the sample in the current study recounted a story of childhood trauma. In an investigation of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) in Hispanics/Latinos in the U.S., researchers found that most of the sample- (77.2%) had experienced at least one ACE, the prevalence being higher in women than men. Women were most likely to have experienced emotional and physical abuse (Llabre et al., 2017).

Experiencing ACEs has also been linked to mental health issues and child maltreatment (LaBrenz et al., 2020). Although it is difficult to compare this study to past quantitative work, this study demonstrated that the mothers in this study went through significant challenges in their childhoods, which was a barrier to feeling equipped to regulate their emotions. Practitioners working with the Latinx community must emphasize and promote mental health resources for children and family members. Some mothers in this study described how they were seeking therapy and that it positively impacted their abilities to regulate emotions and respond to their child's feelings.

Interestingly, mothers did not vary by generation or educational attainment when discussing mental health. This may demonstrate that seeking mental health resources is becoming slightly more normalized in the Latinx community, however the sample in this study skewed towards highly educated and higher-earning Mexican American families. Even though so, practitioners that work with Mexican families should be aware of the cultural stigmas of seeking mental health support. Parenting programs may be a helpful gateway to learn more about the utility of therapy and other forms of mental health support.

Online Parenting Resources

As demonstrated in this study, online parenting groups can be very helpful resources for parenting information and for community. The Latinx Parenting Facebook group from which several mothers in this study are a part of has over 180k followers on Instagram and 4k active members in their Facebook Non-Violent Parenting group. Although we only have information on where mothers learned about the study (e.g., Instagram, Email, or Facebook) and not on specific parenting groups on Facebook or accounts on Instagram. Our recruitment on social media sites, and parenting groups on Facebook proved to be the most productive source of recruitment.

Further research into the utility of online parenting resources or the benefits of a like-minded online community could be an interesting foray into the ways in which Mexican American mothers learn about parenting practices.

Community Involvement in School Based SEL Programs

When it came to teaching their children about prosocial behavior and emotions, mothers in this study describing using discussions about empathy and perspective taking to help teach their children to be intrinsically motivated to be prosocial. Furthermore, mothers emphasized that children learn best from observing the adults around them. While SEL programs incorporate curriculum that discusses empathy and perspective taking, mothers in this study described creative ways of incorporating these discussions in everyday activities. Discussions about social problems, asking questions about a character's thoughts and feelings in a TV show, and recognizing and labeling emotions were some of the ways they promoted these skills in their children. It may be especially useful for SEL programs in schools to share information with parents that describes some of these simple strategies to incorporate discussions about empathy at home.

SEL programs could incorporate discussion of respect and manners and why they are valued in Mexican and other cultures. Understanding the *why* behind valued behaviors was one of the goals many mothers emphasized in this study. Additionally, mothers expressed the importance of self-compassion and boundaries. SEL programs could also incorporate these tenets into their curriculum. Teachers could engage students in discussions about when prosocial behavior is not needed or when it is important to advocate for yourself. Mothers also highlighted acts of generosity and charity, SEL programs could discuss what generosity and charity is and connect with community and church organizations to get children involved in food drives or

volunteer activities. Pairing this with discussions about poverty may be particularly helpful, as school-age children are already forming conceptualizations of socioeconomic status (Mistry et al., 2017). Additionally, SEL programs and practitioners should take special care in how they approach boys and girls, noting that some Latinx children may be socialized to hide their emotions on the basis of gender. Connecting with Latinx community partners to have discussions about the potential harms of this and promoting the acceptance of emotions may be a helpful way to change this narrative.

Given that this study found variances in mother's use of emotion regulation strategies for themselves and for their children on the basis of generation and educational attainment, increased focus on providing ways to involve parents in SEL educational programs would be helpful as well. Parental emotion regulation is related to children's emotions regulation, such that parents are more likely to respond to their child's emotions in a sensitive way and provide regulation strategies to their children (Hajal & Paley, 2020). Finding creative ways to involve parents, through activities that involve parents and other caregivers could be particularly useful way of supporting children's self-regulation. As first generation mothers were less likely to describe taking these approaches, it is essential that schools build partnerships with families that are Spanish speaking and that all resources are provided in Spanish. Taken together, these recommendations would acknowledge the cultural strengths of Mexican families, increase engagement in communities, and foster children's social and emotional skills through discussions about empathy, giving back, and socioeconomic status.

Future Research in Parenting Practices

This investigation added to the body of knowledge about Mexican American mother's socialization practices of emotion and prosocial behaviors. Similar to past research on Latinx

mothers (e.g., Pintar Breen et al., 2018; Cervantes, 2002; Lugo-Candelas, 2015; Suizzo et al., 2019), this study found that parenting practices are dynamic, nuanced, and do not fit easily into categories of parenting styles. For instance, mothers shared similar values with their children like *respeto* and accepting emotions, however, the parenting practices they utilized to teach their children about these values varied. This variance may explain why Mexican American and Latinx mother's socialization practices are frequently not linked to the same child outcomes found in European American samples. Investigating cultural values, parenting styles, and digging deeper into ecological contexts gives a more comprehensive understanding of parenting than the goal of fitting diverse parenting behaviors into categories.

Limitations

This investigation is not without limitations. Given the qualitative nature of this study, our sample size is small and limited in representing the wide range of variations of generation and other demographic variables present in the Mexican population. This study recruited only Mexican mothers in the state of California, where a significant percentage of the population is Latinx, mothers in this study may have greater cultural supports and communities compared to Mexican mothers in other U.S. states. Additionally, this investigation only recruited mothers and did not involve fathers or other primary caregivers in the household. Fathers are not frequently examined in emotion-related socialization research, however it is known that they contribute to children's emotion-related socialization and can often socialize emotion differently than mothers, as show in this study and in past research (i.e., Baker et al., 2011). While a strength as well as a potential limitation, we recruited the mothers in this study largely from social media outlets like parenting groups on Facebook and parenting accounts on Instagram. This may have shaped our sample such that they adopted more progressive views on parenting like shifting traditional

parenting practices, emphasizing boundaries with kindness, and strongly rejecting gendered cultural scripts. We also did not probe mothers about their religious participation or age of immigration, as these factors impact mother's participation and exposure to cultural practices. Finally, this study only examined emotion-related socialization of happiness, sadness, and anger. While these are emotions that are most easily recognized by young children (Widen, 2013), there is reason to examine other complex emotions that may be especially important to Mexican families such as feeling proud.

Conclusion

In sum, this study aimed to highlight the ways in which culture informs Mexican American mothers' beliefs and practices related to prosocial behavior and emotion. In many ways, mothers in this study depicted how their past experiences and cultural values shape how they teach their children these skills. This study demonstrates the strengths, complexities, and challenges Mexican mothers have faced when making decisions about how to raise their children. The results of this study also point to the utility of taking an ecocultural approach to understanding the goals and beliefs behind particular parenting practices. Increased research that takes an ecocultural and mixed methods approach to understand parenting practices is needed to reveal the cultural intricacies that shape children's development. Furthermore, greater emphasis on the cultural backgrounds of children and creating opportunities for SEL programs and cultural communities to partner are needed to best support children's social and emotional competencies.

Table 1
Participant Demographic Information

Pseudonym	Mother Age	Child Gender	Child Age	Primary Language	Years of Education*	Income	Generation**
Adelita	40	Boy	6	Spanish	18	100,000-149,999	First Generation
Alejandra	34	Boy	5	Spanish	16	75,000-99,999	First Generation
Andrea	42	Girl	6	English	18	100,000-149,999	Second Generation
Angela	45	Boy	8	English	13	50,000-59,999	First Generation
Araceli	33	Boy	5	English	16	75,000-99,999	First Generation
Camila	42	Boy	5	English	20	40,000-49,999	Second Generation
Carmen	36	Girl	7	Spanish	20	150,000 +	First Generation
Carol	33	Boy	4	English	14	150,000 +	Second Generation
Catalina	37	Boy	5	Spanish	16	20,000-24,999	Second Generation
Cristina	39	Girl	5	English	22	100,000-149,999	Second Generation
Diana	39	Boy	8	Spanish	12	<5,000	First Generation
Elena	46	Girl	7	English	14	50,000-59,999	Third Generation +
Estela	41	Girl	6	English	16	150,000 +	Second Generation
Gloria	25	Boy	6	English	16	20,000-24,999	First Generation
Jessica	41	Girl	8	English	19	150,000 +	Third Generation
Jocelyn	37	Boy	6	Spanish	20	75,000-99,999	First Generation
Juana	44	Girl	6	Spanish	15	35,000-39,999	First Generation
Karime	39	Girl	5	Spanish	16	20,000-24,998	First Generation
Lupita	31	Boy	5	English	15	75,000-99,999	Second Generation
Marisol	36	Girl	6	English	19	75,000-99,999	Second Generation
Mercedes	29	Boy	8	Spanish	13	12,500-14,999	First Generation
Monserratt	42	Girl	8	English	20	60,000-74,999	Second Generation
Natalia	39	Boy	8	English	14	50,000-59,999	Second Generation
Perla	38	Boy	5	English	22	100,000-149,999	Second Generation
Rosa	42	Boy	6	Spanish	13	12,500-14,999	First Generation

Samantha	32	Girl	6	Spanish	14	40,000-49,999	First Generation
Selena	44	Girl	4	English	16	150,000 +	Second Generation
Silvia	44	Girl	7	English	21	150,000 +	Third Generation
Socorro	29	Girl	4	English	20	50,000-59,999	First Generation
Susy	27	Girl	5	English	16	75,000-99,999	Second Generation
Yaretzi	25	Boy	6	English	20	15,000-19,999	Second Generation

Note. *Maternal educational attainment is defined as: High school = 9–12 years, Community college = 13–14 years, College/University = 15–16 years, Graduate school = 17–20+ years, **Generation is defined as: First Generation= Born outside of the U.S., Second Generation+ = Born in the U.S. and at least one of your parents was born outside of the U.S., Born in the U.S. and both of your parents were born in the U.S., or Born in the U.S. and both of your parents and at least one grandparent was born in the U.S.

Table 2
Meta and Sub Themes of Mexican American Mothers Socialization of Kindness and Emotion and Sample Quotes

Meta-theme	Subtheme	Sample Quote
Shifting Perspectives in Parenting Practices Mother's named differences in their parenting styles compared to their parents		
	Modifying how *respeto* is taught to children Shifting how respect is taught to children	*"The views of a parent in the old times compared to now, is a lot different…I don't believe in, you know,…the "chancla." I don't want him [my child],…to be scared of me. I want him to be able to come to me, and speak, you know, talk to me about anything. That's not something that I grew up with…"*
	From hiding emotions to validating emotions Shifting perspectives in how to respond to children's emotions	*"Because I want her to know that it's okay that other people feel sad and it's okay I'm okay that I feel sad, and that it's going to pass. You know, it's… I want to just… normalize it for her, having different emotions*."
	Teaching children emotion regulation strategies Mothers described teaching their child different strategies for regulating emotions	*"... Sometimes I'll give her like little reminders, 'Hey remember if you're angry you can go grab a paper. You can rip it.' Um, 'If you need space you can go to your room.' Um, just like little, I try to prompt her but if anything."*
Teaching Children the Meaning Behind Kindness Mothers want their children to understand why kind behaviors help others feel good but to remember to be kind to themselves		
	Discussing empathy & perspective taking Acknowledging the importance of discussions about empathy and perspective taking	*"I kind of just try to get him to think about his brother. 'Oh, brother is crying... He is sad that he wants that toy that you're playing with... umm how do you think that makes him feel?' or 'How do you feel hearing him crying?' You know, instead of forcing, oh 'You have to share.'"*

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>Having boundaries and caution with kindness
Mother’s described the importance of being kind when you can but also being wary of being taken advantage of</td><td>I have to teach her how to feel safe with her own boundaries too. So, it's okay to be unkind in those situations if she feels like she's not safe. That's a fine line to walk because it's very different than the way we were raised, you know, where you respect elders regardless.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gendered expectations of kindness and emotion expression
Mother’s highlighted how gendered expectations colored their childhood experiences when learning about kindness and emotions</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Machismo
Recognizing the problems with machismo</td><td>“I grew up with really, really, strong gender roles. The way they treated my brother was different from the way they treated me. But you know like the things like boys crying. Like I am not going to tell them they can’t cry. That’s not right for me…”</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Marianismo
Reflecting on the problems with marianismo</td><td>“…dedication to the child and to the husband and nothing outside of that. Not questioning anything that she's told to do...stuff like that. Yeah, I was definitely taught (that), but I don't want (my child) thinking that... even though he's a boy...I don't want him to be taught those things about women.”</td></tr>
<tr><td>The Importance of Giving Back to the Community
Reflecting on experiences of giving back to the community</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Connection to Religion
Values of giving back and being kind to others taught through the church</td><td>“My mom...she is a big believer, in religion...So she always talked about ‘Do good, regardless of who it is’.. She always said it, ‘Do good, regardless of who it is.’”</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Generosity & Charity
Sharing experiences of receiving and giving generosity</td><td>“…so I remember growing up, my mom, like, would give people rides, like, all the time. She’d like pull over and be like, ‘Do you need help? Can I help you?’”</td></tr>
</table>

	Shared Experiences and Challenges Awareness of shared struggles within the community	*"I think with, Latino culture, it's very much like, we support each other, we lift each other up. For the most part... I don't think that's the case, in all aspects, but, um, yeah, just sort of, like, doing things in a community and communally... I feel like there's...that level of like, support and kindness and... especially like [when] so many... people who are immigrants, right?"*
Mother's Self Reflections		
	Mother's challenges with emotion regulation Mother's awareness of their own emotion regulation challenges	*"I don't always model like healthy behaviors, and I'm not always good at regulating my emotions."*
	Apologizing Mothers shared the importance of apologizing to your child	*"...if I didn't do it right in that moment, and then knowing how to apologize. That's what I had to do. I really had to, uh, I had to like learn how to apologize to (my son) if I acted like in a certain way, you know?"*
	Happiness with Family Mothers most frequently discussed experiencing happiness in familial settings	*"All my parents, my aunts, uncles, my grandparents, my cousins, like just everyone in the room, just laughing and teasing and playing, you know, just having a good time sitting around in a circle."*

Table 3
Meta and Sub Themes of Mexican American Mothers Socialization of Kindness and Emotion Case Counts and Proportion of Variation by Generation and/or Level of Education*

Meta-theme	**Subtheme**	**Case Count**	**Proportion of Variation by Generation**		**Proportion of Variation by Years of Education**	
			1st (n=14)	2nd+ (n=17)	12- 15 years (n=10)	16-21 years (n=21)
Shifting Perspectives in Parenting Practices		27				
	Modifying how *respeto* is taught to children	26	**50%**	**65%**	**40%**	**63%**
	From hiding emotions to validating emotions	27	86%	88%	**100%**	**79%**
	Teaching children emotion regulation strategies	22	**50%**	**88%**	**50%**	**71%**
Teaching Children the Meaning Behind Kindness		31				
	Discussing empathy & perspective taking	26	71%	76%	80%	68%
	Having boundaries and caution with kindness	10	36%	29%	30%	29%
Gendered expectations of kindness and emotion expression		24				
	Machismo	24	**64%**	**88%**	**60%**	**76%**
	Marianismo	11	36%	35%	30%	29%
The Importance of Giving Back to the Community		18				

	Connection to Religion	18	**50%**	**65%**	60%	48%
	Generosity & Charity	18	**71%**	**47%**	50%	57%
	Shared Experiences and Challenges	11	**71%**	**47%**	50%	57%
Mother's Self Reflections		22				
	Mother's challenges with emotion regulation	18	**57%**	**82%**	**50%**	**71%**
	Apologizing	6	21%	18%	20%	19%
	Happiness with Family	28	93%	88%	80%	86%

Note. Differences of 15% or higher are bolded.

Table 4
Descriptive statistics for full sample (N=31)

Generation status	Number	Percent
First Generation	14	45%
Second Generation	14	45%
Third Generation+	3	9%
Child age at time of assessment (years)		
4-years-old	3	10%
5-years-old	9	29%
6-years-old	10	32%
7-years-old	3	10%
8-years-old	6	19%
Child gender		
Girls	15	48%
Boys	16	52%
Annual household income		
<$5,000	1	3%
12,500-14,999	2	6%
15,000-19,999	1	3%
20,000-24,999	2	6%
25,000-34,999	1	3%
35,000-39,999	1	3%
40,000-49,999	2	6%
50,000–59,999	4	13%
60,000–74,999	1	3%
75,000–99,999	6	19%
100,000–149,999	4	13%
150,000+	6	19%
Maternal educational attainment		
High school = 9–12 years	1	3%
Community college = 13–14 years	7	23%
College/University = 15–16 years	10	32%
Graduate school = 17–20+ years	13	42%

Appendix A

Prosocial Behavior Socialization

Next, we are going to talk about prosocial behavior and kindness. Are you familiar with the term “prosocial behavior”? Prosocial behavior is defined as any behavior intended to benefit another. It can include acts of helpfulness, sharing with others, and comforting others when they are feeling upset. Not everyone defines prosocial behavior and kindness the same way. I am interested in your beliefs and practices related to these things.

When you think of kindness and prosocial behavior, what do you think of? (What does it look like? What kind of behaviors do you think of?)

Reflecting on your childhood, in your family growing up, how did you learn about kindness and prosocial behavior?

> How did your parents and family members teach you about kindness and prosocial behavior?
>
> Could you share a story about a time when you experienced or did something kind when you were growing up?

Thinking about the present time, what do you and your family do to show each other prosocial behavior and kindness? Can you describe an example?

How do you think children learn about prosocial behavior and kindness?

How do you encourage (child’s name) to be kind and act prosocially?

Are there any tools or resources you use to teach (child’s name) about kindness and prosocial behavior? (i.e. personal stories, books, religious resources, children’s media, tv shows, games, apps)

If you ever saw (child’s name) act unkindly, how would you respond?
If you can recall an example, please describe it.

Emotion Socialization
Note. These questions were asked about happiness and sadness

Could you describe a time when you were a child when you or someone in your family was feeling sad?

> What did it look like? (Did people show their sadness?)
>
> What kinds of words were said? (If any)

How did your caregivers respond or not respond?

Were there any “rules” spoken or unspoken about being sad?

Coming back to the present, what are you like when you feel sad now? Could other people tell that you were feeling sad? (to other adults and to your child)

When you are feeling sad, what are some of the ways that you cope with it? Do they work?

Next, I am going to ask some questions about your child’s feelings.
Can you share a story of a time when (child’s name) was sad? What did they say and/or do?
How did you respond?
How did your child respond to you?

When (child’s name) is sad, what thoughts and feelings come up for you?

What’s the most important thing about sadness that you want to teach (child’s name)?

Appendix B

Demographic Survey

Your first name:
____

Q1 Your birthdate
Date (mm/dd/yyyy) (4) ____

Q3 Your Gender Identity

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Non-binary / third gender (3)
- Prefer not to say (4)
- Prefer to self describe (5) ____

Q76 Child first name:
____

Q2 Child date of birth
Date (mm/dd/yyyy) (4) ____

Q4 Child Gender Identity

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Non-binary / third gender (3)
- Prefer not to say (4)
- Prefer to self describe (5) ____

Q58 Your native language is:

- Spanish (1)
- English (2)
- Both Spanish and English (fully bilingual) (6)
- Other (write in) (5) ____

Q60 Child's father's native language is:

- Spanish (1)
- English (2)
- Both Spanish and English (fully bilingual) (6)
- Other (write in) (5) ____
- Not applicable (7)

Q59 Your child's native language is:

- Spanish (1)
- English (2)
- Both Spanish and English (fully bilingual) (4)

- Other (write in) (3) ____

Q7 Do you speak Spanish to your child?
- Not at all (1)
- Sometimes (2)
- Frequently (3)

Q8 Does your child speak Spanish to you?
- Not at all (1)
- Sometimes (2)
- Frequently (3)

Q72 Is English the primary language spoken in your home?
- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q9 What racial and/or ethnic categories describe you? Select all that apply:
▢ Latino/a/x (1)
▢ Hispanic (2)
▢ Mexican (3)
▢ Chicano/a/x (6)
▢ Salvadoran (7)
▢ Guatemalan (9)
▢ Honduran (10)
▢ Dominican (12)
▢ Colombian (13)
▢ Puerto Rican (14)
▢ Cuban (15)
▢ Other (please describe): (11) ____

Q10 What racial and/or ethnic categories describe your child's father? Select all that apply:
▢ Latino/a/x (1)
▢ Hispanic (2)
▢ Mexican (3)
▢ Chicano/a/x (12)
▢ Salvadoran (6)
▢ Guatemalan (7)
▢ Honduran (10)
▢ Dominican (8)
▢ Colombian (9)
▢ Puerto Rican (4)
▢ Cuban (5)

▢ Other (11) ____

Q57 What racial and/or ethnic categories describe your child? Select all that apply:

▢ Latino/a/x (1)
▢ Hispanic (2)
▢ Mexican (3)
▢ Chicano/a/x (12)
▢ Salvadoran (6)
▢ Guatemalan (7)
▢ Honduran (10)
▢ Dominican (8)
▢ Colombian (9)
▢ Puerto Rican (4)
▢ Cuban (5)
▢ Other (11) ____

Q12 How many years of schooling have you completed?
Elementary/Middle school = 1–8 years
High school = 9–12 years
Community college = 13–14 years
College/University = 13–16 years
Graduate school = 17–20+ years

- Your years of schooling (numbers only): (1) ____
- What is the highest degree you completed? (2) ____
- If there is an additional parent who lives in your household, how many years of schooling has that person completed (numbers only): (3) ____

Q15 Your Generation status

- Born outside of the U.S. (1)
- Born in the U.S. and at least one of your parents was born outside of the U.S. (2)
- Born in the U.S. and both of your parents were born in the U.S. (3)
- Born in the U.S. and both of your parents and at least one grandparent was born in the U.S. (4)

Q14 Child's Father's Generation status

- Born outside of the U.S. (1)
- Born in the U.S. and at least one of your parents was born outside of the U.S. (2)
- Born in the U.S. and both of your parents were born in the U.S. (3)
- Born in the U.S. and both of your parents and at least one grandparent was born in the U.S. (4)

Q16 Thinking about ALL of the money earned by ALL adults in your household living with your combined over the past 12 months (including money from various jobs; net income from a business, farm or rental; pensions; dividends or inheritance; interest; social security payments; earned income tax credits; child support; welfare benefits or other money from the government; and any other money income received) which category best describes your total household income:

o Less than $5,000 (1)
o 5,000-7,499 (2)
o 7,500-9,999 (3)
o 10,000-12,499 (4)
o 12,500-14,999 (5)
o 15,000-19,999 (6)
o 20,000-24,999 (7)
o 25,000-29,999 (8)
o 30,000-34,999 (9)
o 35,000-39,999 (10)
o 40,000–49,999 (11)
o 50,000–59,999 (12)
o 60,000–74,999 (13)
o 75,000–99,999 (14)
o 100,000–149,999 (15)
o 150,000 or more (16)

Q63 How many people live in your household and depended on that income over the past 12 months? Include everyone who is living or staying here for more than 2 months, including yourself.

o Number of people: (1) ____

Q64 Is the household's income this year (2022) more than, less than, or about the same as the income last year (2021)?
o Less than last year (1)
o About the same as last year (2)
o More than last year (3)

Q65 In the past 12 months, did you or any member of your household ever receive benefits from the Food Stamp Program or SNAP? (Do not include WIC, the school lunch program, or assistance from food banks).
o Yes (1)
o No (2)

Q66 In the past 4 years, did you or any member of your household ever receive benefits from the Food Stamp Program or SNAP? (Do not include WIC, the school lunch program, or assistance from food banks).
o Yes (1)
o No (2)

Q67 Is the child included in this study currently covered by any of the following types of health insurance or plans? Indicate as many answers as apply.
▢ Insurance through a current or former employer or union from any family member (1)
▢ Insurance purchased directly through a health exchange (2)
▢ Medicaid, medical assistance or any kind of government assistance plan for those with low incomes or a disability (3)
▢ Any other type of health insurance (specify): (5)
▢ The children are not covered by any insurance plan (6)

Q68 In the past 12 months-- that is, since June 2021, did you have the experience that the food that you bought just didn't last long enough, and you didn't have money to get more?
o Often true (1)
o Sometimes true (2)
o Never true (3)

Q69 Have you lived in the same place for the last three months?
o Yes (1)
o No (2)

Q70 If so, does that place have (check all that apply):
▢ an in-home washer and dryer (1)
▢ air conditioning (2)
▢ a personal garage (3)
▢ A stove or range (4)
▢ more than 1 bathroom (5)
▢ more than 2 bedrooms (6)
▢ electricity, heating/gas that are currently functioning (8)

Q71 Last week, did either you or your child's other parent do ANY work for which you/they were paid? Select all that apply:
▢ a. Yes, one (or both) worked full time (1)
▢ b. Yes, one (or both) worked part-time (6)
▢ c. No, one (or both) were unemployed or laid off (7)
▢ d. No, one (or both) are currently looking for work (8)
▢ e. One (or both) are keeping house or raising children full-time (9)
▢ f. One (or both) Retired (11)
▢ g. One (or both) Disabled or unable to work (10)

Q17 What is your marital status?
o Now married or living in long-term partnership with the other parent of the child in this study (1)
o Now married or living in long-term partnership with adult who is not the parent of the child in this study (2)
o Widowed (3)
o Divorced or Separated – joint/shared custody of child (4)
o Divorced or Separated – primary/sole custody of child (5)
o Never married (6)

Q20 Other members living in household that provide care for your child (i.e., Grandma, Father, Aunt):

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