The Interaction of Country of Origin, Acculturation, and Gender Role Ideology on Wife Abuse*

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Objective. Using data from the Mexican American Prevalence and Services Survey (Vega et al., 1998), this research tests whether the impact of acculturation and gender role ideology on wife abuse depends on country of origin. *Methods.* Two separate logistic regressions, one for U.S.-born Latinas and one for Mexican-born Latinas, are compared to test the impact of the interaction of place of origin with the other variables. *Results.* Our findings support earlier research indicating that power dynamics within a relationship impact the likelihood of a wife reporting she has experienced abuse. Significant differences in the influence of independent variables are found when comparing U.S.- and Mexican-born respondents. In particular, variables related to family power dynamics operate differently. Gender role beliefs, however, have an independent influence for both groups after controlling for sociodemographic factors and power dynamics. Women with more traditional orientations are less likely to report abuse. *Conclusions.* Because the impact of gender role ideology is significant and in the same direction for both those born in the United States and those born in Mexico, it is unlikely that the traditional familism and gender role orientations reported among the Mexican born afford them greater protection against abuse.

Hispanics have become among the most rapidly growing ethnic groups, and as a result have become more important to the nation's economy, culture, and social structure. Thus the processes of Latino/a integration into the economy and social assimilation into the society at large have become important research issues. One important domain of research associated with Latinos/as has been the structure and social dynamics of the family. The influence of culture change on interpersonal behaviors of family mem-

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bers is one such research domain. For example, several studies have found higher rates of wife abuse among Latino/a families compared to Anglo families (Straus and Smith, 1990; Sorenson and Telles, 1988; Torres, 1991; Perilla, Bakeman, and Norris, 1994; Sorenson, 1996). Although the etiology of the relationship is not obvious, some research has linked cultural orientation to wife abuse (Jasinski, 1998; Firestone, Lambert, and Vega, 1999; Firestone, Harris, and Vega, 2003). It may be the case that the stresses associated with the acculturation process increase likelihood of abuse (Sorenson and Telles, 1988; Torres, 1991; Jasinski, 1998; Firestone, Lambert, and Vega, 1999; Firestone, Harris, and Vega, 2003). Alternatively, low acculturation levels may reduce educational attainment and limit occupational choices, which could increase a woman's risk for abuse (Sabogal et al., 1987; Champion, 1996; Lambert and Firestone, 2000; Firestone, Harris, and Vega, 2003).

The lack of consistent findings has been attributed to two main sources: (1) using different indicators of culture change (Jasinski, 1998) and/or (2) group differences among the Latino/a population (e.g., Mexican American, Cuban, Puerto Rican) may impact findings (Kantor, Jasinski, and Aldarondo, 1994; Jasinski, 1998; Segura, 1992). In either case, the process of acculturation may be accompanied by changes in family dynamics, including expectations about appropriate role behavior for men and women. To the extent that varying levels of acculturation create different gender role expectations and gender role attitudes, there could be concomitant shifts in the prevalence and frequency of wife abuse. In this article we examine the links between acculturation and frequency of self-reported abuse by Latinas.

Acculturation and Family Issues

A strong identification with and attachment of individuals to their families has been associated with Latino/a culture (Mirande and Enriques, 1979; Sabogal et al., 1987; Ybarra, 1988; Vega, 1990). Past research indicated that, compared to other ethnic groups, Mexican Americans prefer a higher intensity of face-to-face contact with family members and are more likely to view the family as a place of emotional and instrumental support (Keefe, 1994; Mindle, 1980). In particular, working-class Hispanic women are said to place a high value on the maternal and related domestic roles, and that this value preference is reinforced by parents and husbands who discourage the women from gaining higher levels of education and career skills (Mirande and Enriques, 1979; Ybarra, 1988; Wildsmith, 2004). If this is the case, one would expect that such "familistic" behaviors could be expected to erode with intergenerational acculturation and with changes in family structure that produce female labor-force patterns similar to other race/ethnic groups (Firestone and Harris, 1994; Wildsmith, 2004). There is some evidence that the behaviors and attitudes associated with strong

familism (as well as other Latino/a cultural values) weaken with increasing contact with U.S. mainstream culture (Sabogal et al., 1987; Firestone and Harris, 1994; Garza and Gallegos, 1995; Harris and Firestone, 1997; Jasinski, 1998).

Such traditional cultural explanations have been criticized for ignoring the role of social institutions, labor-market structures, and the power of majority ideologies in shaping individual decisions (Tienda, 1980; Baca Zinn, 1982, 1994; Ybarra, 1988; Fernandez Kelly, 1991; Williams, 1990; Segura, 1992), and for assuming that the experience of individuals within race/ethnic groups is homogeneous (Brubaker, 2001; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). Thus traditional expectations about gender roles in Mexican-origin families may not be rigid or necessarily lead to less egalitarian decision making (Baca-Zinn, 1976; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Ybarra, 1982). That is, Latino/a families may retain symbolic allegiance to traditional gender roles but in practice be adaptive in actual role behaviors as required by the structural demands of their daily lives (Firestone and Harris, 1994; Wildsmith, 2004). Latinos/as, strongly expressed familial values may themselves represent a necessary adaptation that keeps them socially and economically marginal (Baca Zinn and Eitsen, 2002). To the extent that stereotypical gender role expectations may become less traditional and less restrictive toward women as groups become more acculturated (Vega, 1990; Ginorio et al., 1996; Firestone, Lambert, and Vega, 1999; Harris and Firestone, 1998; Wildsmith, 2004), we expect that as Latinas become more acculturated they may adopt a less traditional perspective with respect to gender role behaviors and attitudes. These changes may help us understand the factors influencing risk for intimate abuse.

Feminism, Marital Power, Gender Roles, and Wife Abuse

According to some feminist researchers, issues of power and gender are the ultimate origin of intimate violence because intimate violence may be viewed as part of a system of coercive controls that serves to create and maintain male dominance and an imbalance of power between husband and wife (Anderson, 1997; Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Martin, [1976] 1983; Pagelow, 1992; Pence and Paymar, 1993; Schechter, 1982; Stark and Flitcraft, 1991; Walker, 1986; Yllö, 1993). These researchers suggest that male power in marriage could provide an opportunity for men to feel dominant despite their powerlessness in a capitalist system. Men who are jealous, controlling, or verbally abusive, all attempts to assert male dominance, are more likely to sexually assault their wives or partners (Tjaden and Thoennes, 2000). Alternatively, others argue that these feminist scholars ignore the impact of other important factors such as income, unemployment, and age while concentrating on patriarchal power relations (Gelles, 1993; Gelles and Straus, 1988). In spite of recent changes, it remains the case that on average

women hold a lower status than men in the family and in economic, educational, political, and legal institutions.[1]

Violence can be used as an instrumental and "legitimate" means to gain power for a number of reasons. First and foremost, socialization processes in Western culture teach and encourage men to maintain power over women and other men (Blood and Wolfe, 1960). Second, these same gender role socialization processes encourage men to behave in aggressive, often violent ways (see, e.g., Messerschmidt, 1993). From this perspective, use of violence can be viewed as a legitimate means of asserting authority when engaged in conflict with a partner. According to Blood and Wolfe (1960), a man can no longer necessarily exercise power simply because he is "the man of the house." He must sometimes "prove" his right to power or win power in order to exercise it. Brute force is one way this can be accomplished.

The relationship between conflict and violence in a relationship has been linked in complicated ways to the power structure of the marriage as well as the degree of consensus concerning the power distribution between the husband and wife (Babcock et al., 1993; Coleman and Straus, 1986; Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1990). Asymmetrical marital relations are found to produce greater levels of stress and conflict than egalitarian ones (Lenton, 1995; Firestone, Harris, and Vega, 2003). Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz (1980) found that marriages based on an egalitarian structure have the lowest rates of abuse. Coleman and Straus (1986) further suggested that consensus about the legitimacy of the existing power structure, whether egalitarian or not, reduced the overall chance of violence, but when conflict occurred there was a higher risk for violence. Other research suggests that the impacts of decision making and socioeconomic power on violence in domestic relationships may be moderated by other interaction processes such as communication skills (Babcock et al., 1993) or the wife's control over expressive resources (Kulik, 1999). In both of the latter cases, gender roles emerge as important. First, women are socialized to be better at communicating within relationships (Peplau, 1983), and second, gender role attitudes may impact the normative context of the marriage (Kulik, 1999; Babcock et al., 1993). Gender role attitudes change over time (Harris and Firestone, 1998) and may change situationally (Kulik, 1999; Babcock et al., 1993), thus altering power dynamics and suggesting a complex and dynamic model for understanding abuse and violence in domestic relationships.

In other words, violence against women cannot be separated from the cultural and social-structural context in which such acts occur. This context includes patriarchal institutions, sexist norms, and the historical legacy of male dominance, which socializes men and women and supports, condones, and legitimates men's violence toward women (Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Harris and Firestone, 1998; Lambert and Firestone, 2000; Murphy and

[1]See, for example, data on the status of women from the U.S. Census 2000 ⟨www.census.gov⟩.

Meyer, 1991; Pagelow, 1992; Russell, 1982; Schechter, 1988; Walker, 1981; Yllö and Straus, 1990). In previous work, it was discovered that abuse increased for women with nontraditional gender role views and who may have been seeking greater decision-making power in their intimate relationships (Firestone, Harris, and Vega, 2003). When male spouses/partners insisted on having their own way, female partners/spouses were at a significantly greater risk for reporting abuse.

Finally, some studies found strong relationships between drug and alcohol use and increased risk for abuse (Jasinski, 1998; Kaufman Kantor, Jasinski, and Aldarondo, 1994; McHugh, Frieze, and Browne, 1993; Tjaden and Thoennes, 2000). It may be that the use of alcohol and drugs is related to lowering inhibitions so that individuals act without thinking of consequences. On the other hand, abusers may drink or use drugs to excuse their own conduct. In either case, increased drug and alcohol use among women has been associated with less traditional gender role attitudes (Gomberg, 1993).

As more acculturated individuals exhibit less traditional gender role expectations, they become more similar to U.S. society in general (Harris and Firestone, 1998; Wildsmith, 2004), and we might expect the changes toward less traditional gender role beliefs to increase risk of wife abuse. This study will test two competing hypotheses related to acculturation, gender role beliefs, and wife abuse. First, traditional gender role attitudes associated with females being subordinate to male power could place women at higher risk for being abused by their spouse/partner. Alternatively, a strong focus on the value of wives and mothers associated with traditional gender roles could provide ''protection'' against male partner aggression. Second, less traditional gender roles could increase women's awareness that they do not have to accept abuse and that there are places they can go for protection. As a result, nontraditional gender role attitudes may decrease women's risk for abuse because they are more likely to remove themselves from the situation. Alternatively, as suggested by previous findings, less traditional gender role attitudes among women may lead male partners to assert physical power in order to maintain dominance in the relationship, which would put these women at higher risk for abuse.

Sample and Variable Construction

The data for our analysis provide a unique opportunity to explore intimate violence against women of Mexican origin residing in the United States. Although the prevalence and predictors of spouse abuse have been described in a number of population-based studies, data on Mexican Americans were often not collected or analyzed separately but instead included as one of several Hispanic groups (Champion, 1996; Ramos Lira, Koss, and Russo, 1999; Straus and Smith, 1990). In addition, previous study samples

often included either rural or urban residents, completed interviews in English only, or included either married or co-habiting women (Jasinski, 1998). The data we utilize from the Mexican American Prevalence and Services Survey overcome many of these deficiencies (Vega et al., 1998).[2] At the time of the survey, Latinos/as represented approximately 25 percent of the population of California and due to high cumulative fertility levels and continuing migration they are still the fastest-growing segment of the population. The data we analyzed are a subset from a stratified randomized household survey of 3,012 Mexican-origin men and women. All respondents were aged 18 to 59 and lived in Fresno County, California, a primarily agricultural county whose population is 38 percent Hispanic. Overall response rates were 88 percent for the urban, 91 percent for the small town, and 92 percent for the rural strata. Subjects were selected in a three-stage stratified cluster sampling design using Census blocks as primary sampling units and households as secondary sampling units. The original sample was stratified on sex and place of residence (urban, town, rural). Data were weighted using the weight created by the original researchers so that residence, block aggregate, and household size reflected the actual distribution of women in the county.[3] Questions related to violence against women were included in a section on family dynamics and were asked only of women. The current analysis includes women who are either married or living in a marriage-like relationship and answered questions about violence ($N = 997$).

The questions pertaining to violence included information about prevalence of verbal and physical abuse with respect to current partner; follow-up questions asked about the frequency within the last 12 months for each type of abuse. Because most individuals reported no abuse, we created a dichotomous measure that identified whether respondents reported any type of abuse. The young age, low educational attainment, and low income of the women in this sample may place them at increased levels of risk for intimate abuse in this population. Although it is believed that spouses can give valid information about the other partner for some objective characteristics such as socioeconomic background and marital history, some researchers contend that they cannot provide valid data on attitudes or perceptions of marital relations (Szinovacz and Egley, 1995). Others, such as Smith (1990), have defended the use of perceptual measures on the grounds that this approach validates the women's experiences and perceptions and that wives' reports of husbands' behavior are shown to be more accurate than husbands' self-reports of marital violence.

[2]In addition to the variables analyzed in this article, the data set provides a comprehensive set of individual-level data with respect to psychiatric, physical health, and drug use morbidity; sociocultural attitudes and beliefs; socioeconomic, immigration, and occupational histories; and social network characteristics.

[3]For additional information about the sampling and weighting process, see Vega et al. (1998).

Self-report is always a limitation in studies of sensitive topics;[4] however, the interviewers who gathered the original data received extensive training to limit the influence of social desirability in the administration of the survey. Interviewers were carefully screened for linguistic, cultural, intellectual, and personality capabilities, as well as the resiliency required for interviewing these unique populations. Expert researchers from local universities were subcontracted to collect data from rural and seasonally employed migrant populations (see Vega et al., 1998). Because these survey data are cross-sectional, we are not able to make clear causal inferences. For example, it cannot be established whether correlates are risk factors or consequences of intimate abuse (Sedlak, 1988). Nor are we able to ascertain precisely when the reported abuse took place. Finally, without corresponding data from spouses/partners, spuriousness is difficult to detect. The data allow for identification of related characteristics and behaviors associated with targets of abuse, as well as an analysis of the impact of acculturation and acculturation stress on reported abuse.

Variable Measurement

Reported Abuse

Our measure of abuse includes measures of whether specific types of acts were experienced by the respondent. Examples of the questions asked include: ''Has your *current* (spouse/partner) *ever* insulted you, called you names, or told you that you were worthless?'' ''Has your *current* (spouse/partner) *ever* threatened to hit you or threatened to hurt your children, threatened you with deportation, threatened to use a knife or gun?'' ''Has your *current* (spouse/partner) *ever* pushed you, hit you with a fist, used a knife or gun, tried to choke or burned you?'' ''Has your *current* (spouse/partner) *ever* forced you to have sex against your will?'' Other experience with abuse is measured with a question that asks: ''Has anyone (other than a spouse/partner/boyfriend) *ever* done any of these things mentioned in the previous questions to you?'' Adding all of the abusive acts the respondent experienced created a total abuse measure. A final dichotomous variable, abuse, was created from these items measuring any abuse of any kind, which allows for comparison to individuals who reported experiencing no abuse. Overall, 35 percent of the women reported abuse. Of those reporting any

[4]Prevalence of abuse based on face-to-face interviews may result in a low estimate. If the marital situation differs significantly from the respondent's ideal and expectations, more or less conscious distortions of reality may arise (Szinovacz and Egley, 1995). Additionally, social desirability may influence responses when the situation contrasts greatly with societal norms. One-partner data have been found to underestimate violent incidents by 50–56 percent for wives (Szinovacz and Egley, 1995). Furthermore, spouses were more likely to deny violence in a face-to-face interview than if they submitted questionnaires to an interviewer (Szinovacz and Egley, 1995).

abuse, 25.4 percent reported only verbal abuse. Strikingly, only 3.4 percent reported physical threats only, indicating that threats are almost always accompanied by other forms of abuse as well.

Gender Role Index

As discussed earlier, traditional orientations toward gender roles are associated with lower socioeconomic status, risk of abuse, and lack of social support. We use an index combining three items measuring beliefs about traditional or egalitarian gender roles for men and women. Respondents were given four response choices ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree" for the following items: (1) "It is much better for everyone if the man is the principal income provider and the woman takes care of the home and family;" (2) "It is more important for a wife to help her husband's career than to have one herself;" and (3) "Most of the important decisions for the family should be made by the man of the house." An index was created combining these three items. Possible values range from 0 to 9, with higher values indicating more traditional gender role ideologies. The mean score on this index was 4.7 ($SD = 2.2$). A Cronbach's alpha of 0.743 indicates acceptable reliability for this measure.

Acculturation

Standard sociodemographic variables were supplemented with information about immigration and migration histories. Cultural orientation and acculturative stress questions were derived from Cervantes, Padilla, and de Snyder (1990) and Vega et al. (1993) (see also Cuellar, Harris, and Jasso, 1980). The concept of acculturation is measured with an index combining:

1. Six indicators of language behavior: the language respondent prefers to speak; the language spoken at home; the language spoken with friends; the language of the music respondent listens to; the language of movies, TV, and radio programs respondent likes to watch and listen to the most.[5]
2. One item concerning length of time lived in the United States, coded 0 for less than 10 years and 1 for 10 years or longer, including entire life.
3. The language the interview was taken in, coded 0 for Spanish and 1 for English.

Acculturation is conceptualized as a continuum from monocultural Mexican American to monocultural non-Hispanic white. This scale has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.9457, indicating very good internal reliability. Scores range

[5]Language use at work was eliminated from the scale to prevent exclusion of nonworking women from the analyses.

from 0 (monocultural Mexican American) to 32 (monocultural non-Hispanic white), with a mean scale score of 16.17 ($SD = 8.97$).[6]

Acculturation Stress

The acculturation stress scale is based on the Hispanic Stress Inventory developed by Cervantes, Padilla, and de Snyder (1990). Stress from acculturation was measured with a series of subjective questions that asked respondents "how worried or tense" they felt with respect to seven different instrument items. Self-reported appraisal was recorded for each particular stressor event. Respondents rated the stressfulness of each event with a range of responses from 0 = "Not worried/tense" to 4 = "Extremely worried/tense." Values for the scale range from 0 (no stress) to 28 (a great deal of stress), with a mean score of 0.95 ($SD = 2.48$).[7] A Cronbach's alpha of 0.7410 indicates good internal consistency. In addition, respondents were identified as having been born in Mexico or having been born in the United States.

Gender Power Relations

Gender power relations are hypothesized to explain the correlation between violence and socioeconomic status. The focus is on asymmetrical power in the relationship and was measured with two separate items. The first asks who has the final say in major decisions. A dummy variable was constructed, measuring "male has final say," with "female has final say" and "both" as the omitted category for use in multiple regressions. In addition, a dummy variable, egalitarian, was created to measure the extent to which egalitarian decision making by themselves and their partners was reported. About 46 percent of the sample reported that the final say about major decisions was made through equal participation by them and their spouses. Responses to the second item, "My (spouse/partner) insists on (his/her) own way," were dichotomized, with Strongly Agree and Agree responses coded 1 and Disagree and Strongly Disagree responses coded 0. Over 80 percent of these Mexican-origin women reported that their spouses insist on having their own way.[8]

[6]Further evaluation of the acculturation and acculturation stress scales can be found in Vega et al. (1993).

[7]Due to the skewness of this variable, we tested transformations based on both the natural log and the square root. Both transformations actually reduced the model chi-squares and did not alter the results of the other independent variables in terms of their relative magnitude or statistical significance.

[8]Examination of the correlation matrix revealed no problems with multicollinearity among these variables. The strongest relationship was between egalitarian decision making and spouse decides (-0.714), which is below the 0.8 standard for identifying problems (Kennedy, 2003:209). The separate influences of these variables are meaningful and removing one of these two variables is likely to underspecify the model, creating biased indicators.

Share of Family Income

In previous research, lower socioeconomic status has been linked to increased risk of abuse, to influence the effects of relationship quality and social support networks, to be associated with level of acculturation, to influence gender power relations, and to be associated with gender role ideology (Sabogal et al., 1987; Champion, 1996; Lambert and Firestone, 2000; Firestone, Harris, and Vega, 2003). Family income is the total monthly household take-home income of all family members. Personal income is the total monthly take-home income of the respondent. These measures include all sources of income, including salaries and wages, Social Security, welfare or AFDC payments, disability payments, workers' compensation, and so on. Original categorical responses were converted to midpoint values, measured in thousands of dollars. Mean monthly family income was $1,277, with a standard deviation of $936 ($N = 1,486$; median = $1,250). Mean personal income was $555, with a standard deviation of $596 ($N = 1,501$; median = $250).[9] Family share of income was constructed by dividing personal income by family income and designed to capture the amount of economic power the respondent is likely to have within the household context.

Demographic and Behavioral Variables

Educational attainment was measured as years of completed schooling. This question was asked only of respondents, so does not provide spouse's/partner's educational attainment. These women had an overall average education of 8.5 years. Those born in the United States had an average education of 11.5 years, and for those born in Mexico the average education level was 7.0 years. Age was measured in years with a mean age of 34.1 for the entire sample, 33.1 for those born in Mexico and 35.6 for the respondents born in the United States. Variables measuring the nonprescription use of drugs, alcohol use, and whether respondents ever got drunk are dichotomous variables (0 = none reported; 1 = at least one reported) and were created from specific questions related to usage patterns of various types of drugs and alcohol.[10] Means and standard deviations for all variables in the analysis are included in Table 1. For the dummy variables the means are presented as percentages.

[9]A skewness statistic of 1.698 indicates few responses at higher levels of income, but is low enough that a transformation is not necessary.

[10]Respondents were asked whether they drank alcohol, and if they said yes, how many drinks per day they usually drank. They were also asked how often they became drunk and how often they drank so much they could not remember what they said or did. Similarly, they were asked whether they used specific drugs (e.g., stimulants, sedatives, inhalants, tranquilizers, marijuana, cocaine) not prescribed by a physician and if they did, how frequently they used them. In addition, they were asked whether they used drugs prescribed by a physician in greater amounts than prescribed.

Table 2 presents the results from three logistic regressions testing the impact of gender role attitudes as a factor in predicting risk for abuse. Logistic regression was used for the analysis because the dependent variable is a dichotomous indicator of reported abuse (0 = none reported; 1 = at least one type reported). In each of the cases analyzed (total sample, those born in Mexico, and those born in the United States), more traditional gender role attitudes are associated with less reported abuse. In the overall sample, being born in Mexico was significantly associated with a lower likelihood of reporting abuse and had the third strongest impact on reporting abuse.[11] Illegal use of drugs had the strongest impact on the likelihood of reporting abuse, with the more drug use reported, the more likely abuse was reported. Because being born in Mexico had such an important impact on whether abuse was reported, we ran separate models for those born in the United States and those born in Mexico.

Higher levels of acculturation are significantly associated with less reported abuse for those born in the United States. For those born in Mexico, higher level of acculturation was associated with more likelihood of reported abuse, but the effect was not significant. On the other hand, higher level of acculturation stress was significantly associated with a greater likelihood of reporting abuse for those born in Mexico. Although the direction of acculturation stress for those born in the United States was the same as for those born in Mexico, the impact was not statistically significant.

Age and share of family income are significant predictors for the full sample as well as for those born in the United States, while education is significant for the subgroups of U.S. and Mexican born only. In all cases, the older the respondent and the larger the share of family income, the more likely abuse was reported due to opposite influences in the two groups. For those born in Mexico, higher levels of education are associated with a higher likelihood of reported abuse, while for those born in the United States, higher levels of education are associated with a lower likelihood of reported abuse.

Factors describing the intimate relationship itself are significant variables predicting reported abuse although they operate differently depending on country of origin. Women whose male intimate partner insists on having his own way are significantly less likely to report abuse from their partner for the total sample and for those born in Mexico. This variable is not significant for those born in the United States, but operates in the opposite direction. Those whose male partners insist on having their own way are less likely to report abuse in the total sample but this is due to the strong impact among the

[11]In addition to the variables included, we tested interactions for acculturation and gender role attitudes, acculturation and acculturation stress, and whether or not distance from the border for those born in Mexico, rural compared to urban residence, amount of time in the United States, length of relationship and official marriage versus long-term relationship had an impact. None of these variables had significant effects and were excluded in the interest of presenting a more parsimonious model focusing on variables emphasized in previous research.

TABLE 1

Percentages, Means, and Standard Deviations of Variables in Analysis

Variable	Total Sample		Mexican Born		U.S. Born		*t* Tests
	Mean/%	*SD*	Mean	*SD*	Mean/%	*SD*	Mex-U.S. Diffs.
Reported abuse (1 = yes; 0 = no)	35%	48%	22%	42%	54%	50%	– 10.173***
Sex role attitude (high = traditional)	4.73	2.07	5.37	1.8	3.72	2.07	12.547***
Acculturation	16.17	8.97	10.5	5.41	25.03	5.62	– 39.428***
Acculturation stress	0.95	2.48	1.41	3	0.23	0.8	9.398***
Mexican born (1 = Mexico; 0 = U.S.)	61%	49%	—	—	—	—	
Spouse wants own way (1 = agree; 0 = disagree)	81%	39%	81%	39%	83%	38%	– 0.785
Egalitarian relationship (1 = both decide; 0 = other)	46%	50%	47%	50%	46%	50%	0.301
Spouse makes decisions (1 = sp. decides; 0 = other)	37%	48%	44%	50%	27%	44%	5.540***
Use drugs (1 = yes; 0 = no)	28%	45%	11%	32%	53%	50%	– 14.200***
Use alcohol (1 = yes; 0 = no)	24%	43%	12%	33%	42%	49%	– 10.251***
Get drunk (1 = yes; 0 = no)	10%	30%	3%	18%	21%	41%	– 7.805***
Education	8.73	3.92	6.96	3.72	11.49	2.3	– 23.685***
Share of family income	41%	41%	35%	41%	49%	39%	– 5.307***
Age	34.1	10.17	33.08	9.63	35.6	10.8	– 3.646***
N	997		647		350		

***$p < 0.01$.

NOTE: The *t* tests above are for differences in means or differences in proportions, testing the bivariate relationships of each variable comparing Mexican-born and U.S.-born respondents without controlling for other variables. Some readers prefer chi-square tests for dichotomous variables. The χ^2 values and significance levels are: abuse (100.2, $p < 0.0005$), own way (0.236, $p = 0.627$), egalitarian (0.556, $p = 0.456$), spouse decides (26.3, $p < 0.0005$), drugs (208.6, $p < 0.0005$), alcohol (118.1, $p < 0.0005$), drunk (89.6, $p < 0.0005$). In Table 2, Wald tests were used to test the null hypothesis that each coefficient is not significantly different than 0 after controlling for other variables. Further, *t* tests are provided, testing for statistically significant differences in the coefficients, comparing the Mexican-born and U.S.-born respondents, again after controlling for other variables.

TABLE 2

Logistic Regression Models of Independent Variables on Abuse

	Total Sample		Mexican Born		U.S. Born		
	Coefficient	Exp(B)	Coefficient	Exp(B)	Coefficient	Exp(B)	*t* Test
	(S.E.)	(*R*)	(S.E.)	(*R*)	(S.E.)	(*R*)	Mex. vs. U.S. Born
Sex role attitude	−0.1704***	0.8433	−0.1268*	0.8809	−0.2789***	0.7566	−1.62
(high = traditional)	(−0.0445)	(−0.1029)	(−0.0678)	(−0.0499)	(−0.0652)	(−0.1806)	
Acculturation	−0.0186	0.9816	0.0182	1.0184	−0.0645***	0.9376	−2.57**
	(−0.0153)	(0.0000)	(−0.0224)	(0.0000)	(−0.0231)	(−0.1075)	
Acculturation stress	0.0763**	1.0793	0.0695**	1.0719	0.1564	1.1693	0.52
	(−0.0311)	(−0.0578)	(−0.033)	(−0.0635)	(−0.1638)	(0.0000)	
Mexican born (1 = yes; 0 = no)	−0.9239***	0.3739	—	—	—	—	
	(−0.2568)	(−0.1028)					
Spouse wants own way (1 = agree;	−0.3347*	0.7156	−0.6904***	0.5014	0.3148	1.37	2.48**
0 = disagree)	(−0.1977)	(−0.0268)	(−0.2522)	(−0.0635)	(−0.3178)	(0.0000)	
Egalitarian relationship	0.3611	1.435	−0.483	0.617	0.6984**	2.0105	2.50**
(1 = both decide)	(−0.2243)	(−0.0222)	(−0.366)	(0.0000)	(−0.2993)	(−0.083)	
Spouse makes decisions	0.5013**	1.6509	−0.0981	0.9065	0.8256**	2.2832	1.84**
(1 = spouse decides)	(−0.2433)	(−0.0433)	(−0.3749)	(0.0000)	(−0.3349)	(−0.0903)	
Use drugs (1 = yes; 0 = no)	0.8875***	2.4291	0.4862	1.6261	1.4466***	4.2488	2.26**
	(−0.1930)	(−0.1264)	(−0.3166)	(−0.0244)	(−0.2836)	(−0.2192)	
Use alcohol (1 = yes; 0 = no)	0.2493	1.2831	0.4348	1.5446	0.1065	1.1123	−0.7
	(−0.223)	(0.0000)	(−0.3488)	(0.0000)	(−0.3123)	(0.0000)	
Get drunk (1 = yes; 0 = no)	−0.1854	0.8308	0.766	2.1511	−0.4884	0.6136	−1.73*
	(−0.3032)	(0.0000)	(−0.6225)	(0.0000)	(−0.3739)	(0.0000)	

Continued

TABLE 2—Continued

	Total Sample		Mexican Born		U.S. Born		
	Coefficient	Exp(B)	Coefficient	Exp(B)	Coefficient	Exp(B)	*t* Test
	(S.E.)	(*R*)	(S.E.)	(*R*)	(S.E.)	(*R*)	Mex. vs. U.S. Born
Education	0.0394	1.0402	0.0650*	1.0672	−0.1330**	0.8755	−2.84***
	(−0.0283)	(0.0000)	(−0.0352)	(−0.0484)	(−0.0601)	(−0.0761)	
Share family income	0.4977***	1.6449	0.0876	1.0916	0.8591***	2.3611	1.86*
	(−0.1933)	(−0.0621)	(−0.2769)	(0.0000)	(−0.3154)	(−0.1041)	
Age	0.0176**	1.0178	0.0059	1.0059	0.0250**	1.0253	1.08
	(−0.0083)	(−0.0463)	(−0.0125)	(0.0000)	(−0.0124)	(−0.0645)	
Constant	−0.6203		−0.9477		1.5211		1.7
	(−0.6951)		(−0.8554)		(−1.1714)		
	N = 997		*N* = 647		*N* = 350		
	Model chi-square = 168.97; $p = 0.000$		Model chi-square = 48.006; $p = 0.0000$		Model chi-square = 67.977; $p = 0.0000$		
	Cox & Snell $R^2 = 0.166$		Cox & Snell $R^2 = 0.081$		Cox & Snell $R^2 = 0.171$		
	Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.229$		Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.124$		Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.229$		
	Percent correctly predicted = 73.3		Percent correctly predicted = 79.5		Percent correctly predicted = 70.3		

*$p < 0.10$; **$p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.01$, all based on two-tailed tests.

Mexican-born respondents. Reporting that major decisions were made equally by both the respondent and her partner had a significant and positive effect on reported abuse for those born in the United States only. Thus, those reporting that they had an equal say in major decisions were more likely to report abuse. For respondents born in Mexico, the effect was negative and nonsignificant. Reporting the illegal use of drugs significantly increased the likelihood that those born in the United States reported abuse, but was not a significant factor for those born in Mexico. Reported alcohol use or getting drunk had no significant effects on likelihood that abuse was reported.

The relative importance of the variables in predicting the likelihood of abuse was different for those born in Mexico compared to those born in the United States. For the women born in Mexico, acculturation stress and their partners insisting on getting their own way had the strongest impacts on likelihood of reporting abuse (both with $R = 0.0635$).[12] For the U.S.-born group, reporting illegal use of drugs had the strongest influence ($R = 0.2192$). Interestingly, for both groups, gender role attitudes were the second strongest factor in whether abuse was reported (U.S. born, $R = -0.1806$; Mexico born, $R = -0.0499$). Education was the third most important factor for those born in Mexico ($R = 0.0484$), while degree of acculturation was third in importance for those born in the United States ($R = -0.1075$). For those born in the United States, share of family income provided by the respondents was the fourth most important factor in likelihood of reporting abuse ($R = 0.1041$). The family power dynamics as expressed by decision-making practices had the next most important impacts for the U.S. born, followed by education and age.

Country of origin clearly interacts substantially with many of the other independent variables. Based on the t tests for differences in coefficients shown in Table 2, eight of the independent variables have statistically significantly different influences in the two subsamples. Acculturation is more important for the U.S. born, while acculturation stress is more important for the Mexican born. Spouse wants own way, egalitarian relationship, and spouse makes decisions all work differently between these two groups. Drug use is much more important among the U.S. born. Though not significant in either subsample, the coefficients for getting drunk are opposite each other. The coefficients for education are also opposite and significantly different, with higher education associated with greater risk among the Mexican born but lower risk among the U.S. born. Share of family income is only significant among the U.S. born.

Model diagnostics are given at the bottom of Table 2 for each analysis. In each case, the model chi-square is statistically significant. It is noteworthy

[12]The R statistic is a measure of partial correlation, calculated as a transformation of the Wald statistic. It is useful for determining the relative importance of the statistically significant variables (Norusis, 1990:48). As is evident in Table 2, however, it does not discriminate among the weaker, nonsignificant variables, often displaying a value of 0.0000 in these cases.

that the pseudo *R*-square values are about twice as large for the U.S.-born respondents as for the Mexican born. A larger proportion of cases is correctly predicted based on a 50/50 classification rule for the Mexican born (79.5 percent compared to 70.3 percent for the U.S. born), but this is largely due to the univariate distribution of responses. For a sense of proportional reduction of error, the percent correctly predicted can be compared to the univariate information in Table 1.

Discussion

Gender role attitudes had a strong impact on whether the women in this sample reported abuse by their partners. The more traditional the gender role attitudes expressed, the less likely that abuse was reported. This could result from those with more traditional gender role attitudes being less likely to define a situation as abuse than those with more egalitarian views. For those born in the United States it is clear that the more likely their male partner is to make major decisions, or the more likely the women said they had an equal say in major decisions, the more likely they were to report abuse. Both of these variables are associated with gender role beliefs ($r = 0.224$ and -0.099, respectively, in the total sample). In addition, the larger the share of family income contributed by the respondent, the more likely she was to report abuse. The more she contributes to the family income, the more economic power, including the power to leave the relationship she is likely to have. For those born in the United States, the reported use of illegal drugs is the most important factor in reporting abuse. The more drug use reported, the more likely abuse was reported.

For those born in Mexico, her partner insisting on his own way, along with higher levels of acculturation stress, are the strongest predictors of reporting abuse. The first variable is associated with more traditional gender role attitudes ($r = 0.068$), while the latter is associated with less traditional gender role attitudes ($r = -0.058$). Education had the third strongest impact for those born in Mexico; those with higher levels of education were more likely to report abuse. Education also had a strong correlation with gender role attitudes for this group—the higher the level of education, the more traditional the gender role beliefs ($r = 0.276$). Interestingly, while reporting illegal use of drugs had the fourth strongest impact on reporting abuse for this group, the effect was not significant.

Conclusion

The findings related to gender role attitudes and gender role dynamics present a complex structure of relationships. Traditional gender role attitudes are consistently associated with lower levels of reported abuse among the

Mexican-born and U.S.-born respondents. Further, among the Mexican born, both spouse wanting his own way (traditional) and egalitarian decision making reduce reported abuse. Apparently, the traditional familism and gender role orientations reported among the Mexican born do contribute to lower reporting of abuse. Increasing levels of education are associated with greater likelihood of abuse for those born in Mexico as are higher levels of acculturation stress. With this combination, it seems plausible that those with traditional gender orientations are less likely to define some experiences as abuse. It is the case that the group born in Mexico were far less likely to report abuse (22 percent) than those born in the United States (54 percent). In contrast, among the U.S. born both egalitarian decision making and male dominant decision making (each more traditional than female dominant decision making)[13] are associated with increased reported abuse. The attitudes have the same influence but the gender power dynamics are almost opposite.

One interesting observation is that the structure of relationships is so different between the Mexican-born and the U.S.-born respondents. Importantly, gender role beliefs influence the reporting of abuse independent of sociodemographic factors and variables measuring power dynamics within the family. Because the impact of gender role ideology is basically the same for both those born in the United States and those born in Mexico, the influence of gender role attitudes transcends the cultural differences, such as the very different influence of family power dynamics on reporting abuse.

The documented shift away from traditional gender role attitudes among women of different race and ethnic groups in the United States (Harris and Firestone, 1998) may produce changes in typical gender power dynamics. In the meantime, these results support prevention strategies that would take into account the different contexts in which abuse is likely to be reported. For example, at the individual level, nonviolent alternative means for attaining goals in a conflict situation and coping with nontraditional contexts (e.g., negotiation, conflict resolution, and assertion skills) could be taught. At the macro level, solutions could include creating programs that focus on changing social norms that favor male power in relationships.

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[13]The reference group in the model.

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