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## Cultural Stressors Experienced by Young Latinas with Depressive Symptoms Living in a Tumultuous Sociopolitical Climate in the United States

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to describe the cultural stressors experienced by Latina young women with depressive symptoms from 2016-2018 in the United States. Twenty-four Latina young women (mean age=16.7 years) participated in this qualitative descriptive study. Content analysis of interviews revealed four cultural stressors: Parental oversight, pressure to succeed, being treated differently, and fears of deportation. Experiences with cultural stressors varied across generational status. Clinicians should provide Latina young women with a safe space for discussing cultural stressors, assess how they are managing their stress, and advocate for policies that will benefit the well-being of Latina young women.

### Keywords

Hispanic Americans; Culture; Stress; Adolescent; Young Adult

### Introduction and Background

In addition to the stressors commonly experienced by all youth, Latino/a youth in the United States (U.S.) experience cultural stressors, which are negative events uniquely experienced by members of ethnic minority groups (Stein, Gonzalez, & Huq, 2012). Although all Latinos/as may experience cultural stressors, adolescents are specifically vulnerable to these stressors as they are undergoing a period of identity development (Waterman, 1982). During adolescence, individuals become more aware of their cultural values and how others perceive those values, and thus become more susceptible to cultural stress (Delgado,

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Updegraff, Roosa, & Umana-Taylor, 2011). Cultural stress experienced during adolescence may interfere with developing a bicultural ethnic identity (Torres & DeCarlo Santiago, 2017), which is protective against a variety of negative health outcomes (Neblett, Rivas-Drake, & Umaña-Taylor, 2012).

Cultural stress is associated with adverse outcomes for Latino/a youth. Studies have found, for example, that having a parent with a vulnerable legal status is associated with negative emotional well-being for Latino/a children (Brabeck & Xu, 2010), and deportation of a parent is associated with a variety of negative psychosocial consequences (Brabeck, Lykes, & Hunter, 2014). Ethnic discrimination (Cano et al., 2015; Cervantes, Cardoso, & Goldbach, 2015; Piña-Watson & Castillo, 2015) and a negative context of reception, or feeling that one is not welcomed in their local community, have also been linked to depressive symptoms in Latino/a youth (Cano et al., 2015; Schwartz et al., 2014). Conflict between parents and children stemming from differences in acculturation is also associated with depressive symptoms among Latino/a youth (Cervantes et al., 2015; Cervantes, Cordova Jr, Fisher, & Napper, 2012; Piña-Watson & Castillo, 2015).

Cultural stress may be more intense for Latina young women than Latino young men (Piña-Watson, Castillo, Ojeda, & Rodriguez, 2013). Due to the focus on familism, or family centeredness, in the Latino/a culture and strict behavioral expectations that many Latino/a parents have for their daughters, Latina young women frequently experience conflict with their parents as they enter adolescence and desire more autonomy (Zayas, Gulbas, Fedoravicius, & Cabassa, 2010; Zayas & Pilat, 2008). Discrepancies between parents' and their daughters' beliefs on traditional gender roles are associated with depressive symptoms for Latina young women (Piña-Watson et al., 2013). Because Latina young women may be more affected by family conflict (Zayas et al., 2010; Zayas & Pilat, 2008) and more likely to experience mental health problems such as depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation than Latino young men (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018), research is needed to determine what cultural stressors Latina young women face in the current U.S. sociopolitical climate.

Over the last several years, immigration policies and negative political rhetoric towards immigrants have increased stress for many Latinos/as living in the U.S. Latino/a individuals compose the largest group of immigrants in the United States (Pew Research Center, 2019), and many of Donald Trump's statements concerning immigration have been particularly directed at immigrants from Mexico, indicating that members of the Latino/a community are "criminals" and "rapists" and that a border wall would be built between Mexico and the U.S. (Desjardins, 2018, January 12). These comments have been coupled with harsh immigration policies such as increased Immigration and Customs Enforcement activity (Department of Homeland Security, 2017, February 21), terminating Temporary Protected Status for immigrants from Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Honduras (Department of Homeland Security, 2018, March 9), rescinding of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (Department of Homeland Security, 2017, September 5), and separation of children and parents at the U.S.-Mexico border (Congressional Research Services, 2019). Sociopolitical messages such as these can filter down to the interpersonal level and set the tone for how minority populations are received in society (Bourhis, Moise, Perreault, & Senecal, 1997).

Just prior to Trump's inauguration, 47% of Latinos/as indicated they worried "a lot" or "some" about themselves or loved ones being deported, and 41% of Latinos/as indicated they were worried about their place in the U.S. with the new Trump administration (Pew Research Center, 2017b). A recent study also found that Latino/a immigrant parents frequently worried about immigration-related adversity under the Trump administration, and those with more intense immigration-related worries were more likely to experience psychological distress (Roche, Vaquera, White, & Rivera, 2018).

From an anecdotal perspective, individuals working with Latino/a youth in a variety of settings have observed how anti-immigration policies and heightened negative attitudes towards the Latino/a community in the U.S. are negatively affecting Latino/a youth. A variety of news articles have been published in the last several years about school teachers managing the stress of Latino/a youth in the classroom (Gumbel, 2016, November 25; Kamenetz, 2017, March 9) and clinicians seeing increases of anxiety and fear in their young Latino/a patients (Klivans, 2017, April 19; Planas & Carro, 2017, March 1). Professional societies have also issued statements urging the medical community to protect immigrant youth from the toxic stress that many are experiencing as a result of the current sociopolitical climate (Stein, 2017; Svetaz & Coyne-Beasley, 2017). Because experiences with cultural stressors such as discrimination and fears of deportation have likely intensified from 2015, systematic documentation of how contemporary Latina young women experience these stressors is needed.

Previous research on Latino/a youth has often not accounted for how experiences of cultural stress vary by generational status. Immigrants are often classified by generational status as a proxy measure of their level of acculturation, or the degree to which they have adopted aspects of a new culture (Berry, 2003). Individuals are classified as first generation (born outside the US), second generation (one or both parents born outside the US), and third or higher generations (one or more grandparents or beyond born outside the US; United States Census Bureau, 2016). As generational status increases, individuals tend to have a higher level of acculturation to a host culture, and level of acculturation has been associated with specific attitudes, behaviors, and health outcomes (Thomson & Hoffman-Goetz, 2009). Latinas of differing generational statuses, thus, may be more or less vulnerable to different cultural stressors. For instance, first- and second-generation Latina young women may be more vulnerable to cultural stressors due to struggles with acculturation (Ramos, 2004) than third- and fourth-generations, who are less likely to self-identify as Latino/a (Pew Research Center, 2017a). In research on cultural stress and depressive symptoms among the Latino/a adolescent population, research has shown that Latino/a adolescents of varying generational statuses report differing types and levels of cultural stressors (Cervantes, Padilla, Napper, & Goldbach, 2013). Since Latina youth of varying generational statuses may have different levels of acculturation and experiences with cultural stressors, there is a need to understand how perceptions of cultural stress vary by generational status.

Given that recent changes in the sociopolitical climate in the U.S. have likely exacerbated the cultural stressors experienced by Latina young women, and these stressors are likely to vary by generational status, more information is needed about the current stressors experienced by different generations of contemporary Latina young women. The purpose of

this study is to describe cultural stressors experienced by Latina young women of different generational statuses by systematically analyzing narratives drawn from a larger study of depression in this population. Because the narratives provide rich accounts of the young women's day-to-day lives, they offer a unique glimpse into factors that concern them and affect their well-being.

## Methods

### Parent Study

The data for the current study is drawn from a larger qualitative study examining how Latina young women experience, self-manage, and seek mental health services for their depressive symptoms during their adolescent years. All participants who described cultural stressors were included in this analysis (24 out of 25 participants). Participants in this study were young Latinas (n=24) aged 13-20 living in a large city in the Midwest. Morse (2000) suggests that 20 to 30 participants are often sufficient when conducting a qualitative study that examines a shared psychosocial phenomenon, suggesting that the sample size was sufficient for this study. All participants self-identified as female and Latina, were fluent in English, and reported experiencing depressive symptoms during their adolescent years. In order to enroll participants who had and had not received mental health services, some were recruited by fliers placed throughout the local community and some were recruited from a primary care clinic and had been identified as having a clinical history of depression. Individuals were excluded from participating in the study if they were experiencing imminent thoughts of self-harm or a significant amount of mental distress.

Verbal parental permission and adolescent assent were obtained for adolescent participants (ages 13 to 17), and verbal informed consent was obtained for young adult participants (ages 18 to 20) prior to the interviews. To maintain participant confidentiality and ease any concerns about signing documents in the current sociopolitical climate, the team obtained a waiver of documentation of consent and assent and did not use participants' names on any study documents. A distress protocol was used in the event that the participant became acutely distressed or if safety issues arose during the interview (Draucker, Martsof, & Poole, 2009). This protocol directed the interviewer to conduct a safety assessment, determine if the participant was at risk of acute self-harm or harm to others, and act based on this determination (refer to mental health resources, call to check on the next day, or arrange transport to the emergency room). The distress protocol was activated on two occasions; one in which there was a concern about suicidal ideation, and one in which there was a safety concern in the participants' home. After completing the interview, each participant was given a \$30 gift card as compensation. All procedures were approved by the Institutional Review Board at the investigators' university.

Data collection took place from June 2016 to March 2018. Participants were given a brief demographic questionnaire to complete before the interview, and qualitative data was collected via semi-structured interviews driven by an interview guide. Interviews were conducted in English, audio-recorded, and lasted approximately one hour. All interviews were conducted by the first author who was directly supervised by the third author, a psychologist with extensive experience conducting qualitative interviews with adolescents

and young adults experiencing mental health problems. All interviews took place in private rooms in public locations outside of the participants' homes but within their local communities. Interviews began with broad questions regarding the participants' experiences with their depressive symptoms and transitioned to more focused questions to clarify previous information discussed by the participant and ensure that other important information related to the study aims was collected. Sample questions from the interview guide included: "What was going on in your life the first time you experienced depressive symptoms"; "Tell me about a good experience you have had with managing your depressive symptoms"; and "Tell me about the help you have received for your depressive symptoms from others." The interview guide also included a question asking the participants to reflect on the stress they felt as a result of being a Latina currently living in the U.S. ("Do you feel that being a Latina living in the United States has contributed to any of the stress you experience? If so, how?"). The responses to this question, as well as the discussion of any other cultural stressors noted in the complete interview transcripts, were used for analysis in the current study.

### Current Study

A qualitative descriptive design (Sandelowski, 2000) guided this study. Qualitative description is a low-inference way of representing the phenomenon of interest in the everyday words of the participants. The research team chose a qualitative descriptive design in order to obtain a straightforward depiction of the common cultural stressors Latina young women are experiencing in the current U.S. sociopolitical climate.

Qualitative content analysis techniques (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014) were employed to analyze the data in this study. Content analysis is the typical method of data analysis in qualitative descriptive studies (Sandelowski, 2000). Transcripts were read in entirety by the first and third authors, specifically focusing on how the Latina young women described the stressors they were experiencing as a result of their Latina culture or the current sociopolitical climate. A content analytic summary table (Miles et al., 2014) was used to aid the qualitative coding process. A content analytic summary table is a form of data matrix that gathers all textual data related to a specific topic into a single table to more easily identify commonalities across the experiences of all participants (Miles et al., 2014). Initial coding was completed by hand in Microsoft Word®, and any codes related to cultural stress or the current sociopolitical climate were copied into the content analytic summary table and separated by generational status. For this analysis, we did not include information about the stressors participants described that were common to young women more generally and not clearly described by the participants in relation their cultural background, such as general family discord or typical peer conflicts. We defined cultural stressors as events or situations perceived as threatening by Latina adolescents that were clearly related to their status as a member of an ethnic minority or immigrant group in the U.S. (Stein et al., 2012). The first author grouped similar codes related to cultural stressors together into categories and gave them names and definitions. The first and third authors met weekly to discuss the codes and emerging categories and determine if they met the definition of cultural stressors. If there were disagreements regarding codes and categories, they returned to the data and engaged in discussion until consensus was achieved. The first author wrote memos throughout the data

analysis process to maintain an audit trail of analytic decisions (Charmaz, 2014). While traditional member checking was not completed, the interviewer asked participants later in the interview process to weigh in on emerging categories of cultural stress to determine if they resonated with their experiences. The second author, who designs, implements, and evaluates resiliency-building programs for Latino/a youth in the local community, was involved in the data analysis process to determine if the emerging categories also resonated with her experience working with this population (Charmaz, 2014).

## Results

A total of 24 Latina young women were interviewed in the study. The mean age of participants was 16.7 years ( $SD=2.4$ ) with a range of 13-20 years. Eight participants were recruited from primary care, and 16 were recruited from community settings. Eight participants were first-generation immigrants who were born outside of the mainland United States. Fourteen participants were second-generation immigrants who reported that one or both parents were born outside of the mainland United States. One participant was a third-generation immigrant whose grandparent was born outside of the United States, and one participant was a fourth-generation immigrant whose great-grandparent was born outside of the United States. For first-generation immigrants, the average time in the U.S. was 10.14 years with a range of 5-12 years. Most participants were of Mexican origin (63%), as is consistent with the demographics of the area. Three participants identified as Salvadoran, two as Puerto Rican, one as Venezuelan, one as Nicaraguan, one as Tejano, one as Honduran, one as Cuban, and one as Colombian.

The participants provided rich descriptions of stressors they experienced due to their cultural background and as a result of the current political climate. The research team identified four types of cultural stressors described by the participants: 1) Parental oversight, 2) pressure to succeed, 3) being treated differently, and 4) fear of deportation.

### Parental Oversight

Seventeen first- and second-generation participants described the stressor of parental oversight as related to their Latino/a culture. This stressor included both perceived overinvolvement or under-involvement by parents in the participants' lives. Many participants described how typical Hispanic parents are over-involved in their children's lives due to "overprotectiveness," either to keep their children safe or due to reliance on traditional values. Other participants felt like they had little parental oversight because their parents were often out of the home due to job responsibilities.

While both first- and second-generation participants described parents as being underinvolved in their lives, participants in the first-generation discussed having absent parents more so than second-generation youth. One second-generation participant explained why she thought Latino/a parents are often absent: "Mexican parents...focus a lot on working as much as they can to get as much money as they can for their kids. So they might not be there for them because that happens." Participants whose parents were often absent took on extra responsibilities around the house and cared for younger siblings. One second-generation participant described her responsibilities while her father was working: "I took

care of my siblings and that was really hard because I wanted to go with my friends and do other stuff, but I had to focus on my siblings." One first-generation participant whose father had been deported described her struggle to help her mom maintain the household:

It's just really hard, especially with my mom. She has two jobs, and she's really trying, and I'm really trying to help her with everything, like keep the house clean, take care of my sister. Nobody is taking care of us. We're really trying to help her.

Second-generation participants were more likely than first-generation participants to describe their parents as "strict." These participants often described conflicts with their parents due to what they perceived as their parents' over-involvement in their lives. Some participants had conflicts with their parents over having boyfriends and "hanging out" with friends. One second-generation participant said, "Hispanic dads are really strict. You have to finish school before you can have a boyfriend, or if you get pregnant, forget school. You would get kicked out of the house, and they have all of these different strict things." A few participants described times when their parents held younger siblings to different standards, causing even more frustration for the participants. One participant explained, "Now my sister wanders the whole neighborhood, and they don't care. That got me upset... I wasn't allowed to do all that stuff when I was younger." One second-generation adolescent described ongoing conflict with her mother:

In Mexico, that's like traditional that you shouldn't show pictures of where you live or FaceTime™ at your house because that's bad because they might come and rob you and stuff like that. But I understand that's how it is in Mexico but... you're here now, and people are different here than they are there. They're not all the same. She [mom] thinks the same way. She always gets mad at me or like even if I take like a black photo... She gets mad about that. So there's always conflict.

### **Pressure to Succeed**

Seventeen participants of first-, second-, and third-generations discussed the stressor of the pressure to succeed as it relates to their Latino/a culture. Pressure to succeed refers to the stress that the participants felt in attempting to live up to expectations related to the opportunities that were afforded to them in the US, particularly in relation to education. Participants understood that their families expected much from them because their parents and grandparents did not have the same opportunities when they were growing up abroad. In particular, participants felt pressured to graduate from college and get a "good job." One second-generation adolescent described this pressure: "My mom looked to me, since I'm the youngest and I was still going to school, so it was just so much pressure already, how she was looking forward to me succeeding." Several participants were told that as minorities they needed to work harder than White peers to reach the same goals. One second-generation young woman stated, "As a brown person, you need to take two steps for every one step a White person takes so that makes things more difficult."

This pressure to succeed was felt by first-, second-, and third- generation participants with slight variations. First-generation participants felt pressure to succeed specifically because their parents gave them better opportunities by immigrating to the US. After struggling in one of her classes, one first-generation adolescent was told by her parents, "[W]e're giving

you a very good opportunity here, because we really didn't have this when we were growing up.'" Second- and third-generation participants were pressured by their parents to graduate from high school, go to college, and make their family "proud" of their academic achievements. Their parents expected them to be "great" and remain "at the top of the class." One second-generation adolescent stated, "[Mom] wants to see me be at least top three, and right now, I'm top 100, but I'm still at 65, so that's kind of going to be really hard." The fourth-generation participant did not personally feel the pressure to succeed, but she recognized it in friends that were Latino/a.

One participant who moved to the mainland United States from Puerto Rico described her struggle with schoolwork, capturing the multifaceted phenomenon of pressure to succeed among young Latinas:

I was a disciplined student in Puerto Rico, so I got good grades. Then coming here my 4.0 had dropped to a 2.8 and that is not okay for Hispanic parents. So for them [parents] before it used to be like, "Oh, no, you've got to make something of yourself." When we came here it changed to, "Oh, no, you've got to show these White people that you're smart too and that you're also valuable." I kind of felt like I had a whole responsibility of representing my race.

### Being Treated Differently

Fifteen participants of first-, second-, and third-generations described the stressor of being treated differently due to their Latina background. This stressor included both internal feelings of being different from peers, as well as receiving differential treatment from others on the basis of ethnicity. Some participants at times felt "weird" or "the odd one out" in relation to their peers, and many had been subjected to acts of discrimination, microaggressions, and stereotyping. Participants had been told to "go back home," were stereotyped as being sexual, and made fun of for being Spanish-speaking. One first-generation young woman described an experience with discrimination: "This kid started making fun of my long last name because I have two last names. He started adding words like 'oh taco' and, I don't know, like really stereotypical Spanish words. I got really mad." Participants also described being treated differently by White people as well as other Latinos/as. One participant explained, "If you're White passing, it's a different experience than not being, just because the people who are supposed to be your people don't really identify with you, and it's understandable because I experience privilege more than they would."

Being treated differently was experienced by the first-, second-, and third-generation participants, but varied more by skin color and degree of ethnic diversity in their communities than by generational status. Individuals who identified themselves as more "White passing" felt they were less likely to be treated differently than their darker-skinned peers. One second-generation participant stated, "People questioning how my mom is my mom, because we're very different in skin tone, I'm very White compared to her, and so sometimes they discriminate [against] her." Participants who attended schools and lived in communities where there was more diversity experienced less of a sense of being treated differently than those who did not interact often with other Latinos/as. A second-generation

participant described the environment at her school: "[T]here were a lot of White people, there were a lot of Black people, but there weren't a lot of Hispanics, and so I guess maybe that's one of the reasons I felt kind of left out."

First-, second-, and third-generation participants thought that Latinos/as might be treated differently more now than they had been in the past due to the current sociopolitical climate. One second-generation young adult shared her thoughts on how younger Latinos/as might be affected by the Trump administration:

Back then there was no such thing as bad stuff for Mexicans or Latinos as it is right now because of, I don't want to mean or anything, because of our President and because of all that stuff that has happened. But as far as I remember when I was younger there was no problem of me being a Latina and Hispanic living here in the States. So as far as I remember, it's been nice, but I can't really talk much for this generation...

### Fear of Deportation

Eight first- and second-generation participants discussed the stressor of the fear of deportation from the United States for themselves or their family members. Several participants were worried about deportation based on the Trump administration's calls for changes in immigration policies. Participants felt a great deal of uncertainty about what would happen to their families and had a general sense that deportation was completely out of their control. One first-generation participant whose father was being detained in the U.S. stated, "I know that someday they are going to end up taking him back to Mexico. There is nothing you can actually do." One second-generation adolescent participant stated, "Since Trump got voted, I've been constantly worried about my parents being taken... And then when I think about that, that makes me want to cry."

First-generation youth feared deportation for both themselves and family members, while second-generation youth specifically worried about the deportation of their family members and friends. One second-generation participant explained, "I have friends too, that go to my school that aren't from here, and with DACA and everything, what's happening, they have to worry about that. Like are they going to get sent back?" Both first- and second-generation participants also realized that they may have to "step up" and care for remaining family if parents were deported. One first-generation participant whose father had been deported stated:

Please don't take my mom. I really need her in my life. Since my sister was born here, I was afraid of like them taking her [participant's mother] and we just leave her. It was my biggest fear. I just couldn't really imagine the police taking my mom. And just my brother and me, trying to take care of my sister... I just hope that I can actually see my dad at least one more time, and just hope that no one takes my mom away from us.

A few first-generation participants also discussed fears about what their future held in the U.S. as an undocumented immigrant. One first generation adolescent stated, "I would be like

really scared a lot. What if I can't go to college here? Or one day something bad happens and I need this and this that I don't have, because I'm not from here."

To cope with these fears, participants relied on informal community networks to communicate information about increased local deportation activity. One participant described one such network: "Some of her [mom's] friends have told her, 'Oh, police are checking for papers today'... so we warn each other and help each other out and stuff, so we won't get caught." Some individuals also described how they relied on their religious faith to ease fears of deportation. One first-generation adolescent stated, "[T]he whole Donald Trump thing, becoming president, they were all worried, but... it's what God wants, like if he wants us to go back for some reason, and if he doesn't, he won't let us."

## Discussion

Participants in this study described a variety of cultural stressors, some of which have been discussed in previous literature. For example, our participants' descriptions of parental "overprotectiveness" are consistent with prior research that indicates that Latino/a youth experience conflict with parents as a result of differences in levels of acculturation as it relates to youth autonomy (Cervantes et al., 2015; Cervantes et al., 2012; Piña-Watson & Castillo, 2015), and this stressor is often more intense for Latina young women due to conflict regarding gender roles (Piña-Watson et al., 2013). Similar to the results in our study, Cervantes et al. (2013) also found that second-generation Latino/a adolescents were more likely to report intergenerational conflict with family than first- or third-generation youth. The stressor of parental absence due to work demands has been less frequently studied, although it is documented that Latino/a families frequently immigrate to the U.S. to provide their families with better economic opportunities (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007; Roche et al., 2018), and Latino/a parents often depend on dual incomes to support their families after immigration (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007). Latino/a parents have also reported difficulties being involved their children's education due to demanding work schedules (Ryan, Casas, Kelly- Vance, Ryalls, & Nero, 2010; Zarate, 2007). The stressor of parental oversight represents the intersection of culture and low socioeconomic status for this population (Zayas et al., 2010), and future research should explore in more depth how parents being absent from the home due to demanding work schedules acts as a cultural stressor for Latina young women and may be associated with mental health problems among this group.

Our finding that experiencing intense pressure to succeed was a prominent cultural stressor for Latina youth has not been extensively addressed in the existing literature, despite the fact that many Latino/a families immigrate to the U.S. so that their children can have access to better educational opportunities (Roche et al., 2018). One study documented that Latina young women commonly felt familial pressure to succeed, which contributed to their level of stress (Lopez-Morales, 2008). Instruments measuring cultural stress for Latino/a youth, such as the Bicultural Stress Scale (Romero & Roberts, 2003) and Hispanic Stress Inventory-Adolescent Version (Cervantes et al., 2012), however, do not measure pressure to succeed for Latino/a youth. This concept should undergo further conceptual development and instrumentation so that it can be measured in future research with Latino/a young people.

Consistent with our findings regarding the cultural stressor of being treated differently, studies have demonstrated that experiencing ethnic discrimination (Cano et al., 2015; Cervantes et al., 2015; Piña-Watson & Castillo, 2015) and intragroup rejection (Basañez, Warren, Crano, & Unger, 2014; Piña-Watson, Domhecker, & Salinas, 2015) were associated with negative mental health outcomes for Latino/a youth and that experiences with discrimination stress do not differ significantly across adolescent generational status (Cervantes et al., 2013). Similarly, just as our participants noted that variations in the experience of being treated differently were related to their skin color, experts have discussed how lighter skin tones have been associated with more privilege than darker skin tones among Latinos/as (Adames, Chavez-Dueñas, & Organista, 2016; Chavez-Duenas, Adames, & Organista, 2014). Consistent with the findings of the current study, several studies demonstrate that living in a neighborhood with a white majority is associated with increased experiences of discrimination toward minority residents (English, Lambert, Evans, & Zonderman, 2014; Hunt, Wise, Jipguep, Cozier, & Rosenberg, 2007), and students attending ethnically diverse schools with no clear majority population experience less discrimination (Seaton & Douglass, 2014). Our findings add to this literature by suggesting that experiences of being treated differently may be more pronounced under the current administration.

Although studies conducted prior to Trump's campaign demonstrated that parental deportation negatively impacts the mental health of Latino/a youth (Gulbas et al., 2016; Rojas-Flores, Clements, Hwang Koo, & London, 2017; Zayas & Bradlee, 2014), research is needed to determine how these effects may be exacerbated in the current sociopolitical climate. Roche et al. (2018), for example, revealed that Latino/a parents now avoid seeking health services for their families and warn their children to evade the authorities due to fears of deportation. Additionally, Latina young women in this study perceived a lack of control over the deportation of themselves and their family members. Previous research demonstrated that having a sense that external events are out of one's control, or an external locus of control, is associated with negative mental health outcomes (Culpin, Stapinski, Miles, Araya, & Joinson, 2015), specifically for young women (Jain & Singh, 2015). Our study's findings provide evidence in participants' own words that fears of deportation of oneself or one's parents can be consuming for some Latina young women and that their distress may be further compounded if they feel they have no control over deportation outcomes.

Our findings provide a preliminary indication that a variety of cultural stressors affect the day-to-day lives of Latina young women who are experiencing depressive symptoms, often in pronounced ways, and that these stressors are exacerbated in a sociopolitical climate that calls for strict immigration policies and is marked by negative political messaging about immigrant populations. Further research is needed to determine the prevalence with which the cultural stressors identified in this study are experienced by Latino/a youth across the U.S. and how these stressors are associated with negative psychological outcomes. Future research addressing these topics should also be inclusive of gender, U.S. geographical location, generational status, and documentation status.

## Limitations

The current study has several limitations. First, the Latina young women in the sample all had experienced depressive symptoms and thus may have had more pronounced or different experiences with the cultural stressors we identified than their peers who were not experiencing depressive symptoms. For example, the adolescents' depressive symptoms, rather than culture, may have contributed to parental over- and under-involvement, and our design did not allow us to differentiate these influences. Moreover, in 2007, 11% of U.S. Latino/a youth were first-generation immigrants, and 37% were third- and fourth-generation (Pew Research Center, 2009). Because we over-sampled first-generation adolescents and under-sampled third- and fourth-generation adolescents, our ability to make generalizable comparisons of experience of cultural stressors between generational status groups was limited. Additionally, the Puerto Rican young women in the sample, who are citizens of the United States but classified as first-generation immigrants, may have also had different experiences of cultural stress, specifically related to fears of deportation, than first- and second-generation young women. Because one inclusion criterion was fluency in English, we also cannot make claims about members of this population who speak only Spanish. We might surmise, however, that this group could experience additional stressors that may be attributed to language barriers. Additionally, we did not ask participants about documentation status in order not to introduce suspicions about the intent of the research and could not therefore systematically examine how individual or family documentation status might have impacted participants' experiences with cultural stressors.

## Clinical Implications

Individuals working with this population should be aware of the cultural stressors identified in this study and provide Latina young women with a safe space in which to discuss their stressful experiences (Svetaz & Coyne-Beasley, 2017). Healthcare providers, in particular, should inquire how young women are coping with cultural stressors and discuss ways they might manage these stressors. For Latina young women who are suffering from significant psychological distress as a result of cultural stressors, healthcare providers should refer them to mental health providers with expertise working with this cultural group. Individuals working with Latina young women in a variety of settings can also assist them in developing a better sense of control over the stressors they are experiencing through goal setting activities, making plans to achieve their future goals, and providing families with resources to address immigration-related concerns. Individuals working with Latina young women should be knowledgeable of resources available for undocumented families such as the National Immigration Law Center (n.d.) and local non-profit organizations that may provide legal assistance to Latino/a immigrant families.

## Policy Implications

The American Academy of Pediatrics and Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine have issued statements regarding the impact of the current sociopolitical climate on the health of immigrant youth (Stein, 2017; Svetaz & Coyne-Beasley, 2017). These organizations call for healthcare providers to advocate for public policies that protect immigrant youth from the toxic stress that has resulted in the wake of the current administration's attitudes and policies

towards immigrants (Stein, 2017; Upadhyia & Coyne-Beasley, 2017). Professional codes of ethics also call for nurses, mental health providers, and social workers to advocate for social justice when patients are impacted by discriminatory policies that negatively impact their physical and mental health (American Counseling Association, 2014; American Nurses Association, 2010; American Psychological Association, 2016; National Association of Social Workers, 2017).

## Conclusion

This study is among the first to systematically document the cultural stressors that are currently being experienced by Latina young women with a history of depressive symptoms in a sociopolitical climate that is hostile towards immigrant families. In addition to other cultural stressors they have experienced throughout their lives, the Latina young women in this study identified having increased fears of deportation and more noticeable experiences of being treated differently under the current administration. Due to the negative psychological outcomes associated with cultural stress for Latina youth, healthcare providers have a duty to address experiences of cultural stress in their practice with Latina young people and advocate for policies that will ultimately result in improved mental health for Latina youth in the U.S.

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**Highlights**

- Parental over- or under-involvement was a stressor for young Latinas.
- Latina young women felt pressure to succeed within an immigrant family.
- Young Latinas were treated negatively by peers due to their ethnicity.
- Latina young women feared deportation in connection with the Trump administration.
- Experiences with cultural stressors varied by generational status.