

HISPANIC FAMILISM RECONSIDERED: Ethnic Differences in the Perceived Value of Children and Fertility Intentions

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Familism has been described as a cultural trait that might explain why the fertility of Hispanic women remains higher than non-Hispanic white women. Still, few studies have analyzed group differences in childbearing attitudes. This article focuses on two dimensions of childbearing orientation: social value of children and fertility intentions. Using the National Survey of Family Growth, we find limited support for the idea that familism undergirds differentials in fertility between native-born Hispanics and whites. However, for foreign-born Hispanics, there are some differences in the perceived value of children compared with whites, and these differences could contribute to fertility differentials.

INTRODUCTION

Despite evidence that the fertility of U.S.-born and immigrant Hispanic women has been declining over time and across generations, it has remained higher than the fertility of non-Hispanic whites (hereafter “whites”) for many decades (Glick 2010). Pooled data for 2000 to 2008 from the June fertility supplements of the Current Population Survey show that the average number of children ever born to women 40 to 44 is 1.8 among native-born whites compared with 2.1 and 2.5 among native-born and foreign-born Hispanics, respectively. Period fertility estimates also indicate higher fertility rates for Hispanics compared with whites (Martin et al. 2009). These differences, together with immigration, have raised questions about Hispanic impact on the social and economic fabric of the United States as well as prospects for new immigrants’ incorporation (Massey 1995).

A central question surrounding discussions about Hispanic fertility—and family behavior more generally—is the extent to which observed between-group differences (from whites) and within-group differences (between foreign- and native-born Hispanics) reflect the social position of the group versus cultural orientations emanating from socialization processes. The relative weight of structure versus culture in explaining Hispanic behaviors has been the focus of considerable debate. An organizing notion in studies emphasizing culture is the idea that Hispanics possess a more familis-

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tic orientation than whites, which translates into higher fertility and more rigid family arrangements. Alternatively, those emphasizing structure have argued that these differences stem from disparities in social position or life-course experiences and should disappear once variation in opportunities are taken into consideration. While disparities in social position are well established, the relevance of familism continues to be debated (Staples and Mirande 1980; Vega 1990), and few studies have directly investigated differences in cultural orientations between Hispanics and other groups (Fuligni, Tseng, and Lam 1999). In 1990, Vega argued that “we still don’t have enough of the right kind of information to adequately explain the complexity and volatility of Hispanic families,” and 20 years later, this is still the case.

This article contributes in several ways to the discussion on the role of Hispanic familism in structuring ethnic differences in fertility. We provide a more precise notion of familism directly connected with childbearing that builds on the idea of the *social value of children* and assess its variation by ethnicity and nativity. In addition, we investigate differences in *childbearing intentions* to assess the extent to which they can account for subsequent fertility differentials. The empirical analysis formulates a more comprehensive model of attitudes toward children, taking into account how attitudes are influenced by social position as well as ethnicity. In addition, we focus on both men and women to assess the extent to which gender differences in attitudes toward children could translate into differences in fertility behavior.

BACKGROUND

Explaining Ethnic Fertility Differentials: Social Class and Other Factors

Prior efforts to understand racial-ethnic fertility differentials have focused on socioeconomic status as an explanation, and particularly, why the costs and benefits of childrearing vary by group. Lower fertility among higher status women is often explained using differences in opportunity costs, meaning that women with higher earning potential have more to lose by shifting time from market work to childcare work (Becker 1991; Edin and Kefalas 2005). Part of this effect is related to timing: Women who invest heavily in education and work tend to delay childbearing, thereby ending up with fewer years in which to have children. Bean and Tienda (1987) tie this correlation to ethnic fertility differentials: “If lower education tends generally to make for higher fertility, and if the Spanish origin women are relatively more concentrated in the lower educational categories, it is not difficult to see why higher fertility persists within many of these groups” (p. 224).

In addition to lower opportunity costs for childbearing, less advantaged women have greater barriers to acquiring and using contraceptives. These include their tendency to have less health insurance coverage and fewer resources to pay for the most effective methods (which are also the most expensive), as well as more chaotic lives, which may hinder consistent usage (Breheny and Stephens 2004). Unintended pregnancies and births are more common among Hispanic women than among whites, likely attributed to both lower rates of contraceptive use and higher rates of

contraceptive failure (Trussell and Vaughan 1999; Mosher et al. 2004; Finer and Henshaw 2006). Types of methods used also differ, with Hispanic women being more likely to use injectable contraception and female sterilization, and less likely to use the pill or male sterilization (Mosher et al. 2004).

Familism and Acculturation

Culture and attitudes could also be instrumental in explaining racial-ethnic differences in fertility behavior. As applied to the case of Hispanics, cultural explanations have tended to stress the importance of familism as a core element of Hispanic culture to account for particular family and fertility behaviors that cannot be explained by the social and economic position of the group (Bean and Tienda 1987). Familism refers to a collective orientation in which family roles and obligations are highly valued, and the well-being of the family group takes precedence over the interests of each of its members (Vega 1995; Landale and Oropesa 2007). Theoretical and empirical work on familism has tended to focus on kinship networks and attitudes toward familial obligation. For example, research by Sabogal et al. (1987) found stronger familistic attitudes among Hispanics than whites when gauging 14 measures related to familial obligation, perceived support from family, and involvement of family members in decision making.

Familism may extend to attitudes toward childbearing as well. There are several theoretical reasons why this might be the case. A context of high collectivism and kin involvement could lower the costs of children if childrearing duties are shared among multiple adults. Given a heightened sense of familial obligation, children also may be viewed as a potential source of support in old age, particularly among less acculturated immigrants. Some empirical work suggests that Hispanics have more favorable attitudes toward children than do whites, although most of this research is either outdated or relies on small samples. In the 1994 General Social Survey, Hispanics reported having less favorable attitudes toward childlessness than did non-Hispanics (Koropecyk-Cox and Pendell 2007), and some research have observed a relationship between indicators of acculturation and a desire for fewer children (Sorenson 1985, 1988).

To the extent that Hispanics in the United States do exhibit stronger favorability toward childbearing (or stronger familistic attitudes more generally) compared with whites, it is expected that these attitudes will be greater among those born outside the United States and weaker among subsequent generations. Classic assimilation theory argues that when immigrants move from one country to another, they trade one set of cultural values and economic constraints for a new set (Bean and Swicegood 1985). As a result, their behavior gradually becomes less similar to that in the home community and more similar to the behavior of peers in the new location. It is assumed that familistic and pronatal attitudes are the prevailing model in sending countries, bolstered in part by the important role of the Catholic Church, which is explicitly pronatal and anti-contraception. Immigrants socialized in these contexts carry these norms to the United States, but with the passage of time (or generations), the norms and behaviors

of immigrants incline toward those of the receiving community—either the mostly white “mainstream” (under “classic” assimilation theory) or the relatively poor local communities in which they often settle (under “segmented” assimilation theory), which may or may not include large numbers of co-ethnics (Portes and Zhou 1993; Rumbaut 1994; Bean, Swicegood, and Berg 2000; Alba and Nee 2003; Portes 2007). While there is considerable debate as to the extent to which familistic orientations are maintained among U.S.-born Hispanics, the underlying expectation is that Hispanics’ commitment to family life is stronger and qualitatively distinct from whites, and that this translates into different family behaviors.

The idea that Hispanics have strong familistic orientations has also been challenged, however. Some critics have termed familism a “catch-all” characterization used to explain residual differences in family behaviors between Hispanics and non-Hispanics. In addition, the concept of familism may be applied inconsistently in the literature: For example, black women have higher fertility than whites and strong relationships with family members, but they are not considered familistic. Most important, empirical work on familism among Hispanics has yielded mixed results. For example, Keefe (1984) observes that Mexican Americans are more likely than whites to say that family members are responsible for helping individuals with problems, but the two groups equally reported valuing their relationships with family members.

A criticism leveled at much of the research on Hispanic familism is that it does not sufficiently account for differences in social position between groups. Culture and structure are often treated as distinct factors, when in fact, they are intertwined and mutually reinforcing. In keeping with other research, we anticipate that differences in familistic attitudes between whites and Hispanics will be at least partially explained by differences in structural factors such as social class, as well as religion (Sarkisian, Gerena, and Gerstel 2007). As a whole, the body of research on familism suggests that group differences in family orientations are nuanced, and more research is necessary to explore the contours of attitudes around the family.

Contributions of the Study

Despite its potential significance for explaining differences in outcomes, research assessing cultural differences between Hispanics and whites, especially related to fertility, is rare. As discussed earlier, the extent to which Hispanics’ childbearing preferences and orientations differ from whites’ or how they vary between immigrants and natives have not been established. This study specifically addresses the issue of differences in orientations and preferences as they relate to fertility behavior. We seek to further refine the concept of familism (which until this point has mostly focused on kinship networks), both conceptually and empirically, by evaluating whether Hispanics value children and childrearing more than whites. In doing so, we take account of differences in social position, which influence both attitudes and behaviors related to the family.

We evaluate the salience of Hispanic familism for fertility in two ways. First, building on the notion of the social value of children, we investigate the extent to which Hispanic immigrants and their descendants attach different rewards to childbearing

relative to whites. Since we assume both greater familism among Hispanics and a correspondence between familism and placing a high social value on children, we expect that Hispanics will perceive greater benefits to having children than do whites. And since we assume familism will be lower among the more assimilated Hispanics, we expect the perceived value of children to be stronger among foreign-born than among native-born Hispanics.

Second, we directly investigate differences in fertility intentions by ethnicity and nativity. Whether individuals intend to have additional children is a direct measure of their childbearing preferences, and this indicator has consistently been found to be associated with subsequent behavior. In this analysis, the intention to have additional children is treated as an indicator of a more pronatalist orientation. Specifically, we expect that Hispanics will be more likely to intend to have additional children compared with whites, and that stronger pronatalist orientation will be particularly pronounced among immigrants.

In addition to more precisely measuring attitudes toward childbearing decisions, this analysis contributes to the discussion of familism by extending the analysis to men. Most prior studies of fertility behavior and orientations focus exclusively on women, assuming they are the central decision-making unit in childbearing behavior. Prior research, however, has shown that men and women differ in their fertility intentions and attitudes toward childbearing and that men are important to the process of fertility decision making (Koropecykj-Cox and Pendell 2007). Even when a couple does not engage in explicit decision making, men's childbearing preferences may translate into eagerness or reluctance to use contraception, and a woman likely takes into account what she perceives as her partner's readiness to be a parent when she makes her own calculations. Among Hispanics, an exclusive focus on women might be especially problematic in the context of strong familism or rigid gender roles, where lack of power might prevent women from contradicting men in fertility decisions (Sable et al. 2009). In our case, a potential finding is that fertility differentials between whites and Hispanics may be caused by a strong pronatalist position of Hispanic men rather than Hispanic women. The extent to which familistic attitudes vary by gender is expected to be an indicator of the role of gender inequality in affecting fertility differentials.

DATA AND METHODS

Data for the analysis come from the 2007 to the 2010 cycles of the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG). The full data set includes 12,363 white and Hispanic respondents. An additional 254 (2 percent) of these respondents were dropped because of missing data on a key variable. The resulting analytic sample consists of 6,469 women (4,415 whites, 1,074 native-born Hispanics, and 980 foreign-born Hispanics) and 5,640 men (3,868 whites, 927 native-born Hispanics, and 845 foreign-born Hispanics). Following the theoretical discussion, the empirical analysis is separated into two parts. The first part investigates ethnic, nativity, and gender differences in the social value of children. The second part elaborates on differentials between these groups in fertility

TABLE 1. List of Variables Included in the Analysis

Variable name	Description
Dependent	
Social value of children	
Rewards worth costs	“The rewards of being a parent are worth it, despite the cost and the work it takes.” (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) agree, or (4) strongly agree
Cannot be happy	“People can’t be happy unless they have children.” (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) agree, or (4) strongly agree
Bothered by childlessness	“If it turns out that you do not have any children, would that bother you . . .” (1) Not at all, (2) a little, (3) somewhat, or (4) a great deal.
Parity-specific fertility intentions	
Intent	Equals 1 if person intends to have more children, 0 otherwise.
Explanatory	
Hispanic, foreign born	Equals 1 if person is Hispanic and born outside the United States, 0 otherwise.
Hispanic, native born	Equals 1 if person is Hispanic and born in the United States, 0 otherwise.
Non-Hispanic white, native born	Equals 1 if person is Non-Hispanic white and born in the United States, 0 otherwise (reference).
Age	Respondent’s age.
Years of education	Number of completed years of education.
Income	Set of dummy variables indexing whether the respondent’s household income was less than \$25,000, \$25,000–\$49,999, \$50,000–\$74,999, or \$75,000 or more (reference).
Religion raised	Set of dummy variables indexing whether the person was raised Catholic, Protestant (reference), other, or no religion.
Sex	Respondent’s sex. Analyses are run separately for women and men.

intentions. Together, the two dimensions capture constitutive elements of familistic orientations. We also examine the link between the two by exploring whether attitudes about the value of children predict the intention to have a birth.

Table 1 lists the variables included in the analysis together with their definitions. The perceived social value of children is measured using three attitudinal questions in the NSFG that capture the extent to which people believe that children are related to happiness and personal gratification. Questions 1 and 2 ask for level of agreement—strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree—to two statements: “The rewards of being a parent are worth it, despite the cost and the work it takes” and “People can’t be happy unless they have children.” The small minority of cases (less than 1.5 percent) in which respondents insisted they could neither agree nor disagree, or refused to answer, were discarded. Question 3, presented solely to respondents without biological or adopted children, asks “If it turns out that you do not have any children, would that bother you . . . not at all, a little, somewhat, or a great deal.”

The NSFG also asks respondents about their intention to have a child in the future. Specifically, the survey asks “Looking to the future, do you (and [name of current partner, when applicable]) intend to have (a/nother) baby?”¹ Respondents who are sterile (or whose partners are sterile) are excluded. About 1 percent of respondents do

not know what their intentions are and are grouped with those who do not intend to have a child in the future. Using this information, parity-specific fertility intentions were constructed (Morgan 1982). In other words, these measures report the respondents' intentions to have additional children, among those with the same number of prior births.

Model Specification

Table 1 also lists the explanatory variables in the analysis. Descriptive statistics by ethnicity and nativity are reported in Appendix A. The dummy indicators of whether a person is Hispanic—foreign born, or Hispanic—native born, or white—native born (referred to as “white”) are the main variables of interest since they capture ethnic and nativity differences in childbearing attitudes. White is the reference category. In addition, the models control for background and socioeconomic characteristics including age, years of education, income, and the religion in which the respondent was raised. These variables have been found in prior literature to directly relate to fertility decisions. Models are estimated separately for women and men.

DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS

Social Value of Children and Fertility Intentions

Table 2 reports descriptive results for ethnic and nativity differences in the social value attached to children, by gender. Overall, respondents in all ethnic and nativity groups seem to agree that parenting is a worthwhile endeavor. Only 3 to 7 percent of women and men disagree or strongly disagree with the statement about the rewards of parenthood, with more cross-group variation among women than men. Where differences exist, they contradict the image of strong Hispanic familism. White women are more likely to strongly agree with the idea that the rewards of being a parent are worth it (60 percent) compared with immigrant (52 percent) or native-born (50 percent) Hispanic women.

Results show more variation in agreement with: “People can’t really be happy unless they have children.” The difference is primarily driven by nativity, with foreign-born Hispanics significantly more likely to agree or strongly agree than either native-born Hispanics or whites. Among foreign-born Hispanics, 36 percent of women and 40 percent of men agreed or strongly agreed with the statement compared with 3 percent and 6 percent of white women and men, and 9 percent and 13 percent of native-born Hispanic women and men. The third question, about how much the respondent would be bothered by childlessness, shows some evidence of ethnic and nativity differences, and some variation by gender. Among foreign-born Hispanic men, 29 percent said that it would not bother them at all to remain childless compared with 27 percent among native-born Hispanics and 22 percent whites (statistically significant at $p < .05$). Among women, 16 percent of whites said that they would not be bothered at all by remaining childless, compared with 18 percent of native-born Hispanics and 20 percent of foreign-born Hispanics (not significant at $p < .05$). These results do not support the image of strong Hispanic familism.

TABLE 2. Ethnic and Nativity Differences in the Social Value Attached to Children, by Gender

	Women			Men		
	Native-born whites	Native-born Hispanics	Foreign-born Hispanics	Native-born whites	Native-born Hispanics	Foreign-born Hispanics
The rewards of being a parent are worth it, despite the cost and the work it takes (percent)						
Strongly disagree/disagree	3.5	6.5*	3.3	4.4	6.0	3.6
Agree	36.3	43.9*	45.2*	47.8	49.3	47.2
Strongly agree	60.3	49.6*	51.5*	47.8	44.7*	49.2*
N	4,415	1,074	980	3,868	927	845
People cannot really be happy unless they have children (percent)						
Strongly disagree	45.7	34.8*	13.6*	34.4	21.7	12.7
Disagree	51.1	56.4*	50.2	60.2	65.8*	47.1*
Strongly agree/ agree	3.2	8.8*	36.2*	5.5	12.5*	40.2*
N	4,415	1,074	980	3,868	927	845
If it turns out that you do not have any children, would that bother you . . . (percent)						
Not at all	16.2	17.5	19.5	22.2	26.9*	29.0*
A little	15.8	18.8	18.6	21.3	19.7	17.6
Somewhat	29.7	30.1	21.0*	31.4	28.0	23.3*
A great deal	38.2	33.6*	41.0	25.1	25.4	30.1
N ^a	2,257	521	210	2,496	618	279
Percent who intend to have a future birth, by parity						
Parity 0	75.5	84.7*	85.8*	79.8	88.7*	85.1*
Parity 1	45.1	62.4*	58.4*	46.7	68.4*	67.0*
Parity 2	15.2	19.8	36.0*	15.7	37.5*	36.3*
Parity 3+	6.4	15.9*	15.5*	15.5	18.2	21.7
N	4,415	1,074	980	3,868	927	845

^aThis question is limited to respondents who do not have children at the time of the survey.

*Difference with whites statistically significant at $p < .05$.

The bottom panel of Table 2 reports the proportion of women and men intending to have an additional child (or children) by parity. Cross-group comparisons show evidence of a more pronatalist orientation among Hispanic women and men: Both immigrants and natives are more likely to intend to have additional children than whites, at all parities. Focusing on the transition to third birth (parity 2) shows that 36 percent and 20 percent of immigrant and native-born Hispanic women, respectively, intend to have an additional child compared with 15 percent of white women. The difference holds for men: at parity 2, 36 percent and 38 percent of immigrant and native-born Hispanic men, respectively, intend to have an additional child compared with 16 percent of white men.

MULTIVARIATE RESULTS

Social Value of Children

The next set of analyses investigates whether these differences remain after controlling for individual demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. We concentrate first on the social value of children. Table 3 reports results from ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models predicting women's and men's attitudes toward children. We present results from three models, each predicting a different dependent variable: (1) agreement with the statement that the rewards of childrearing are worth the cost (1–4 scale, where 4 = strongly agree); (2) agreement with the statement that people cannot be happy without children (1–4 scale, where 4 = strongly agree); and (3) how much the respondent would be bothered by childlessness (1–4 scale, where 4 = a great deal). All models include ethnic and nativity indicators, as well as measures for age, education, income, and religious background as predictors.

Consistent with the descriptive results, the regression results in Table 3 show relatively minor ethnic and nativity differentials in the social value of children. In fact, most of the coefficients for Hispanic ethnicity (both native-born and foreign-born) are either negative or not significant, meaning that once background and socioeconomic characteristics are controlled, either there are no differences between Hispanics and whites, or Hispanics are *less* likely to give responses consistent with a high social value of children. For example, Hispanic women (both native-born and foreign-born) are less likely than white women to report that the rewards of childrearing are worth the costs, and native-born Hispanics (both women and men) report being more bothered by childlessness than whites.

The central exception to this pattern is found in the models predicting whether respondents agree that “people can't be happy unless they have children.” Hispanic women and men are more likely than their white counterparts to agree with the statement. For native-born Hispanics (compared with whites), the difference is very small: native-born Hispanic women are .14 points higher on the four-point agreement scale than are white women (the coefficient is nearly identical for native-born Hispanic men at .16). Differences between whites and foreign-born Hispanics are

TABLE 3. OLS Regressions Results Predicting the Social Value of Children, by Gender

	Women				Men			
	Rewards worth costs ^a	Cannot be happy ^b	Bothered by childlessness ^c	Bothered by childlessness ^c	Rewards worth costs ^a	Cannot be happy ^b	Bothered by childlessness ^c	Bothered by childlessness ^c
Ethnicity and nativity (reference = Non-Hispanic white)								
Hispanic, native-born	-.099**	.143**	-.208**	-.208**	-.006	.164**	-.134**	-.134**
Hispanic, foreign-born	-.061*	.613**	-.012	-.012	.055*	.512**	.057	.057
Control variables								
Age	.008**	.003**	-.049**	-.049**	.006**	.004**	-.038**	-.038**
Years of education	.003	-.037**	.042**	.042**	.009**	-.034**	.068**	.068**
Income (reference = \$75,000+)								
Less than \$25,000	-.041***	-.004	-.156**	-.156**	-.130**	.034	-.187**	-.187**
\$25,000-\$49,999	-.027	-.020	-.025	-.025	-.040***	-.020	.005	.005
\$50,000-\$74,999	.003	.001	-.050	-.050	-.037	-.037	-.040	-.040
Religion raised (reference = Protestant)								
No religion	-.087**	-.061*	-.230**	-.230**	-.136**	-.102**	-.129*	-.129*
Catholic	-.051**	.005	-.027	-.027	-.008	.026	.074***	.074***
Other religion	-.027	.109**	-.113	-.113	-.027	.005	.085	.085
N	6,469	6,469	2,988 ^d	2,988 ^d	5,640	5,640	3,393 ^d	3,393 ^d

^a“The rewards of being a parent are worth it, despite the cost and the work it takes.” (1) Strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) agree, or (4) strongly agree.

^b“People can’t be happy unless they have children.” (1) Strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) agree, or (4) strongly agree.

^c“If it turns out that you do not have any children, would that bother you . . .” (1) Not at all, (2) a little, (3) somewhat, or (4) a great deal.

^dThis question is limited to respondents who do not have children at the time of the survey.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .10$ (two-tailed tests).

larger: foreign-born Hispanic women and men are more than half a point higher on the four-point scale than their white counterparts.

Most of the background and socioeconomic characteristics are significantly associated with the social value of children. Respondents are more likely to say that the rewards of childrearing are worth the costs if they are older (among women and men), have high household incomes (among men), were raised Protestant rather than no religion (among women and men), or were raised Protestant rather than Catholic (among women). Agreeing that people cannot be happy without children is associated with older age, lower levels of education, and being raised Protestant rather than no religion (these associations hold for both women and men). Being bothered by remaining childless is associated with younger age, more years of education, higher income, and being raised Protestant rather than no religion (among both women and men).

Fertility Intentions

The final analysis evaluates fertility intentions in a multivariate context. Table 4 reports coefficients from logistic regression models predicting whether the respondent intends to have a child in the future, estimated separately for women (Table 4a) and men (Table 4b), by parity. At each parity, the first model (labeled "controls") includes ethnicity and nativity, as well as controls for background and socioeconomic characteristics (since these characteristics are associated with fertility intentions and differ by ethnicity). The second model for each parity (labeled "controls plus attitudes") adds two indicators of the social value of children to examine how ethnic differences in fertility intentions are mediated by attitudes. The two indicators are based on agreement with the statements: (1) that the rewards of parenthood are worth the costs; and (2) that people cannot be happy without children (the question about whether the respondent would be bothered by childlessness was not included because it was administered only to respondents at parity 0).

Focusing on the models labeled "controls," the results show two consistent patterns applicable to men and women. First, we see a more pronatalist orientation among Hispanics, and second, it seems that this orientation could originate in the immigrant population. Even after accounting for demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, foreign-born Hispanic women and men maintain higher fertility intentions than whites. The only exception is found among men at parity 3 and higher: In this group, foreign-born Hispanics do not significantly differ from whites in their fertility intentions. The pattern for native-born Hispanics in the "controls" models shows only small differences with whites, with coefficients that are mostly positive but not significant (only significant at parity 3 or higher for women). Overall, results suggest that intentions might be relevant for understanding fertility differentials between foreign-born Hispanics and whites, but they are not very salient for native-born Hispanics compared with whites. This corresponds with the assimilation theory predicting that pronatalist orientations would be lower among U.S.-born Hispanics than among their immigrant counterparts.

Table 4a.
Logistic Regression Predicting the Intention to Have A(nother) Birth, by Parity (Women)

	Parity 0		Parity 1		Parity 2		Parity 3+	
	Controls	Controls + attitudes	Controls	Controls + attitudes	Controls	Controls + attitudes	Controls	Controls + attitudes
Ethnicity and nativity (reference = Non-Hispanic white)								
Hispanic, native-born	.146	.140	.224	.224	-.266	-.283	.811**	.862**
Hispanic, foreign-born	.945**	.722**	.636**	.461*	1.102**	.962**	1.293**	1.140**
Control variables								
Age	-.170**	-.173**	-.169**	-.173**	-.206**	-.207**	-.213**	-.214**
Years of education	.117**	.121**	.101**	.112**	.036	.039	-.033	-.022
Income (reference = \$75,000+)								
Less than \$25,000	-.467**	-.479**	-.447***	-.447***	-.140	-.153	-.282	-.228
\$25,000-\$49,999	.033	.042	-.254	-.263	-.188	-.200	-.289	-.249
\$50,000-\$74,999	-.144	-.228	-.119	-.113	-.375	-.378	.099	.159
Religion raised (reference = Protestant)								
No religion	-.695**	-.566**	-.192	-.140	-.131	-.116	-.125	-.115
Catholic	.020	.071	.224	.250	.269	.273	-.229	-.272
Other religion	-.261	-.216	.016	-.042	.531	.513	.908*	.829*
Social value of children								
Rewards worth costs ^a	—	.980**	—	.315*	—	-.017	—	.119
Cannot be happy ^b	—	.692**	—	.459**	—	.198	—	.291*
N	3,008	3,008	1,153	1,153	1,213	1,213	1,095	1,095

^a“The rewards of being a parent are worth it, despite the cost and the work it takes.” (1) Strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) agree, or (4) strongly agree.
^b“People can’t be happy unless they have children.” (1) Strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) agree, or (4) strongly agree.
 p* < .05; *p* < .01; ****p* < .10 (two-tailed tests).

Table 4b.
Logistic Regression Predicting the Intention to Have A(nother) Birth, by Parity (Men)

	Parity 0		Parity 1		Parity 2		Parity 3+	
	Controls	Controls + attitudes	Controls	Controls + attitudes	Controls	Controls + attitudes	Controls	Controls + attitudes
Ethnicity and nativity (reference = Non-Hispanic white)								
Hispanic, native-born	.230	.193	.449***	.549*	.471	.453	-.232	-.204
Hispanic, foreign-born	.475*	.213	.697**	.671**	.658*	.540***	-.055	-.004
Control variables								
Age	-.141**	-.146**	-.121**	-.118**	-.165**	-.166**	-.134**	-.133**
Years of education	.127**	.147**	.090**	.070*	-.003	.000	.006	-.002
Income (reference = \$75,000+)								
Less than \$25,000	-.111	-.061	-.110	-.041	.183	.133	.698	.721
\$25,000-\$49,999	.192	.214	.072	.096	-.152	-.177	.480	.486
\$50,000-\$74,999	.289***	.368*	.049	.041	-.128	-.144	.078	.060
Religion raised (reference = Protestant)								
No religion	-.303*	-.105	-.364	-.409	.621***	.622***	-.343	-.346
Catholic	.290*	.267*	.187	.175	.346	.316	.261	.288
Other religion	.138	.156	-.426	-.486	.212	.179	.740	.771
Social value of children								
Rewards worth costs ^a	—	.896**	—	.680**	—	.003	—	.137
Cannot be happy ^b	—	.698**	—	.075	—	.238***	—	-.127
N	3,500	3,500	843	843	744	744	553	553

^a“The rewards of being a parent are worth it, despite the cost and the work it takes.” (1) Strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) agree, or (4) strongly agree.

^b“People can’t be happy unless they have children.” (1) Strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) agree, or (4) strongly agree.

p* < .05; *p* < .01; ****p* < .10 (two-tailed tests).

In the models labeled “controls plus attitudes,” indicators of the social value of children are significant predictors of the intention to have a birth at parities 0 and 1, but generally not at parities 2 and 3+ (the exception is that women who believe that people cannot be happy without children are more likely to intend a high-parity birth). Indicators of the social value of children seem to partially mediate the association between Hispanic ethnicity and childbearing intentions among foreign-born Hispanics. In other words, for both women and men, the coefficient for foreign-born Hispanic is slightly attenuated when value-of-children indicators are added to the models.

Socioeconomic and background characteristics are associated with intentions generally in the expected direction and in a manner that is consistent across women and men. Across all parities, the intention to have an additional birth is associated with younger age. At parities 0 and 1, men and women with higher levels of education and women with higher income are more likely to intend a birth than are their counterparts. Childless respondents who were raised Protestant are also more likely to intend a first birth, compared with those raised with no religion. In addition, being raised Catholic is associated with intending a birth among childless men, while being raised in a non-Christian religion is associated with intending a birth among high-parity women.

Sensitivity Analyses

We tested a number of other specifications to verify the stability of our results. First, it is possible that Hispanic respondents were less likely to be bothered by remaining childless simply because childless Hispanics are a smaller, more selective group than childless whites. To investigate this possibility, we conducted separate analyses limiting the sample to the youngest women and men, among which the proportion childless is most similar across ethnic groups. Subgroups ages 15 to 19 and 15 to 24 were tested, and the results show a similar pattern to the one described for the whole sample, meaning that differences between whites and Hispanics are small in magnitude, mostly not significant, and point to Hispanics being less bothered by childlessness compared with whites. The exception is that young foreign-born Hispanic men appear to be more bothered by the prospect of remaining childless than do whites, but the magnitude of the difference is small.

The regression models presented do not include marital or parenthood status as independent variables since they themselves could be considered measures of familism, but it could be argued that these are potentially important structural factors. We reestimated all the models with these variables included as predictors and found that the pattern of results did not change. In addition, we reestimated the models predicting the social value of children indicators (Table 3) using ordered logistic regression models (rather than OLS) and found the same general pattern of results. Finally, we reestimated the regressions including the small number of respondents who insisted they could neither agree nor disagree with the statements about the rewards of childrearing, and whether people can be happy without children. These responses were treated as a

neutral category (between agree and disagree), and our results did not change with this specification. In sum, the sensitivity tests showed that the results were stable.

DISCUSSION

In this article, we examined whether there were differences between whites and Hispanics in the extent to which they value children and intend subsequent childbearing. Despite considerable speculation that cultural constructs such as familism might undergird Hispanic fertility behavior, direct tests of ethnic and nativity differences in cultural orientations are rare. Our study contributes to that discussion by more precisely evaluating two components of the broader notion of familistic orientations, namely the social value of children and intentions for additional children.

We find little evidence in support of dramatically different cultural orientations regarding children between native-born Hispanics and whites. Results show a very small positive association between Hispanic ethnicity (native-born) and two measures of familistic orientation: the belief that children are essential for happiness, and the likelihood of intending high-parity births (the latter was found only among women). In contrast, several measures had either no significant association or a negative association with Hispanic ethnicity (native-born) once structural and life-course factors were controlled. These measures were whether the respondent agrees that the rewards of childrearing are worth the costs and whether the respondent would be bothered by remaining childless. There was also no significant difference between whites and native-born Hispanics in the intention to have an additional birth at most parities (the exceptions being high-parity women, and men with one child). Moreover, the pattern of results is comparable for women and men, indicating little evidence for gender differences in cultural orientations toward childbearing.

The pattern is somewhat different among the foreign-born. Results show that foreign-born Hispanics (both men and women) are much more likely to believe that children are essential for happiness, compared with whites as well as native Hispanics. In addition, immigrants are more likely than other groups to intend to have a future child at almost every parity. However, Hispanics who are foreign-born are actually less likely than whites to agree that the rewards of being a parent are worth it and are less likely to be bothered by childlessness. As with their native-born counterparts, the pattern of results among foreign-born Hispanics is comparable for women and men.

Data limitations prevented us from exploring country-of-origin differences in cultural orientations. However, the majority of Hispanic respondents are of Mexican origin, so we find essentially the same results when the Hispanic groups are limited to Mexicans. Results for Hispanics of other national origin follow the general patterns, but small numbers prevent us from deriving precise conclusions. Overall, results suggest that the expectation of strong pronatalist attitudes among Hispanics may have been overstated, especially among the native-born. Among foreign-born Hispanics, there does seem to be some evidence of more favorable attitudes toward childbearing, possibly stemming from socialization processes in home countries. The fact that the

responses of native-born Hispanics fall between those of foreign-born Hispanics and whites supports assimilation perspectives, which predict the erosion of ethnic differentials across generations net of socioeconomic background (Fischer and Mattson 2009).

This study has several implications for subsequent research. More precise definitions of cultural constructs such as familism are necessary for understanding the role of culture in shaping fertility behaviors. Notions such as the value of children and fertility intentions could be framed within broader discussions about attitudes and culture, and in many cases, could lead to hypotheses that are testable using quantitative analysis. Such endeavors could move beyond our focus on showing cultural differences by relating cultural orientations to behavior. In addition, the salience of the immigrant experience highlights the importance of separating the foreign-born in studies of ethnic groups. There is increasing recognition that immigrant status is a key stratifying dimension affecting various life-course experiences, and we find it is also associated with attitudinal orientations. For groups with sizable immigrant populations, distinguishing between native and foreign-born may be central for accurately assessing ethnic traits.

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NOTE

¹Cohabiting women were asked for their joint intentions with their partner. Women who were pregnant at the time of the survey (and men whose partners were pregnant at the time of the survey) were asked for intentions after the current pregnancy.

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APPENDIX A. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR SAMPLE

	Women			Men		
	Native-born whites	Native-born Hispanics	Foreign-born Hispanics	Native-born whites	Native-born Hispanics	Foreign-born Hispanics
Age (mean)	28.9	25.9*	31.0*	28.5	24.8*	30.4*
Years of education (mean)	13.8	12.7*	11.4*	13.5	12.4*	11.1*
Income (percent)						
< \$25,000	29.9	42.0*	55.4*	22.8	35.0*	46.3*
\$25,000–\$49,999	27.1	28.1	30.8*	27.9	30.4	36.0*
\$50,000–\$74,999	19.9	16.2*	8.8*	22.2	17.3*	12.2*
\$75,000 or more	23.2	13.7*	5.0*	27.1	17.4*	5.6*
Religion raised (percent)						
No religion	13.6	7.0*	3.6*	13.4	7.0*	4.9*
Catholic	27.1	64.3*	81.8*	28.9	67.4*	80.8*
Protestant	51.7	23.6*	11.8*	51.3	20.4*	11.7*
Other religion	7.6	5.2*	2.8*	6.4	5.2	2.6*
N	4,415	1,074	980	3,868	927	845

*Difference with whites statistically significant at $p < .05$.