2023

"¿Y tu novio? Where's Your Boyfriend?": A Cultural-Ecological Analysis of Latinas' Narratives of Teen Dating Experiences

Jenn M. Lilly
Fordham University, jlilly9@fordham.edu

Susan R. Pace

Maddox C. Emerick

Recommended Citation

Empirical Article

"¿Y tu novio? Where's Your Boyfriend?": A Cultural-Ecological Analysis of Latinas' Narratives of Teen Dating Experiences

Jenn M. Lilly[1] 🆔, Susan R. Pace[1], and Maddox C. Emerick[1]

Abstract

There is a dearth of research examining the dating experiences of Latina teens—a large and rapidly growing population in the U.S. that reports high rates of teen dating violence. The purpose of this qualitative research was to explore Latinas' teen dating experiences and the familial and sociocultural factors that impact them using a cultural-ecological perspective. Twenty-five first-, second-, and third-generation immigrant Latinas between the ages of 18 and 23 participated in the research. A purposive sample was drawn from the New York City (NYC) metropolitan area. We applied a critical narrative inquiry methodology to conduct in-depth narrative interviews with participants, following protocols approved by the IRB. We employed an inductive and iterative analytic process that combined holistic- and categorical-content approaches to identify themes within and across narratives. We identified the following themes: (1) cultural expectations and norms, (2) parents' rules and expectations, (3) covert relationships, and (4) violence and control. This study's findings highlight the importance of considering the cultural-ecological context in examinations of Latina

[1]Fordham University, New York, NY, USA

Corresponding Author:
Jenn M. Lilly, Graduate School of Social Service, Fordham University, 113 W 60th St, Office 219-C, New York, NY 10023, USA.
Email: jlilly9@fordham.edu

teens' dating experiences, with particular attention to how gendered power dynamics shape Latina teens' dating experiences across multiple levels.

Keywords

Latinas, dating, relationships, teen dating violence, gender

Introduction

Adolescence is a significant developmental period for exploring relationships and sexuality. By the end of the teen years, most young people in the U.S. have been involved in what they consider to be a serious relationship (Raffaelli, 2005). Adolescent relationships provide opportunity for social and developmental growth (Collins et al., 2009) and can impact one's health, wellbeing, and relationships well into adulthood (Milbrath et al., 2009). Extant research has shown that adolescent dating experiences are highly influenced by cultural values and parent-adolescent relationships, yet most research in this area has focused on European-American young people leaving crucial gaps in knowledge regarding the dating experiences of ethnic minority teens in the U.S. (Romo et al., 2002). In particular, there is a dearth of research examining the dating experiences of Latina teens - a large and rapidly growing population in the U.S. (Noe-Bustamante et al., 2020) that reports high rates of teen dating violence (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2019). To address this gap in the literature, this qualitative research explores Latinas' retrospective accounts of their teen dating experiences using a cultural-ecological perspective to further understand the contextual factors that influenced their adolescent relationships.

A Cultural-Ecological Perspective on Latinas' Teen Dating Experiences

Latina teens are an ethnic minority in the U.S., whose family systems often have cultural values and expectations that differ from the majority culture (Ackert & Wikle, 2022). Therefore, a cultural-ecological perspective (Garcia Coll et al., 1996) is helpful in contextualizing Latinas' teen dating experiences within their familial and sociocultural contexts. This theoretical framework emphasizes the strengths of minority populations, while centering the ways in which social stratification and the intersections of race, ethnicity, culture, class, gender (and other factors that influence one's position within the social hierarchy) impact child and family development (Garcia Coll et al., 1996). While a psychosocial perspective highlights the importance of identity

development and the emergence of romantic relationships during adolescence (Ghavami et al., 2016), a cultural-ecological perspective emphasizes the ways in which social position variables influence these developmental processes (Garcia Coll et al., 1996). From this perspective, romantic relationships develop within a particular familial and sociocultural context, within which cultural values, norms, and expectations shape Latina teens' dating experiences (Garcia Coll et al., 1996).

Dating and sexuality within a Latinx cultural context is highly influenced by traditional cultural norms surrounding family and gender roles (Bouris et al., 2012), transmitted to youth through their family system (Garcia Coll et al., 1996). Latinx families often place a high value on *familismo*, or the importance of family togetherness, solidarity, and stability, which is generally considered a source of strength and support, especially for Latinx ethnic minority families in the U.S. (Patrón, 2021). In contrast to the individualistic culture of broader U.S. society, the cultural value of *familismo* prioritizes family loyalty and well-being over individual needs. Research suggests that *familismo* encourages Latina young people to focus on family obligations and seek family approval for their choices, including those related to dating and sexuality (Caal et al., 2013; Nolle et al., 2012). However, *familismo* also plays a role in upholding traditional gender norms and other heteronormative ideals which can be harmful to queer youth (Patrón, 2021).

Courtship norms in a Latinx cultural context are also shaped by traditional gender roles deriving from the Latinx cultural values of *machismo* (masculine gender ideologies that emphasize virility, strength, and the right to dominate women) and *marianismo* (feminine gender ideologies that emphasize submissiveness, chastity, and motherhood) (Raffaelli & Ontai, 2001; Rueda et al., 2019). These gender role ideologies are rooted in patriarchy and often reinforced by religious beliefs that maintain heteronormativity (Worthen, 2018). *Machismo* encourages men/boys to demonstrate sexual prowess by having many sexual partners, while *marianismo* places expectations on women/girls to delay sex until marriage with the goal of family formation (Miville et al., 2017). In accordance with these cultural values, Latino men/boys are generally free to date liberally with considerable autonomy, while Latina women/girls are expected to date only for the purpose of entering a committed, heterosexual relationship leading to marriage and motherhood (Bouris et al., 2012; Killoren et al., 2022; Raffaelli, 2005). In heterosexual relationships, Latina girls/women are often encouraged to be the ones to maintain relational harmony, place their partner's desires above their own wellbeing, curb their sexuality, and remain faithful, even though the same is not expected of the male partner (Rueda et al., 2019). Non-heterosexual relationships are seen as a violation of normative cultural gender roles, and queer Latinas often choose not

to disclose their sexuality to their family members out of fear rejection (Gattamorta & Quidley-Rodriguez, 2018; Kane et al., 2012).

The culturally-prescribed, gender-typed courtship expectations for Latina women/girls are seen as different from the majority U.S. culture (Caal et al., 2013), which views premarital sex as acceptable for men and women (Mitchell, 2020), promotes more egalitarian relationship models (Martinez et al., 2021), and is more accepting of queer relationships (Worthen, 2018). According to the cultural-ecological perspective, Latinx families in the U.S. must find a balance between the values, attitudes, and practices of their ethnic minority culture and those of the dominant culture (Garcia Coll et al., 1996). Indeed, level of acculturation has been shown to influence Latinx youth's sexual behavior and attitudes toward dating violence (Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2009; Ulloa et al., 2004). Attesting to the differences in dating norms in the U.S. compared to Latin America, research comparing perspectives of university students in the U.S. mainland and Puerto Rico found significant differences in romantic behavior preferences (Quiles, 2003), and research with Mexican adolescents found that casual and group dating prior to commitment is less common in Mexico than in the U.S. (Espinosa-Hernandez & Vasilenko, 2015).

Given these cultural differences, teen dating activities can be a source of tension between Latina adolescents and their parents, especially because rules around dating tend to be stricter for daughters than sons (Bouris et al., 2012; Killoren et al., 2022; Raffaelli, 2005). With regard to their daughters' dating activities, one study revealed that Latinx parents were concerned about protecting daughters from male exploitation and premarital pregnancy (and the associated shame it would bring on the family), and implemented rules meant to prohibit or strictly monitor daughters' dating activity (Raffaelli & Ontai, 2001). However, research has also shown that Latina mothers can help promote healthy romantic relationships in adolescence (Killoren et al., 2022; Tyrell et al., 2016). In one study, higher levels of maternal support in early adolescence were positively associated with relationship quality in middle and late adolescence (Tyrell et al., 2016). Additionally, a growing number of Latina teens report receiving messages from their mothers that go against traditional cultural gender roles emphasizing women's submissiveness, instead encouraging them to make their own decisions (Shaffer et al., 2018). Regarding the content of mother-daughter communication about teen dating, one study found that conversations between Mexican-origin mothers and their adolescent daughters included topics such as adolescents taking their time getting into romantic relationships, choosing partners wisely, insisting on respect, maintaining autonomy in the relationship, continuing to pursue individual educational goals, and developing a sense of personal self-worth (Romo & Hurtado, 2022). These conversations, however, rarely explicitly

discussed violence and abuse (Romo & Hurtado, 2022), which Latina teens disproportionately experience in their relationships (CDC, 2019).

Understanding and Addressing Teen Dating Violence Among Latinas

The majority of research related to Latina young people's dating experiences has focused on understanding and addressing their vulnerability to teen dating violence (TDV), which is understood as a form of abuse that occurs between young people during the course of romantic involvement that impacts their social, psychological and physical well-being (Eaton & Stephens, 2018). Latina adolescents experience among the highest rates of both physical and sexual dating violence in the U.S. (CDC, 2019), and further, are more likely to experience adverse psychological consequences as a result (Willis et al., 2022). Research exploring adolescent TDV typologies reveals that among a majority Latinx sample, TDV was most commonly situational, wherein one partner exhibited violent or controlling behaviors toward the other when triggered by specific circumstances (Messinger et al., 2014). Cultural values such as *machismo* and *marianismo* reinforce the normalization of these controlling behaviors among Latinx youth, particularly perpetrated by males, as a demonstration of their masculinity and dominance (Litz & Holvoet, 2021; Terrazas-Carrillo & Sabina, 2019).

Prevention research on TDV among Latinx young people has focused on the potentially protective role that mothers might play through communication and approval, especially for daughters (Bouris et al., 2012). Research has found that higher levels of parental communication with Latinx adolescents regarding sex, dating and relationships was associated with lower instances of TDV for both males and females (Kast et al., 2016). Specifically, the most protective factor against relationship violence for this group was perceived parent caring (Kast et al., 2016). In particular, research has shown that trust and open communication are two factors imperative to foster constructive conversations between Latina mothers and teen daughters about dating violence, while barriers include shame and fear of embarrassment (Shaffer et al., 2018).

Methods

Research Design

This research explored Latina young adults' retrospective accounts of their teen dating experiences using a critical narrative inquiry research design (Hickson, 2016) to collect and analyze participants' stories. Narrative

methodologies aim to capture and interpret participants' stories to investigate how they experience and integrate their life experiences (Dillard, 2020; Hickson, 2016). Critical narrative inquiry combines a narrative methodological approach with critical reflection principles, which include: highlighting the importance of including diverse voices, questioning both researchers' and participants' values and assumptions, and evaluating processes and outcomes (Hickson, 2016). This methodological approach enhances narrative inquiry by using these critical reflection principles "to explicitly deconstruct the participants' stories to question the construction of knowledge, power and reality, whilst the researcher is reflexively aware of their role and influence in the research" (Hickson, 2016, p. 382). Because critical narrative inquiry gathers and interprets rich, narrative data while considering assumptions, values, and beliefs about knowledge, power, and reflexivity, it was thought to be a suitable methodology for this research (Hickson, 2016).

This study is a component of the larger critical narrative research project *Health Opportunities for Latina Adolescents and Young Adults (HOLA)*, which sought to empirically examine and develop a grounded theory of the multi-layered factors that influence Latinas' mental and sexual health throughout middle and high school. Working toward this more extensive goal, this specific study aimed to collect and critically examine participants' retrospective narratives of their teen dating experiences through qualitative data capable of yielding empirical insights addressing the overarching research questions: How do Latina young adults describe their teen dating experiences? What family, cultural, and societal factors influence their teen dating experiences? Consistent with the study's aims, a critical narrative approach allowed for numerous perspectives and truths to surface (Hickson, 2016, p. 387).

Research Setting and Participants

We recruited a purposive sample of 25 Latinas residing in the New York City (NYC) metropolitan area after acquiring IRB approval. This research setting was chosen because Latinx peoples make up approximately one-third of the region's population, reflecting their strong presence in NYC and surrounding areas (Bergad, 2022; Greer et al., 2017). Latinx peoples in NYC are diverse and represent many nationalities, the largest of which are Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, and Mexicans (Bergad, 2022). The NYC metropolitan area's Latinx population tends to be younger than non-Latinx residents, and the majority are U.S.-born (Greer et al., 2017).

Latina females between the ages of 18 and 25 living in the NYC metropolitan area were eligible for this study. We chose to focus our analysis on

Latina young adults' retrospective accounts of their teen experiences as they would be able to recall and describe in detail events in their recent past while also offering insight into the meanings they made from their experiences. We recruited participants through network sampling methods utilizing the research team's relationships with university-affiliated student groups and non-profit organizations. Recruitment materials specified that the purpose of the study was to "understand Latinas' perspectives on mental health, sexual health, and relationships to inform and improve social service provision." We performed eligibility screening via an online survey asking participants their sex, age, family's national origins, and zip code. Participants also specified their immigrant generation and whether they were of Indigenous descent. To select participants, we used a maximum variation strategy with the aim of including a variety of perspectives based on the identifiers provided. Of the 33 eligible individuals who completed the eligibility screening, we invited the first 30 respondents to participate. Five of those individuals were unresponsive, producing a desired final sample size of 25 participants. The chosen purposive sample reflects the diverse national origins of Latinx peoples in NYC. Participant demographics are provided in Table 1.

Data Collection and Processing

The first author conducted in-depth narrative interviews with each participant via a virtual conferencing interface (Zoom). This one-on-one interaction allowed for rapport-building between the researcher, an experienced interviewer and licensed social worker, and the participants, which increased their comfort in sharing their experiences, especially surrounding the sensitive topic of TDV. Interviews followed a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix A) to provide coherence within explored topics across participants while allowing for flexibility to follow-up on or further discuss particular topics that participants introduced. Interviews lasted approximately 1 hr (59 min on average) and were audio-recorded with participant consent. Following the interview, participants received a $50 Amazon gift card to thank them for their participation. Audio files were transcribed using NVivo automated transcription software; they were then checked for accuracy by research assistants. We continued using NVivo for processing and managing data throughout our data analysis process.

Table 1. Participant Demographics.

Participant number	Age	Immigrant generation	National origins	Sexual orientation
1	21	2	Dominican Republic	Straight
2	21	1	Dominican Republic	Bisexual
3	21	2	Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico	Straight
4	22	1	Mexico	Straight
5	21	2	Colombia	Straight
6	18	2	Peru	Straight
7	21	2	Puerto Rico, El Salvador	Straight
8	19	1	Puerto Rico, Ecuador	Fluid
9	20	1	Mexico, Venezuela	Straight
10	19	3	Puerto Rico	Bisexual
11	23	3	Puerto Rico	Bisexual
12	19	2	Dominican Republic	Straight
13	18	1	Puerto Rico	Straight
14	19	3	Dominican Republic	Straight
15	18	2	Dominican Republic	Straight
16	20	2	Dominican Republic	Biromantic asexual
17	18	1	Colombia	Straight
18	19	3	Puerto Rico	Bisexual
19	19	2	Mexico	Straight
20	19	2	El Salvador	Straight
21	20	2	Dominican Republic	Bisexual
22	19	2	Cuba	Queer/Lesbian
23	19	1	Puerto Rico, Cuba	Straight
24	19	2	Mexico	Straight
25	22	2	Mexico	Queer/ Bisexual

Data Analysis

Following the critical narrative methodology, the research team employed an inductive and iterative analytic process to arrive at a nuanced and robust interpretation of participants' teen dating experiences (Dillard, 2020; Hickson, 2016). A cultural-ecological perspective and critical narrative inquiry can be integrated to provide a holistic and nuanced understanding of individuals' lived experiences within their cultural and ecological contexts (Garcia Coll et al., 1996; Hickson, 2016). This integration allows researchers

to explore how personal narratives intersect with broader systems of power, culture, and environment, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of social phenomena and promoting social change and justice. Both holistic-content (identifying global impressions and themes within each individual narrative) and categorical-content (identifying themes across narratives) approaches were used (Lieblich et al., 1998), combined with Hickson's (2016) approach to critical narrative inquiry, which adds critical reflection to the narrative analysis process. We used a collaborative, team-based analytic approach throughout our analytic process to increase the integrity of data interpretations (Church et al., 2019). Our analysis proceeded in 10 steps, as described in Table 2.

Evaluative Criteria

Reflecting the paradigm of naturalistic inquiry, this study used Lincoln and Guba's (1985) recommended techniques of triangulation of data sources and researchers and keeping an audit trail over the course of our research to establish the trustworthiness of conclusions. We also conducted an intercoder reliability assessment to increase the trustworthiness of our interpretations with a Kappa's coefficient of 0.88, which indicates near complete agreement (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). Additionally, we engaged participants in member-checking to strengthen the reliability of findings by sending each participant a copy of her individual transcript and all participants a summary of preliminary findings for their review and response. Participants confirmed that the themes accurately represented their experiences, and in some cases, provided additional insights and clarifications. After receiving participant feedback, the research team met to discuss it and adjust our interpretations accordingly. Finally, we conducted negative case analysis to enhance the credibility of our findings and illuminate the strengths and limitations of our data.

Findings

All 25 interviewees discussed their experiences with teen dating in their narratives. This topic was coded 406 times across interviews, yielding a high volume of data available for analysis. We identified four overarching themes across participant narratives, as well as several sub-themes: (1) cultural expectations and norms, with sub-themes (a) serious, long-lasting relationships, and (b) family approval and involvement; (2) parents' rules and expectations, with sub-themes (a) avoiding physical intimacy, and (b) promoting goal attainment; (3) covert relationships; and (4) violence and control, with sub-theme (a) age and power differentials. Table 3 provides the number of

Table 2. Analytic Steps.

Step	Team members involved	Actions taken	Analytic approach followed
1	First author (PI), Second and Third authors	Listened to each interview multiple times while observing global impressions and emergent themes	Lieblich et al. (1998): Holistic-content analysis
2	Entire research team (all authors plus two additional research team members)	Examined each participant's individual narrative, conserving the temporal dimensions and story structure to allow patterns to appear	Lieblich et al. (1998): Holistic-content analysis
3	Entire research team	Re-examined each narrative to examine the influences of knowledge, power, and reality	Hickson (2016): Critical narrative inquiry
4	Entire research team	Met as a research team to discuss and refine interpretations and practice reflexivity by discussing our personal influences on interpretations	Hickson (2016): Critical narrative inquiry
5	First author	Wrote global impressions and themes for each narrative	Lieblich et al. (1998): Holistic-content analysis
6	Third author	Performed open coding of all interview transcripts and met with PI every few weeks to discuss findings	Lieblich et al. (1998): Categorical-content analysis
7	First author	Checked intercoder reliability by coding 5 randomly selected transcripts (25% of the dataset)	O'Connor and Joffe (2020): Practical guidelines for intercoder reliability in qualitative research
8	First author	Grouped and ordered codes into themes and sub-themes to draw final conclusions	Lieblich et al. (1998): Categorical-content analysis
9	All authors	Reviewed the data comprising each theme and sub-theme and wrote analytic memos for each	Lieblich et al. (1998): Categorical-content analysis
10	Entire research team	Reviewed and discussed the data comprising each theme and sub-theme to finalize our interpretations, applying the principles of critical reflection	Hickson (2016): Critical narrative inquiry

Table 3. Salience of Themes in Data.

Theme/Sub-theme	Number of participants	Number of references
Cultural expectations and norms	25	103
Serious, long-lasting relationships	11	38
Family approval and involvement	8	27
Parents' rules and expectations	24	70
Avoiding physical intimacy	21	53
Promoting goal attainment	7	12
Covert relationships	13	31
Violence and control	8	24
Age and power differentials	7	19

participants and references associated with each theme and sub-theme within the dataset. Themes are presented in order of salience.

Cultural Expectations and Norms

In describing their dating experiences, many participants' narratives reflected the ways in which cultural expectations and norms influenced their teen dating experiences. The sub-themes that most commonly emerged from participants' narratives were the cultural expectation that Latina teens should only become involved in serious, long-lasting relationships, and the cultural norm that the family should approve of and be involved in romantic relationships.

Serious, Long-Lasting Relationships. Most participants expressed that within Latinx cultures, it was considered very serious for a girl or young woman to enter into a relationship. When a girl or young woman did begin to date, she was expected to be in a committed relationship with one person and make that relationship last. As Participant 10 explained:

> [For boys], there was always, like, "Oh, he's a lady killer. Oh, my goodness, he's a player." In my dad's family it's like, "You got game," or whatever. But, girls do not get that same treatment, We get "Y tu novio? Where's your boyfriend? Where's your boyfriend?" But, like, when we bring a boyfriend home, it's like, "Are you going to marry him?" If we were to bring multiple boys home like a revolving door, it's like, "What is wrong with you?" So there was always this level of like, "Oh my God, if I'm going to bring someone home, I have to pick, like, one or maybe two or three, but, like, I can't catch a bunch of fish," you know what I mean? You know that phrase, "There's plenty of fish in the sea?" Well, I should not be a star fisherman, if you know what I

mean. Like, I cannot bring a bunch of fish home and be like, "Do we like this one? No? Okay, no more tuna. Let's try and catch a flounder." Like, I can't do that. It's more serious. It's more serious. Even with my parents' relationship, like, they were each other's first serious boyfriend and girlfriend.

As this participant recounted, the gendered cultural expectations around dating that she grew up with limited her ability to date around, making her feel as though she should only date seriously.

Participant 13 also felt there was a cultural expectation around the seriousness and duration of relationships in her experience, sharing:

I feel like for Latinos, when you're dating it's like, it has to be serious. Like the title of boyfriend or girlfriend or something is really heavy. . . So dating meant like serious. It wasn't just with a bunch of people or anything. Like if you have that title of boyfriend/girlfriend, it's not a joke anymore. It's like more long-lasting. . .It's like the hookup culture here is very popular and in Puerto Rico in a sense it is as well. But as soon as the boyfriend title comes in, the boyfriend/girlfriend title comes in, it's going to be like a long-lasting relationship. You don't see these like two-month relationships, where he was my boyfriend for two months, my boyfriend for three months. It's not like that at all. I think that was the mindset, at least in Puerto Rico, it was really the importance of having lasting relationships.

Family Approval and Involvement. Reinforcing the idea that Latinas' relationships should be serious and long-lasting, participants also described a cultural norm of family involvement in teen relationships. Attesting to the expected seriousness of girls' romantic involvements, participants frequently described the importance of introducing romantic partners to family members. In particular, parental approval of partners was important, and parents often formed close relationships with romantic partners. Participant 17 shared:

I think that's one of the core values, that I know of, of Latin relationships, they are always with your family. My boyfriend was really close with my brother and my sister. Even with the dog. And I was really close with his family, which always makes you more comfortable. When you first know them, no, but then it's just like you ease into the situation. It's just better. But yeah, I was very close with his family. . ..but then the main struggle is maybe your parents not liking that person and you're going behind their backs because you really like them and they make you feel special. . .If you were really serious about the person, they were literally marrying you into the family.

For this participant, it was important for her partner to know and like her family and for her to know and like his. Had her parents not approved of her chosen partner, it might have caused her difficulty. Another narrative showed how the cultural norm of being involved with a romantic partner's family could be difficult to navigate. Describing her relationship with an ex-boy-friend, Participant 15 recalled:

> He has a very close family. And I actually love that about him. That's one of the things I liked about him. . .But I feel like that got in the way because I feel like they were kind of nosy into our relationship, and I didn't necessarily appreciate that because yes, I understand that's your son and that's your family member. But that does not mean you need to, like, be in my relationship, you know what I mean? And I feel like that boundary issue really was one of the errors in our relationship that made it like fall down. . ..I feel like I genuinely wanted his family to like me and I feel like that got in the way of me, like being who I was, if that makes sense. . .I was the first girl he brought home, and I think that was like maybe a month and a half into our relationship because they [his family] were so curious as to who I was and who he was spending so much time with. And honestly speaking, I felt so much pressure because I didn't know whether or not they liked me or, will they like me because of how I am?

For Participant 15, the need to be approved by her partner's family and navigating their close involvement in her relationship were some of the factors leading to its demise.

Parents' Rules and Expectations

When describing their relationships, many participants explained various implicit and explicit rules that parents put in place. Oftentimes, these rules were meant to protect participants from potential harm that could befall them in the relationship context. When reflecting on these rules, participants felt that parents had their best interests in mind, trying to promote personal safety, avoid unwanted pregnancies, and help daughters stay focused on educational and career goals.

Avoiding Physical Intimacy. Dating rules often centered around avoiding physical intimacy with romantic partners, revealing family expectations about daughters' sexual activity during adolescence and young adulthood. Participant 19 explained what she believed were her mother's reasons for prohibiting her daughters from dating:

My mom, she got pregnant when she was 19. And I feel like, when you think about people my age, our parents, like that generation, it was pretty common to get pregnant first and then get married with the person. It was like, obviously mistakes that they did. And just thinking about that, they don't want us to do that, which obviously makes sense. They're looking for what's the best thing for us. And so they think, like, "OK, we don't allow them to date. We can prevent that."

She went on to share that her older sister was allowed to begin dating at 21, but there are strict conditions in place to ensure she isn't alone with her partner. As Participant 19 stated:

She's definitely not allowed to go to his house. I know that for a fact. He has come to our house like three times. But it was like, my friend also came, so it wasn't just him. It was a group thing. And she's allowed to hang out with him if I'm there. So it's all about mostly group stuff right now.

Participant 17 also described rules related to preventing opportunities to engage in sexual activity with a romantic partner, stating:

He would never sleep over and I could never sleep over, which is completely understandable when you're like 15, 16. He could never take me home that late. We always had to be, we could be alone, obviously, but if you were to be in my house, then doors open to make sure nothing happens for my safety most of all. My sister is going through the exact same stage, I mean, she's 14, so she has the same rules about curfew and not staying over.

According to participants, many parents enforced rules designed to limit opportunities for their daughters to engage in sexual activity in an effort to protect them from potential harm. Only one participant (25) shared that her parents "let me do anything I wanted" when it came to dating as long as she was honest about where she went and with whom; however, regarding sex, her mother's mentality was, "You can go on birth control, but don't be a slut." Although Participant 25's parents' rules were more lax than others, the desire to protect their daughter from the potential harms of frequent or risky sex was still evident.

Promoting Goal Attainment. Other participants described parental rules around dating that were focused on promoting educational and career aspirations. The importance of getting an education and establishing oneself in a career was stressed by Participant 20's mother, who prohibited her daughter from dating, as stated:

> My mom used to say to me growing up, "You're not going to have your first boyfriend until you're 30 because you're going to work on your career first. And you're going to become a professional person, working, whatever you want to work in, but you have to have your career first, and then you can think about it. But not until then. Don't even, like, think about it at all." So that very academic, just, the push for academics all the time.

Thus, the explicit rule communicated to Participant 20 was not to date at all so that she could focus on accomplishing her goals.

Covert Relationships

Although parents often tried to prohibit dating or enforced strict rules around it, many participants' narratives revealed that they did engage in dating without their parents' knowledge. Many participants described romantic relationships that they intentionally kept hidden from their parents. In some cases, keeping relationships secret was a way to circumvent parents' rules about dating. Participant 4 explained that she kept her first relationship hidden from her parents because in their view, she was too young to be dating:

> Everyone I knew was dating in middle school. So, I was too. I had my first boyfriend in the 7th grade. I never told my parents because my parents were against that stuff when we were so young. And everyone had boyfriends and it was like, cool to have boyfriends. . .So, it was a lot of texting back and forth. . ..Just lots of talking. Like holding hands during lunch. . .Sitting next to each other on the bus or finding places to kiss and things like that. . ..I never, ever was put in a situation where, like, I went to someone's house or they came to mine just because they were secret relationships from my parents.

Since participant 4's parents weren't aware of her relationship, it was mostly confined to text communications and school settings.

Participant 22 chose to keep relationships hidden from her family members because she had same-sex partners, stating:

> I was super like, "Oh my God, what do I do? My family is going to hate me." So mine was a bit more secretive, I suppose, because of just the nature of like, I'm almost 20 and I still have not come out to my parents, you know? It's just not going to happen anytime soon. . .I used to go with my girlfriend at the time, we would go to the playground by her house after school and we would hang out there. . .Even if I was straight, I would have never told my parents and my sisters.

As this participant shared, she didn't feel she could tell her parents or sisters about her relationships, and she was especially concerned about how they would react to her having same-sex relationships.

When looking back at their experiences, several participants felt that being more open with parents might or did have positive effects. Participant 2 reflected that choosing not to disclose her relationship to her parents prevented her from seeking their advice when she encountered relationship challenges, stating:

> I didn't really tell my parents about the relationship as well. . .And because the family doesn't know, then they can't seek out advice for a specific type of issue that's happening in the relationship. So, those things just pile up to the point where you're just like, you don't know what to do.

Because her relationship was a secret, Participant 2 didn't feel she could turn to her parents for advice about how to navigate it. Participant 15 also shared that she frequently lied to her mother about her dating life. However, when a long-term relationship that she had kept a secret ended, Participant 15 turned to her parents for support, sharing:

> When I broke up with him, I was like dying. I had to go to them [parents]. I already called them the day we broke up, like I had to go home [from college]. I had to go home and be with them, because if I didn't go home, I would have been here dying by myself because I feel like I didn't, I wasn't really close to my roommate either. And I felt like, damn, who do I go to? My mom. And you know, it's funny, she really was there, like she slept with me in bed. And I feel like even though she didn't say anything, I feel like her being there next to me made me feel like she had my back. I look back at that and I think like, OK, like at least one thing came out of it.

Although Participant 15 had kept her relationships hidden from her parents for several years, she was glad to be able to lean on them for support when she needed it. Participants who did not hide their relationships tended to be close with their mothers, which they said helped them feel more comfortable sharing their dating experiences with her.

Violence and Control

Several participants' narratives of their experiences with dating and romantic relationships in adolescence and young adulthood revealed that their partners exhibited violent and controlling behaviors. Some participants disclosed experiences of emotional abuse, manipulation, and coercion. Three participants

disclosed experiences of physical or sexual violence that occurred in the context of a relationship, and at the time, they did not disclose the abuse to their parents or any other trusted adult. As Participant 3 shared:

> So I had my first boyfriend at 15? 14. . . and he was actually my only boyfriend. But we're not together anymore. It was good at first, like, you know, the honeymoon stage, as they say. You know, it was nice, we got along, we communicated well. But then like, it got to a point where it got toxic, like he was pushing me away. He would talk to me bad. There's been a couple of times where he actually did get physical with me. It wouldn't be like he'd punched me in the face or anything like that, but he kind of like, manhandled me, you know, like, pushed me, shoved me and things that I know now were wrong and he shouldn't have done. But at the time, I didn't see it as wrong.

Reflecting on this relationship, Participant 3 recognized the ways that violence and control manifested in her experience, and that of other Latina girls she knew, stating:

> I feel like I wasn't alone in my experience. I know I could say a handful of girls I know personally in high school who were going through the same thing that I was, you know, verbally abusive, sometimes physical, emotionally. Because I felt like that, "Oh, I don't like what you're wearing - change." That's very emotionally abusive, manipulative and controlling. And I definitely had a lot of friends that were going through the same thing at that time.

Participant 14 explained that she too witnessed and experienced emotionally abusive and controlling behaviors in high school relationships, sharing:

> There were a lot of instances in high school where guys would make fun of their girlfriends with their friends, but then when they're with the girlfriend, they're like, "Oh yeah, hi, whatever." . . .My friend was being treated very bad. . .I knew how to console her because I went through the same thing. This guy would lie to her. This guy would be crazy. He would follow her, stuff like that, you know? It was just crazy things. And then people would be like, you would hear like high schoolers, like, "Oh, I wish I had a guy that would be over obsessed with me, that would be this, that would be that." And it's like, you don't really want that once you live it.

As this participant shared, controlling behaviors were normalized and romanticized by many students in her majority-Latinx high school.

Age and Power Differentials. Participants described how violence and control was magnified in relationships in which partners already did not share power

equally due to age gaps. Participants' narratives demonstrated how common it was for Latina girls to date older boys or young men, and the ways in which power differentials between older and younger partners were used to manipulate and control participants. Participant 5 entered into a relationship with an older man at the age of 14. Her narrative demonstrates her understanding of how her partner exploited their unequal power dynamic:

> So when I was 14, I started dating a boy who was 18. And I thought that that gap was very normal, but he was a freshman in college and I was a freshman in high school. And so now, as I'm older, I realize that it's not okay. And that relationship, there was a very, very strong power dynamic at play that I obviously was not in a position of power. And so I think that a lot of my mental health, at least at that time in high school, was very related to this boy and whatever he needed from me. And he was very, I think, unfortunately, now I realize, [it was an] emotionally abusive relationship. He would say things like, "I don't know what I would do without you. I would kill myself without you." Things that made me feel very, very trapped. . ..I very clearly remember this. It was the weekend of the Super Bowl, and I was supposed to go to a friend's house to watch the Super Bowl and the halftime show. . .But he told me, he was like, "You're not allowed to go to your friend's house. You have to come see me." And so I felt really pressured and really like I had no other choice. . .. When I didn't want to comply with what he needed from me, I would immediately be like stupid, or I would be like irrational, or I would be all of these negative things. And it was like either I could do what he needed me to do and I would be praised for it, or I could not do it and then feel awful because I wasn't getting the praise that I needed.

This participant's narrative shows how her partner used manipulative and controlling behaviors to coerce her into doing what he wanted. Participant 14 also observed how younger girls were frequently manipulated by older boys in relationships, sharing:

> There have been like so many girls, Latina girls, who were kind of manipulated in those situations, who were being targeted by those older boys. . .Like here I am, a freshman in high school and my friends are being hit on by these seniors, senior boys. And it was just normal. It was just fine. It was like, "Oh, yeah, they're like older, but, who cares, right?" Like, "Aww, they're in a relationship together. This is fine." But then it would be down the line when they would realize that like we're being kind of manipulated in these situations or being taken advantage of, you know? With the older people in high school, there's like a divide, kind of like who can drive, who can legally have a job. And because a person can drive and have a job and be able to pay for everything, sometimes if there's that imbalance of power, some people can take advantage

of that. And they'll be like, "Oh, but I'm driving you places. I'm paying for our food. The least you could do is this, right?" And that's where it becomes very problematic.

As this participant explained, even an age gap of a few years can lead to significant power imbalances that can be exploited to manipulate or pressure girls into making certain choices.

Discussion

Rooted in the voices and perspectives of participants, this research revealed that Latinas' teen dating experiences were influenced by cultural expectations and norms, parents' rules and expectations surrounding dating, secrecy, and imbalances of power between partners. Considering these findings in relationship to extant research, gender dynamics seem to play a major role in shaping the family, cultural, and societal factors that impact Latina teens' dating experiences. Consistent with the cultural values of *familismo*, *machismo*, and *marianismo*, the expectation that Latinas pursue serious, long-lasting relationships seems to reflect a gendered double-standard in dating norms, as participants recounted that adolescent boys were encouraged to "play the field," while girls were expected to engage only in committed relationships with one partner. Supporting this idea, extant research has found that males (especially Latinx males) are more likely than females to be encouraged by their family members to date liberally (i.e., pursue multiple partners), reflecting a gender-based double standard in the dating messages Latinx young people receive from their families (Martinez et al., 2021).

Participants also reported that they were expected to seek family approval of and involvement with their romantic partners. Both partners in these adolescent relationships were expected to form relationships with their partner's family and knowing that one's family approved of the partner was valued. However, this cultural norm also caused challenges for participants who reported concerns about whether or not the relationship would be approved by their partners' or their own family and difficulty establishing boundaries with partners' family members. Research suggests that family involvement expectations may be due to the strong emphasis on *familismo* in Latinx cultures (Ackert & Wikle, 2022; Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2009; Killoren et al., 2022). One study found that Latina girls (but not boys) who reported high values of *familismo* sought out partners who were also family-centered (Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2009). The same study found that Latina girls (but not boys) were more likely to be involved in romantic relationships if they perceived maternal approval of the relationship (Guilamo-Ramos et al.,

2009). Research also shows that maternal approval of romantic relationships and intimate activity is more likely to be shown to Latinx males than females (Bouris et al., 2012). Considered together, this research suggests that maternal approval of romantic partners is important but less likely to be given to Latina adolescents.

In navigating the adolescent dating experience, participants also reported having to contend with their parents' rules and expectations which often centered around avoiding physical intimacy with romantic partners (which may be influenced by *marianismo* beliefs) and prioritizing academic and career goals over romantic pursuits, a concept supported by prior research (Romo & Hurtado, 2022). As a result, many participants described engaging in covert relationships, keeping their relationship status and romantic partners a secret from their family members. This agentic strategy allowed participants to engage in romantic relationships when they so desired, even if it meant disobeying parents' rules or not adhering to cultural norms. One potential explanation for this secrecy, as explored in prior research, is a fear of shame or embarrassment potentially surfacing in response to a perceived disappointment or betrayal of their parents' wishes and advice (Shaffer et al., 2018). This perceived need to hide their relationship experiences from parents also limited Latina young people's ability to seek advice or support from their parents when needed, which may increase vulnerability to TDV, as research has shown that parental communication is a significant protective factor for Latina young people (Bouris et al., 2012).

Several participants reported relationship experiences characterized by violence and control, which resulted in experiences of emotional and, in a few cases, physical abuse, constituting TDV. However, experiences of TDV were only described by 3 of the 25 participants in this study, suggesting that most participants had violence-free teen dating experiences. Yet many participants who had not experienced TDV personally described witnessing it amongst their Latinx peers, consistent with the high reported rates of TDV within this population (CDC, 2019). Participants' narratives also revealed that it was seen as somewhat normative for Latina females to date older males, which introduced age and power differentials to the relationship dynamic and seemed to be a risk factor for TDV. Other examinations of TDV among Latinas have theorized that age, gender, and race/ethnicity play a role in shaping power dynamics in teen relationships (Lopez et al., 2012), consistent with our findings. It is therefore important to contextualize Latina teens' dating experiences within a societal context characterized by heteropatriarchal norms and a cultural context often shaped by traditional gender role ideologies, both of which assign more authority and decision-making power to boys/men, while proscribing girls/women into submissive roles (Lopez

et al., 2012; Terrazas-Carrillo & Sabina, 2019). Extant research with Latinx adults has shown that traditional gender role ideologies significantly influence interpersonal relationships in ways that can negatively impact well-being (Miville et al., 2017). The findings of this study highlight the importance of considering how familial and sociocultural contexts influence Latinas' teen dating experiences.

Strengths and Limitations

We centered Latinas' perspectives in this research to deepen our understanding of their teen dating experiences. Though this study yielded richly detailed stories from participants, the results are not intended to represent the experiences of all Latina young people residing in the New York metropolitan area. Additional research is needed to expand on these findings, both in New York and elsewhere, and compare between different geographic areas. Although the present study summarizes salient patterns and themes across narratives, consideration of how these themes play out within the context of each participant's life narrative is also crucial. We analyzed narratives both holistically and categorically, however, the categorical approach results in a somewhat fragmented view of participants' dating stories.

We purposefully focused on Latina young people (ages 18–23) because we sought to learn from their past experiences. There are advantages to asking Latina young people to retrospectively recount their teen dating experiences, as they are better able to reflect on and make meaning of those experiences over time. However, this approach relied on participants' ability to recall stories and experiences of their past dating experiences. Memory is fallible and experiences in the recent past may have been recounted with greater detail than those in the distant past. Furthermore, their narratives may contain social desirability bias. Future research might therefore explore the dating experiences of Latina teens by eliciting the accounts of young people still in earlier developmental stages of the lifecourse. Observational research could also be utilized to triangulate the results of this study.

Implications

As the first study to exclusively explore the firsthand perspectives of Latina young people on their teen dating experiences, our findings suggest important directions for future research and practice with this population. This study's findings highlight the importance of considering the social, cultural, and family context in examinations of Latina teens' dating experiences, with particular attention to how gendered power dynamics shape Latina teens'

dating experiences across multiple levels. While a great deal of research has examined interpersonal factors that contribute to TDV (Giordano et al., 2010), our findings suggest that future research is needed to examine the role that societal and cultural contexts characterized by heteropatriarchal norms play in increasing Latinas' vulnerability to TDV (Storer et al., 2020).

Our findings also bear implications for practitioners working to promote healthy relationships among Latinx teens. Participants reported experiencing cultural pressure to engage in serious, long-lasting relationships, which may increase their susceptibility to TDV or increase the likelihood that they will stay in abusive relationships (Cuccì et al., 2020; Muñoz-Rivas et al., 2022). This finding suggests a need for a cultural shift toward prioritizing safety and healthy dynamics rather than longevity in Latinx teen dating relationships. We also found evidence that Latina teens were compelled to hide relationships from parents in order to circumvent parents' rules around dating, which prevented participants from seeking parental support that might have helped them navigate relationship difficulties. Interventions that aim to help Latinx parents set healthy, safe, and realistic rules around teen dating as well as increase parent-child communication about dating expectations and TDV may be a promising pathway to promoting healthy teen dating expectations and dynamics (Romo & Hurtado, 2022; Shaffer et al., 2018). Interventions that empower Latinx parents to provide effective relationship support to Latina teens may also help to decrease TDV and increase healthy relationship dynamics (Fitzpatrick, 2022).

Our findings also point to a need to increase Latinx teens' access to culturally-relevant relationship health and dating violence education that includes a focus on gendered power dynamics (Lopez et al., 2012; Malhotra et al., 2015; Storer et al., 2020). Primary prevention interventions including relationship education programs that teach healthy relationship skills and conflict resolution have proven useful in reducing rates of TDV (Adler-Baeder et al., 2007; Finnie et al., 2022). Many of these interventions, however, have been focused on White and Black adolescents and often neglect to include topics such as the role of gender dynamics in relationships and dating violence, which are critical to Latinx young people (Malhotra et al., 2015). As reflected in this study, traditional gender ideologies are very influential in shaping teen dating experiences and expectations, and are also associated with both the occurrence and acceptance of TDV for Latinx teenagers (Malhotra et al., 2015; Ulloa et al., 2004). The inclusion of these culturally-specific concepts and their connection to dating violence within relationship education programming might increase its relevance and applicability to Latina teens and may reduce the prevalence of TDV within this population.

Centering the voices and perspectives of participants, this study examined Latinas' retrospective accounts of their teen dating experiences. Findings demonstrate that gendered power dynamics informed by traditional gender role ideologies and family values influenced Latinas' early romantic relationships. These findings emphasize the importance of studying Latinas' early dating experiences within their unique familial and sociocultural contexts to inform efforts to promote healthy romantic relationships within this population.

Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Tell Me About Your Early Dating Experiences

Possible Probes:
- Can you tell me the story of your first relationship? How did it begin? How did it end? What were the best and worst aspects of it? How did that relationship make you feel?
- Did you have any serious relationships in middle school or high school? Can you tell me the story of that relationship? How did it begin? How did it end? What were the best and worst aspects of it? How did that relationship make you feel?
- Did you experience any problems or difficulties in your teen relationships? Tell me about them. How did you navigate those problems? What, if anything, helped you navigate them?
- What were your family's attitudes/beliefs toward dating/relationships during that time in your life? Were there implicit or explicit rules around dating for you?
- What were your attitudes/beliefs toward dating/relationships during that time in your life? What was "the point" of dating for you? Why did you choose to date or not date during that time?
- Who did you feel comfortable talking to about your relationships during that time?

School of Social Service Faculty Research Development Program, and the Fahs-Beck Fund for Research and Experimentation Faculty Grant Program.

ORCID iD

Jenn M. Lilly https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2485-943X

References

Ackert, E., & Wikle, J. S. (2022). Familism among Latino/a adolescents: Evidence from time-use data. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *84*(3), 879–899. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12809

Adler-Baeder, F., Kerpelman, J. L., Schramm, D. G., Higginbotham, B., & Paulk, A. (2007). The impact of relationship education on adolescents of diverse backgrounds. *Family Relations*, *56*(3), 291–303. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2007.00460.x

Bergad, L. W. (2022). *Estimating the Latino Population in New York City, 2020* (No. 102; p. 20). City University of New York Center for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latino Studies. https://academicworks.cuny.edu/clacls_pubs/102/

Bouris, A., Guilamo-Ramos, V., Jaccard, J., Ballan, M., Lesesne, C. A., & Gonzalez, B. (2012). Early adolescent romantic relationships and maternal approval among inner city Latino families. *AIDS and Behavior*, *16*(6), 1570–1583. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10461-011-0034-8

Caal, S., Guzman, L., Berger, A., Ramos, M., & Golub, E. (2013). "Because you're on birth control, it automatically makes you promiscuous or something": Latina women's perceptions of parental approval to use reproductive health care. *The Journal of Adolescent Health*, *53*(5), 617–622. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2013.05.003

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019). *1991-2019 High school youth risk behavior survey data*. https://yrbs-explorer.services.cdc.gov/#/graphs?questionCode=H20&topicCode=C01&location=XX&year=2019

Church, S. P., Dunn, M., & Prokopy, L. S. (2019). Benefits to qualitative data quality with multiple coders: Two case studies in multi-coder data analysis. *Journal of Rural Social Sciences*, *34*(1), 2.

Collins, W. A., Welsh, D. P., & Furman, W. (2009). Adolescent romantic relationships. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *60*, 631–652. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.60.110707.163459

Cuccì, G., Confalonieri, E., Olivari, M. G., Borroni, E., & Davila, J. (2020). Adolescent romantic relationships as a tug of war: The interplay of power imbalance and relationship duration in adolescent dating aggression. *Aggressive Behavior*, *46*(6), 498–507. https://doi.org/10.1002/ab.21919

Dillard, N. (2020). Designing research to dismantle oppression: Utilizing critical narrative analysis & critical participatory action research in research on mothering and work and beyond. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, *21*(7), 5.

Eaton, A. A., & Stephens, D. P. (2018). Chapter 10—Adolescent dating violence among ethnically diverse youth. In D. A. Wolfe & J. R. Temple (Eds.), *Adolescent Dating Violence* (pp. 233–260). Academic Press.

Espinosa-Hernández, G., & Vasilenko, S. A. (2015). Patterns of relationship and sexual behaviors in Mexican adolescents and associations with well-being: A latent class approach. *Journal of Adolescence*, 44, 280–290. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2015.08.011

Finnie, R. K. C., Okasako-Schmucker, D. L., Buchanan, L., Carty, D., Wethington, H., Mercer, S. L., Basile, K. C., DeGue, S., Niolon, P. H., Bishop, J., Titus, T., Noursi, S., Dickerson, S. A., Whitaker, D., Swider, S., & Remington, P. (2022). Intimate partner and sexual violence prevention among youth: A community guide systematic review. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, *62*(1), e45–e55. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2021.06.021

Fitzpatrick, J. M. (2022). Perceived parental support in teen dating violence. *Social Work*, *67*(2), 165–174. https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/swac008

Garcia Coll, C., Lamberty, G., Jenkins, R., McAdoo, H. P., Crnic, K., Wasik, B. H., & Garcia, H. V. (1996). An integrative model for the study of developmental competencies in minority children. *Child Development*, *67*(5), 1891–1914. https://doi.org/10.2307/1131600

Gattamorta, K., & Quidley-Rodriguez, N. (2018). Coming out experiences of Hispanic sexual minority young adults in South Florida. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *65*(6), 741–765. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2017.1364111

Ghavami, N., Katsiaficas, D., & Rogers, L. O. (2016). Toward an intersectional approach in developmental science: The role of race, gender, sexual orientation, and immigrant status. In S. S. Horn, M. D. Ruck, & L. S. Liben (Eds.), *Equity and justice in developmental science: Theoretical and methodological issues* (Vol. 1, pp. 31–73). Elsevier Academic Press.

Giordano, P. C., Soto, D. A., Manning, W. D., & Longmore, M. A. (2010). The characteristics of romantic relationships associated with teen dating violence. *Social Science Research*, *39*(6), 863–874. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2010.03.009

Greer, S., Naidoo, M., Hinterland, K., Archer, A., Lundy de la Cruz, N., Crossa, A., & Gould, L. (2017). *Health of Latinos in New York City* (p. 32). NYCHealth. https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/episrv/2017-latino-health.pdf

Guilamo-Ramos, V., Bouris, A., Jaccard, J., Lesesne, C. A., Gonzalez, B., & Kalogerogiannis, K. (2009). Family mediators of acculturation and adolescent sexual behavior among Latino youth. *The Journal of Primary Prevention*, *30*(3–4), 395–419. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10935-009-0180-1

Hickson, H. (2016). Becoming a critical narrativist: Using critical reflection and narrative inquiry as research methodology. *Qualitative Social Work*, *15*(3), 380–391. https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325015617344

Kane, R., Nicoll, A., & Groves, S. (2012). *Supporting and caring for our Latino LGBT youth*. Human Rights Campaign. https://assets2.hrc.org/files/assets/resources/LatinoYouthReport-FINAL.pdf?_ga=2.96465112.539004312.1697135875-1394245692.1697135875

Kast, N. R., Eisenberg, M. E., & Sieving, R. E. (2016). The role of parent communication and connectedness in dating violence victimization among Latino adolescents. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *31*(10), 1932–1955. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260515570750

Killoren, S. E., Len-Ríos, M., Salinas, E., Streit, C. E., & Carlo, G. (2022). Latinx adolescents' perspectives on romantic relationships and sexuality: Exploring the roles of parents and siblings. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1177/02654075221118947

Lieblich, A., Tuval-Mashiach, R., & Zilber, T. (1998). *Narrative Research: Reading, analysis, and Interpretation* (1st ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Sage Publications, Inc.

Litz, K., & Holvoet, N. (2021). Adolescent dating violence among Nicaraguan youth. *Violence Against Women*, *27*(2), 167–186. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801219889182

Lopez, V., Chesney-Lind, M., & Foley, J. (2012). Relationship power, control, and dating violence among Latina girls. *Violence Against Women*, *18*(6), 681–690. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801212454112

Malhotra, K., Gonzalez-Guarda, R. M., & Mitchell, E. M. (2015). A review of teen dating violence prevention research: What about Hispanic youth? *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, *16*(4), 444–465. https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838014537903

Martinez, M. A., Gutierrez, B. C., Halim, M. L. D., & Leaper, C. (2021). Gender and ethnic variation in emerging adults' recalled dating socialization in relation to current romantic attitudes and relationship experiences. *Sexuality & Culture*, *25*(6), 2208–2230. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-021-09873-2

Messinger, A. M., Fry, D. A., Rickert, V. I., Catallozzi, M., & Davidson, L. L. (2014). Extending Johnson's Intimate Partner Violence Typology: Lessons From an Adolescent Sample. *Violence Against Women*, *20*(8), 948–971. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801214546907

Milbrath, C., Ohlson, B., & Eyre, S. L. (2009). Analyzing cultural models in adolescent accounts of romantic relationships. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *19*(2), 313–351. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1532-7795.2009.00598.x

Mitchell, T. (2020, August 20). 3. Public attitudes about today's dating landscape. *Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends Project*. https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2020/08/20/public-attitudes-about-todays-dating-landscape/

Miville, M. L., Mendez, N., & Louie, M. (2017). Latina/o gender roles: A content analysis of empirical research from 1982 to 2013. *Journal of Latina/o Psychology*, *5*(3), 173–194. https://doi.org/10.1037/lat0000072

Muñoz-Rivas, M., Ronzón-Tirado, R. C., Redondo, N., & Cassinello, M. D. Z. (2022). Adolescent victims of physical dating violence: Why do they stay in abusive relationships? *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *37*(11-12), n10362–n10381. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260520986277

Noe-Bustamante, L., Lopez, M. H., & Krogstad, J. M. (2020, July 7). *U.S. Hispanic population surpassed 60 million in 2019, but growth has slowed*. Pew Research

Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/07/07/u-s-hispanic-population-surpassed-60-million-in-2019-but-growth-has-slowed/.

Nolle, A. P., Gulbas, L., Kuhlberg, J. A., & Zayas, L. H. (2012). Sacrifice for the sake of the family: Expressions of familism by Latina teens in the context of suicide. *The American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *82*(3), 319–327. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1939-0025.2012.01166.x

O'Connor, C., & Joffe, H. (2020). Intercoder reliability in qualitative research: Debates and practical guidelines. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *19*, 1609406919899220. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406919899220

Patrón, O. E. (2021). Precarious familismo among Latinas/os/xs: Toward a critical theoretical framework centering queer communities. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *38*(3), 1085–1102. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407520971049

Quiles, J. A. (2003). Romantic behaviors of university students: A cross-cultural and gender analysis in Puerto Rico and the United States. *College Student Journal*, *37*(3), 354–367.

Raffaelli, M. (2005). Adolescent dating experiences described by Latino college students. *Journal of Adolescence*, *28*(4), 559–572. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2005.04.001

Raffaelli, M., & Ontai, L. L. (2001). "She's 16 years old and there's boys calling over to the house": An exploratory study of sexual socialization in Latino families. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, *3*(3), 295–310. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691050152484722

Romo, L. F., & Hurtado, A. (2022). "Know your worth and play it safe:" messages to daughters from Mexican-origin mothers in conversations about dating and romantic relationships. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, *24*(6), 812–826. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691058.2021.1887523

Romo, L. F., Lefkowitz, E. S., Sigman, M., & Au, T. K. (2002). A longitudinal study of maternal messages about dating and sexuality and their influence on Latino adolescents. *The Journal of Adolescent Health*, *31*, 59–69. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1054-139X(01)00402-5

Rueda, H. A., Hoffman, S., & Grytza, K. (2019). Proving their love: Violence and gender norms in descriptions of relationships among rural Mexican adolescents. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *105*, 104424. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2019.104424

Shaffer, C. M., Corona, R., Sullivan, T. N., Fuentes, V., & McDonald, S. E. (2018). Barriers and supports to dating violence communication between Latina adolescents and their mothers: A qualitative analysis. *Journal of Family Violence*, *33*(2), 133–145. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-017-9936-1

Storer, H. L., Schultz, K., & Hamby, S. L. (2020). The role of gender in adolescent dating abuse: An interpretive meta-synthesis of the qualitative literature. *Social Work*, *65*(4), 335–348. https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/swaa032

Terrazas-Carrillo, E., & Sabina, C. (2019). Dating violence attitudes among Latino college students: An examination of gender, machismo, and marianismo. *Violence and Victims*, *34*(1), 194–210. https://doi.org/10.1891/0886-6708.34.1.194

Tyrell, F. A., Wheeler, L. A., Gonzales, N. A., Dumka, L., & Millsap, R. (2016). Family influences on Mexican American adolescents' romantic relationships: Moderation by gender and culture. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *26*(1), 142–158. https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12177

Ulloa, E. C., Jaycox, L. H., Marshall, G. N., & Collins, R. L. (2004). Acculturation, gender stereotypes, and attitudes about dating violence among Latino youth. *Violence and Victims*, *19*(3), 273–287. https://doi.org/10.1891/vivi.19.3.273.65765

Wills, C., Cuevas, C. A., & Sabina, C. (2022). The role of the victim–offender relationship on psychological distress among Latinx women: A betrayal trauma perspective. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, *14*(1), 20–28. https://doi.org/10.1037/tra0000923

Worthen, M. G. F. (2018). "Gay equals White"? Racial, ethnic, and sexual identities and attitudes toward LGBT individuals among college students at a Bible Belt university. *The Journal of Sex Research*, *55*(8), 995–1011. https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2017.1378309

Author Biographies

Jenn M. Lilly is an Assistant Professor in the Graduate School of Social Service at Fordham University. Dr. Lilly's work focuses on storytelling for social justice with Latinx and Indigenous communities. Her current research examines the sociopolitical and cultural determinants of health amongst Latina young people in the U.S.

Susan R. Pace is a PhD student at Fordham University's Graduate School of Social Service. Ms. Pace has worked with children and families as a Licensed Master Social Worker, which has influenced her research interests of access to care for rural youth, healthcare policy reform, and social justice.

Maddox C. Emerick (he/him) is a research associate at Fordham University's Graduate School of Social Service and a practicing Licensed Master Social Worker. Maddox's primary interests are minority stress and identity development within the LGBTQ+ community, which heavily influences his work as both a researcher and clinician.