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Ethnic Identity, Self-Esteem & Intra Group Conflicts Amongst Latinos

Christian Arevalo

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Major:
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Mentor: **Dr. Carlos Eduardo Garcia**

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Biography

Christian is a first-generation student who was born in El Salvador and came to the U.S. at the age of 6. His passion for understanding the impact that social problems have in our society led him to pursue an educational career in sociology. His passion has evolved while at San Jose State University and he now wants to pursue a PhD in sociology. Christian's interest in sociology are race-class-relations, social psychology, culture, race and ethnic identity and international migrations between the U.S. and Latin America.

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Abstract

Unlike Salvadorans, Mexican/Mexican Americans have long established communities revolved around their culture. They have advanced in social class, education and political representation. On the other hand, Salvadorans have only just recently begun migrating and settling in predominantly Mexican/Mexican American communities. Competition over resources and the preservation of Mexican/Mexican American culture has caused continuing conflicts among Salvadorans and Mexicans/Mexican Americans. Additionally, inter-ethnic and in-group conflicts are also affected by generational differences (1st, 2nd, 3rd generation, etc.). Due to acculturation, Latinos/as struggle to retain their cultural heritage and parents often lose the ability to influence their children's ethnic identity (customs, language, social norms). My research aims to contribute to the development and maintenance of ethnic identity and understanding of interethnic conflicts they face amongst Mexicans in California. I will briefly explore the migration patterns of Salvadorans and Mexican/Mexican Americans from past research focusing on ethnic identity development and how it may be connected to generational differences, experiences based on acculturation and discrimination, and family ethnic socialization, how ethnic identity is associated with positive self-esteem, and how marginalization can create group conflict among Latinos/as; specifically with Salvadorans and Mexican/Mexican Americans. The purpose of this research is to educate and bring to light the different experiences of Latinos/as and the struggles to retain ethnic identity and positive self-esteem. Although most research focuses on the Mexican experience, my research will attempt to incorporate the Salvadoran experience— one that reflects Salvadorans' being a double minority: within wider American society and within their Latino/a ethnic group. In doing so, I wish to bring attention to this inter-ethnic conflict that has not been explored enough.

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Historical Background

In order to better understand the Salvadoran/Mexican conflict, learning about the Latino/a diaspora is important. It is also worth noting that the Salvadoran/Mexican conflict is not the only one that occurs amongst Latinos/as, but it is the one I will focus on. Latinos/as from different nationalities have migrated to the U.S for various reasons throughout history. The three largest groups in the U.S are Mexican Americans (or Chicanos), Puerto Ricans and Cubans (Totti 1987). Geographically these groups migrated to different parts of the U.S.; according to Zong and Betalova (2014), Mexican Americans mostly settled in California, Texas and Illinois. Mexican migration to the U.S was caused by the demand for jobs and political instability in their countries. The first wave of migration occurred prior to WWII, and most of the migrants at the time were agricultural workers who were recruited by private labor contractors. The second wave consisted of agricultural guest workers due to the Bracero Program between 1924 and 1964. The third wave began after the end of the Bracero Program in 1965, mostly consisting of male seasonal farm workers who would travel back and forth (Zong and Betalova 2014). During this time period (circa 1965), immigration reform limited the amount of people coming from Mexico and Latin America. Mexican/Mexican Americans have been the largest group since 1980; since 2013, they have a population of 11.6 million, making up 28 percent of the 41.3 million foreign born (Zong and Betalova 2014). Based on their long history in the U.S, Mexicans comprise the largest group within Latinos/as. Not only have Mexican Americans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans and Dominicans established communities but generationally they have advanced in social class, level of educational attainment and political representation.

According to Sarah Gammage (2007), a research associate with the Economic Policy Institute, Salvadorans began migrating during the 1950's and 1960's, but at this time they were only migrating in small numbers. It was not until the Civil War (beginning in 1979 through 1992) that Salvadoran migration to the United States grew in the thousands (Gammage 2007). At its peak (1982), it was estimated that 129,000 Salvadorans had fled their country—most of them to the U.S—seeking asylum.

The Immigration Act of 1990 provided Salvadorans temporary protected status (TPS), but it did not grant them permanent residency (Gammage 2007). Their TPS ended in 1992, but Salvadorans were able to stay in the U.S under the deferred-enforced-departure (DED), allowing them temporary residency and the ability to work in the U.S. The DED status came to an end in 1996 but by then Salvadorans were allowed to apply for political asylum (Gammage 2007). Salvadorans have settled in different places within the United States but have the highest population numbers in Texas, New York and California. Within California, Los Angeles and San Francisco are important cities where Salvadorans reside, but Los Angeles has the highest population of Salvadorans than any metropolitan area (Migration Policy Institute).

It is difficult to talk about ethnic identity without drawing attention to the fact that most research is through the lens of the Mexican/Mexican American experience. However, this lens is necessary in order to explore the issues that many Salvadorans face. My research explores psychological and sociological factors on ethnic identity development and how that can lead to positive self-esteem, and intragroup conflicts that occur generationally and amongst Mexicans and Salvadorans. The purpose of this research is to educate others of the similar struggles that Salvadorans and Mexicans face in the U.S. in the hope of decreasing tension amongst Latinos/as which can hinder group solidarity.

Ethnic Identity Development

Generational differences

The ethnic identity development of Latinos/as is complex due to generational differences (Tover and Feliciano 2009), experiences with acculturation/discrimination (Baldwin-White, Umaña-Taylor, Marsiglia 2017), and family ethnic socialization (Umaña-Taylor, Zeiders, Updegraff 2013).

Tover and Feliciano (2009) examined key differences in ethnic self-identification between 1.5 generation (born in Mexico who migrated as children) and second generation (those born in the United States of two Mexican parents) Latinos/as. How Latinos/as self-identify is an important indication of how they view themselves within a system of ethnic stratification utilized to differentiate ethnic groups in the United States

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(Tover and Feliciano 2009). Rumbaut (1994) describes four ways Latinos/as utilize ethnic labels: national origin (i.e., Mexican), hyphenated identity (i.e., Mexican-American), American identity (i.e. "plain" American identity), and pan-ethnic or racial identity (i.e. Latino/a, Hispanic). Among the second generation, they are far more likely than the 1.5 generation to self-identify as Mexican-American. The opposite occurs with the 1.5 generation as they are more likely to self-identify as Mexican.

Tover and Feliciano (2009) attributes differences in generational status to acculturation level and feelings of belonging to the United States vs Mexico. Individuals who were born in Mexico are more likely than the second generation to lack a sense of belonging, and therefore are more likely to identify with the statement "ni de aqui, ni de alla" ("neither from here, nor from there") (Tover and Feliciano 2009). The generational differences in ethnic self-identification have been attributed to experiences of being teased for being "too Mexican" (1.5 generation) vs. "not Mexican enough" (second generation). Tover and Feliciano (2009) describe the unique situation the 1.5 generation encounter when they visit their country of origin—being told that they are too American, whereas in the United States they are teased for being "too Mexican." The experiences of being teased shape ethnic self-identifications, thus creating a system where generational differences affect how individuals utilize ethnic self-labels.

Acculturation/Discrimination

Umaña-Taylor et al. (2014) describe that during adolescence, Latinos/as are not only tasked with identity formation but also encounter an additional task of developing an ethnic-racial identity (ERI). Baldwin-White et al. (2017) note that ERI is a "multidimensional construct that reflects the normative developmental task of exploring one's ethnic-racial background and gaining a sense of clarity regarding the meaning of this aspect of one's identity" (p.43). The importance of ERI plays a role in adolescent's psychosocial adjustment and in the development and maintenance of self-esteem (Umaña-Taylor, Gonzales-Backen and Guimond 2009). One way that ERI is described to be affected is by acculturation (Baldwin-White et al., 2017).

The term acculturation from (Berry 2003, as cited in Baldwin-White et al. 2017), refers to "the shifting of values, [and] belief systems that occurs from continuous contact between two cultures and is thought to influence adolescent ERI development" (p. 43).

Balwin-White et al. (2017) examined the roles played by acculturation and discrimination in ERI development of Latinos/as. The study revealed that there was a correlation between acculturation and ethnic identity searching—the degree to which one explores their own group membership—where levels of acculturation increased, and ethnic-racial identity (ERI) searching decreased for adolescents. The study also determined that acculturation and discrimination were predictors of ERI affirmation (feelings attributed towards their ethnic background), as the level of acculturation increased, sense of affirmation decreased. Baldwin-White et al. (2017) notes that as adolescents acculturate and experience higher levels of discrimination, they may be forced to develop ERI to feel more positive about their group, while attempting to understand why they are being perceived negatively. The researchers compared the differences with adolescents who don't experience high levels of discrimination and attributed the lack of ERI engagement to being perceived as a normal member of society, therefore, not having to manage the dissonance of ethnic-racial discrimination. Baldwin-White et al. (2017) describe those feelings of connection to the dominant culture decrease the likelihood of adolescents engaging in ERI searching

Discrimination is also experienced due to characteristics constructed in American culture about the appearances of Mexican/Mexican Americans (Tover and Feliciano 2009), and anti-immigration sentiment categorizing all Latinos/as as immigrants—regardless of generational status even if they were born in the United States, there are low expectations for Latinos/as which may create a "shared sense of community" (Ochoa 2000). The negative images of Latinos/as affect how they view themselves and creates stereotypes that lead to discrimination. Latinos/as have long been portrayed negatively on television, with images depicting them as criminals, alcoholics, uneducated, and having low social status.

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These negative images influence the perception of Latinos/as and legitimize how they are treated within society (Behm-Morawitz and Ortiz 2015). The acculturation of Latinos/as to the dominant culture (Anglo) is inevitable but it does not guarantee acceptance by Americans and more often, Latinos/as find themselves victims of discrimination, which can play a role in the development of adolescent ethnic identity (Baldwin-White et al. 2017).

Family Ethnic Socialization

For Latinos/as, adolescence is a crucial time for development (Umaña-Taylor, Gonzalez-Bracken and Guimond 2009; Umaña-Taylor et al. 2014; Balwin-White et al. 2017), when the experiences at home (parents and family) and outside the home (friends, society) can shape the individual's idea of themselves and of their worth in society. This is specifically true for Latinos/as whose ethnic identity is influenced by the immigration status of the family (Umaña-Taylor et al. 2013).

Umaña-Taylor et al. (2013) examined how family ethnic socialization played a role in youth's ethnic identity development during the transition from late adolescence (ages 18-20), to early adulthood (ages 18-25). Family ethnic socialization is described as parents and family members exposing youth to their ethnic culture—such as values and behaviors (Umaña-Taylor et al. 2009). The findings of Umaña-Taylor's et al.'s (2013) study determined that for youth whose mother was born in their country of origin (i.e. Mexico), family ethnic socialization predicted higher degrees of ethnic identity. Researchers have suggested that interactions between family and ethnic socialization are an important developmental process for ethnic identity exploration (the level of exploration of one's ethnicity) and ethnic identity resolution (the level of clarity about what one's ethnic group membership means in their lives) for children of immigrants (Umaña-Taylor et al. 2013). The study also concluded that over time, the way that family ethnic socialization and ethnic identity affected one another had to do to with youths perception of family socialization efforts—described as the motivations to pass on values and expose children to their ethnic culture (Umaña-Taylor et al. 2013).

Ethnic Identity and Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is an important aspect of development for adolescents, most research has focused on the Mexican experience when it comes to ethnic/group identity. There are
differences within how self-esteem may be developed by different ethnic groups (i.e. Whites,

African Americans and Latinos/as). Ethnic groups may experience distinct ethnic and social advantages depending on the geographic area—which may affect group identity and psychological adjustment (Cislo 2008). Umaña-Taylor, Diversi, and Fine (2002) describes the possible experiences that other Latino/a populations go through in which the experiences of "the minority within the larger Latino population could be more adverse because in a sense they are a double minority" (p. 318). The possible effects of a double minority status may lead some ethnic groups to avoid identifying with their group identity to avoid stigma and maintain access to resources (Cislo 2008). Researchers note that ethnic identity may therefore differ among particular ethnic groups which can affect psychological well-being (i.e. self-esteem). Researchers have often used Social Identity theory to understand the development of ethnic identity among Latinos/as. Social Identity theory as defined by Tajfel and Turner (1986, as cited in Cislo 2008) suggests that "Individuals are motivated to achieve a positive 'social identity' defined as 'that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his [or her] membership in a social group" (p. 231).

Having a positive identity often leads to a positive self-esteem. Phinney, Cantu and Kurtz (1997) examined the relationship between ethnic identity and White identity as predictors of self-esteem among three different groups (African American, Latino/a and white adolescents). The study found that ethnic identity predicted self-esteem across all three groups, and highlighted American identity as being more significant for White adolescents but not for African Americans or Latinos/as. Phinney et al. (1997) explains that there is uncertainty about what "American" means because being American is often associated with being "White," therefore, it excludes African Americans and Latinos/as. Nevertheless, positive group

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identity (either ethnic or American) was associated with higher self-esteem. Phinney et al. (1997) noted that there is a correlation between other group attitudes and American identity, where involvement with other ethnic groups members can be associated with feeling American. For Latinos/as, positive attitudes of other groups can predict high self-esteem but involvement can be more salient because many immigrants lack the ability to speak English and are less acculturated, therefore, they may not develop friendships with outside group members (Phinney et al. 1997).

Self-esteem has also been looked at by Cislo (2008) who examined if the relationship of ethnic identification predicted self-esteem and if it was similar among Cubans and Nicaraguan in Miami—a geographic area where Cubans are the minority majority and Nicaraguans are double minority. The findings determined that there were differences with the way Nicaraguan young adults identified with their ethnic groups and how perceived discrimination due to Hispanic identity determined ethnic identification. More importantly, the study found that the level of ethnic identity predicted later self-esteem which benefitted the evaluation for Cubans but was detrimental for Nicaraguans. The research indicates that there may be possible differences amongst other Latino/a ethnic groups as to how they develop ethnic identity and maintain a positive self-esteem.

Intragroup conflicts & marginalization

Language & Conflicts- Language

The influence of the dominant culture on Latinos/as may lead to acculturating and internalizing dominant cultural values (i.e. language, beliefs, customs) which do not coincide with the cultural values of Latinos/as (Castillo et al. 2007). Language is an important aspect of Latino/a culture which contributes to feelings of antagonism and common identity (Ochoa et al. 2000). Negative feelings over language or cultural practices may lead to intragroup marginalization, defined by Castillo et al. (2007) as "the interpersonal distancing that occurs when an acculturating individual is believed to exhibit behaviors, values, and beliefs that are outside of the heritage culture's group norms" (p. 232). Latinos/as navigate through different social environments where they are confronted with conflicts such as; being marginalized by their own family or group members (Castillo,

Cano et al. 2008), and conflicts that occur generationally and inter-ethnically (Tover and Feliciano, 2009; Ochoa et al. 2000).

Ochoa (2000) examined the interaction between Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants, and found that Mexican Americans felt that language (Spanish) was a source of connection or tension with Mexican immigrants. The tension towards Mexican immigrants had to do with their inability to speak English. Others expressed that the symbolic commitment to a common language united Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants. Ochoa (2000) also describes how Mexican American participants disapproved of Mexican immigrants' language, values and cultural practices due to the belief that Mexican immigrants should acculturate. Respondents noted that Mexican immigrants are not in their country, therefore, they should "clean up their act," speak English and be a part of the U.S. Other participants claimed that Mexican immigrants should follow the rules, be good citizens and maintain "our" values. Latinos/as who do not adhere to the acculturation process are often reprieved by being teased or ridiculed. In Tovar et al.'s (2009) study, one of the participants described how in her predominantly Latino/a middle school she was teased for not knowing English, making her feel resentful that she knew Spanish, and making her wish she could speak English. Not only was the participant teased about her inability to speak English, but she was also mocked for her appearance and was called a "wetback" because of how she dressed. Mexican immigrants aren't the only ones who experience tension that revolve around language. Mexican Americans describe experiencing the opposite as they are ridiculed by Mexican immigrants for their inability to speak Spanish, therefore, language becomes instrumental in creating distance between each other due to "real or perceived cultural differences" (Ochoa 2000).

For Latinos/as who are unable to speak Spanish, this can lead to feeling remorseful, embarrassed, or guilty. One aspect of cultural transmission involves teaching the next generation how to speak Spanish; for women (more than men) cultural maintenance was found to be more important. In Ochoa's (2000) research, women who chose not to teach their kids how to speak Spanish felt remorseful. They felt that English was much easier to speak and tried to shield their kids from negative experiences (i.e. teasing). The researcher notes that some Latino/a Americans have expressed

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more favorable views as more Latinos/as immigrate and change the demographics of California, leading to a desire to communicate with their neighbors and co-workers. The desire to be able to communicate can lead to more favorable attitudes towards bilingual education, connections between language, culture and self-esteem, and these are viewed as important aspects of education in school for Latino/a parents and their children (Ochoa 2000). Language can be a source of connection or tension for Latinos/as, but it can also lead to harsh sentiments by non-Latino/a group members who feel that Latinos/as need to acculturate.

Conflict – Family

Family is an important factor in the transmission of cultural values and language, but as individuals transition from adolescence to young adults, many acculturate and internalize the cultural values of American culture (Umaña-Taylor, Gonzales-Backen, and Guimond 2009; Umaña-Taylor et al. 2013; Umaña-Taylor et al. 2014). Previous research has focused on Latinos/as in the university environment because it is a place that consists of White American values and beliefs (Castillo et al. 2004; Castillo et al. 2008). It is important because it is one of many social environment's Latinos/as must navigate through thatforces them to acculturate. It is also significant because immigrant parents acculturate and adopt aspects of the dominant culture at a slower pace than their children (Castillo et al. 2008). The different acculturation levels between older family members and children and the ability to retain aspects of their heritage may be oppositional to what family may expect of their children (Lee and Liu 2001). Therefore, it may lead to family conflict and marginalization.

Castillo et al. (2008) examined the impact of family conflict and intergroup marginalization of Latino/a college students. The study determined that participants who were bicultural (having a combination of cultural attitudes and customs of two nations or ethnic groups), experienced family conflict and marginalization from family members. Marginalization from family contributed to acculturation stress by Latino/a college students (Castillo et al. 2008). Acculturation stress as noted by Roccas, Horenczyk, and Schwartz (2000) (as cited in Castillo et al. 2008) can be experienced "when two cultural group norms and values are incompatible" (p. 44). These

researchers found higher acculturative stress to be attributed to low parental income, low generational status, low acculturation level, higher levels of family conflict, and experiences of family intragroup marginalization. One way Latinos/as may display negative feelings towards acculturation of White American behaviors and attitudes is by teasing and marginalizing members with phrases such as "brown on the outside" but "white on the inside" (Castillo et al. 2008). As noted earlier, Latinos/as are teased for being "too Mexican" or not "Mexican enough." The experiences of being marginalized can lead to interpersonal distancing from the family (Castillo et al. 2008), which may affect the transmission of cultural values needed to identify with one's ethnic identity.

Inter-Ethnic Conflict (Salvadoran and Mexican Animosity)

Capitalism has caused changes to many countries in Latin America, including El Salvador and Mexico (Osuna 2015). Many migrants that come to the U.S. are exploited as a source of cheap labor, forced to work in labor intensive jobs within the minimum wage sector (Robinson 1993). Osuna (2015) states that from the moment Latinos/as arrive from their country of origin, they are placed in competition with "those who own the means of production and exploit their labor power" (p. 241). The researcher notes that ethnicity in the U.S. has been ascribed through a class system of "racialized capitalism," where race is used as a form of stratification (Osouna 2015). The researcher notes Latino/a communities where a minority group within a larger one has been unfairly treated and tensions are developed amongst each other that have to be "fought through."

Osouna (2015) examined the intra-Latino/a struggles between Salvadorans and Mexicans that focused on tensions and experiences observed in these communities. Much of the hostility that surfaced stemmed from the struggles over resources (i.e. jobs) (Osouna 2015). One participant noted that the struggle over resources become a competition amongst ethnic groups. The tensions that are experienced over resources may also develop hierarchies of language where Salvadoran Spanish may be viewed as inferior to Mexican Spanish (Osouna 2015). The sense of "superiority/inferiority" transpires through Salvadorans looking down upon Mexicans for their strong indigenous presence whereas Salvadorans believe

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they are superior because they do not have an indigenous presence in their country.

Osuna (2015) describes feelings of tension as stemming from being "lumped" together, as Salvadorans want to be recognized separately and differently from Mexicans but images constructed of Latinos/as create stereotypes and generalize the idea that all Latinos/as come from Mexico. Another source of tension is described as the idea of "Mexicanization" which is a method of survival for Salvadorans who feel they are forced to adapt to find important resources (such as jobs and housing). This idea of "Mexicanization" may lead Salvadorans to adopt certain behaviors to fit in Mexican communities and is important because "this is a part of a larger structure of assimilation. Since Salvadorans have to lose their 'Salvadoreaness' to adopt to Mexican culture, they begin to accept their marginality" (p. 246).

Salvadorans and Mexicans don't just experience hostility and animosity towards each other, they often experience similar structural conditions from dealings with "racialized class, and gendered forms of exploitation" (P. 247). Osouna (2015) explains that this is why some refer to feelings of being in "the same boat", specifically during moments of xenophobia where all Latinos/as feel the need to come together and not be a separate group, based on ethnicity or nationality. Osouna's (2015) research highlight the animosity and social relations between Salvadorans and Mexicans, the tensions and solidarity that come from conditions of marginalization and exploitation, and issues of hostility that stem from larger structural forces which pits marginalized groups against each other.

Methods

I conducted in-depth interviews with four Latinos, two males and two females. The names of all participants have been changed due to privacy concerns. Diego is 33, Mexican American and was born in San Francisco. Pete is 26, Salvadoran and was born in San Francisco. April is 23, Salvadoran, and was born in El Salvador and came to the U.S. at the age of 11. Rita is 30, Salvadoran and was born in San Francisco.

All of the participants' parents were not born in the United States. The participants had either obtained a Bachelor's or Associate's degree or were in college pursuing a degree. All conversations were recorded and

transcribed and were used to conduct data analysis to explore common themes and differences that participants may have experienced generationally and inter-ethnically.

The participants were asked 20 questions revolving around peer group/social networks, childrearing, language use, school, family history/background, holiday celebrations/ethnic customs, travel experience and ethnic identity issues.

Discussion

The following results describe the common themes and differences that Latinos/as experience in their communities and social environments that affect inter-ethnic relations, self-esteem and ethnic identity. Latinos/as often have difficulties identifying with race because it mainly focuses on physical characteristics as opposed to ethnicity, which focuses on social and cultural characteristics (Porter and Washington 1993). Participants attributed learning about their ethnicity/culture to their family, specifically their parents.

> remember where you're from, you're Mexican, speak Spanish to me. You can count your friends on one hand…we're always [going] to be here…we're here for each other, we [have to] support each other. (Diego, 2018, personal communication)

> The person I am is because of my parents. I am who I am because of my culture, of my Salvadoran culture…That's why I ended up knowing the food, the music, the values, everything. I feel like it comes from that mindset, and I think passing that down and not forgetting who you are and where you come from is always important. I believe when we lose identity of who we are…things just kind of unravel, like we can't really find ourselves…making sure we keep in touch with our roots is very important. (Pete, 2018, personal communication)

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Family is very important in the development of ethnic identity. This is consistent with research focusing on family ethnic socialization efforts that expose them to values and behaviors of their ethnic culture (Umaña-Taylor at al. 2013). It is important to note that feelings of positive identity can lead to higher self-esteem (Phinney et al. 1997). For Salvadorans positive group identity and self-esteem may be more important because California is a geographic area where the majority minority Latino/a population is Mexican/Mexican American and Salvadoran are in a sense a double minority. The influence of family ethnic socialization at a young age determined what aspects of culture participants wanted their kids to learn. Diego was one of two participants with kids, and found himself mimicking what his mother taught him growing up.

> family is here for you, we're always [going to] have your back…I have unconditional love for you (Diego, 2018, personal communication)

> [family] didn't really push it one me so I don't know why I should push it on them (Rita, 2018, personal communication

This demonstrates that family plays a big role with how one identifies with one's ethnic culture and what aspects one feels are important to pass on to the next generation. The opposite may also occur with those who lacked family ethnic socialization efforts. Although many of the participants maintained aspects of their culture from adolescence to adulthood, it was inevitable that they would become acculturated by American culture and values.

> Even though I wanted to hang out with Latinos I kind of didn't. I didn't feel I was a part of the Latino "crew" because I wasn't "traditional" Mexican…they always wanted to talk Spanish all of the time and I didn't…they would talk about things… I didn't know what the "heck" they were talking about. Like traditional culture stuff…the way they were dressing…I never felt accepted by my own culture… it was like, it was too ethnic for me. (Diego, 2018, personal communication)

Language is one of the most visible forms of acculturation and may sometimes lead to intragroup marginalization and feelings of antagonism. Because language creates a sense of common identity, not wanting to speak Spanish may be viewed as straying away from heritage, culture, and group norms (Castillo et al. 2007). This is also consistent with research on how language can be a source of tension amongst Latinos/as (Ochoa et al 2000). Many of the social spaces that Latinos/as navigate through force them to speak English and may lead to speaking one language better than the other. A social environment where individuals are forced to acculturate to the dominant culture is the university environment because it is a place that consists of White American values and beliefs (Castillo et al. 2004; Castillo et al. 2008). For Pete it was also a place that lacked diversity, therefore, he was unable to talk to other people like him in his own language.

> I have gotten accustomed to speaking more in English, especially going to schools like at USC. People there don't speak Spanish… there wasn't a lot of Latinos there…[USC] was unfriendly to the cultural diversity…but their diversity that they mean is a bit different, they're talking more about the Asian diversity, the Indians, the Koreans etc. They even got more Middle Eastern than people from around L.A (Pete, 2018, personal communication).

Pete's experience is unique due to him growing up in San Francisco, Concord and going to school in Southern California. His experience reflects the social relations that occur based on geographic area between Salvadorans and Mexicans and how both groups marginalize each other to create an ongoing conflict.

> When we moved to Concord everything changed… I started to realize I was different from people, even though I wasn't, my background was different… I felt really excluded at that time, [Mexicans] really categorized me, and they would call me names. Even though at times we were friends they were really discriminating against me… it wasn't just Salvadorans, it was other Central Americans that felt kind of excluded out there, we kind of

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> felt like 'man we're not like them'…and it almost felt like the way we did it was wrong and the way they did it was right"… and so there's this kind of ignorance that people kind of like 'well they don't like us, so we're not [going] like you' (Pete, 2018, personal communication).

> In LA it almost seems like a lot of Salvadorans assimilate to avoid problems… some of my close friends… they were kind of 'iffy' about it when I told them that I was Salvadoran…'honestly when you first told me that you were Salvadoran I was kind of unsure because we don't really talk to Salvadorans like that'… at first they didn't know, I didn't trust you, I didn't know if I wanted to be your friend (Pete, 2018, personal communication).

These feelings of inter-ethnic conflict are consistent with Latino/a communities where a minority group within a larger one has been unfairly treated, and tensions are developed amongst each other that have to be "fought through" (Osouna 2015). Some of these feelings that have to be "fought through" may also stem from Salvadorans wanting to have access to resources. This may explain why the participant described that some Salvadorans have to assimilate to not be discriminated. Salvadorans have been noted to go through a form of "Mexicanization" in order to fit in and have access to resources (Osouna 2015).

It is a constant struggle for Latinos/as where differences in geographic area, ethnic socialization, language, and self-esteem may play a role in how they view themselves and their identity positively. Outside of their own ethnic groups, images of Latinos/as as a group are generalized as all being Mexicans and are often portrayed negatively (Behm-Morawitz and Ortiz, 2015), therefore, there are low expectations of them (Ochoa 2000).

> When [people] assume I'm Mexican it just makes me mad because everyone thinks that all Latinos are from Mexico, which is not true (April, 2018, personal communication).

> I feel like the way I speak Spanish…it's very different from like Mexicans [or] to another [country]. That's something I'm very

> proud of because at the end of the day I feel like that's what I carry (Rita, 2018, personal communication).

Because Latinos/as are "lumped" into one category it is sometimes difficult to differentiate themselves from other Latino/a ethnic groups which participants highlight as something that is frustrating and is important for others to acknowledge because there are slight differences among them.

Conclusion

A positive ethnic identity is very important for Latinos/as to develop and families play a major role in how it is developed because it keeps them connected to their roots. Outside of the home, the social environments that Latinos/as navigate through force them to acculturate to the dominant culture because it revolves around White American values and beliefs. Latinos/as constantly have to juggle between both cultures but this can be alleviated if they have a strong understanding of their group identity and have a positive self-esteem. Language for Latinos/as is very important and can create a sense of common identity or create tensions for those that are not able to speak the language.

This study contributed to understandings of the different experiences and conflicts that Salvadorans and Mexicans encounter in California. Nevertheless, the study had limitations to acknowledge for the purpose of conducting future research. First, the study was limited to a small sample group, focusing on only two ethnic groups which may not generalize to other Latino/a ethnic groups. It also did not focus on different social classes to see if this had any effects on the experiences of these two Latino/a ethnic groups. Further research should focus on other Latino/a groups to see if ethnic identity development and different intra-group conflicts that may stem from being a double minority within a minority group may vary.

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