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The Message is in the Bottle: Latino Youth Communicating Double Standard Ideologies Through Photovoice

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Background: Young Latinas living in the United States experience inordinate sexual and reproductive health outcome disparities. However, though prioritized as subjects for prevention, they are also often denied sexual agency. **Purpose:** This article reports the results of a study conducted to examine young Latino/a participants' perspectives on communicating and learning about sexuality in school and family settings. **Methods:** A Photovoice project was conducted with 20 Latino/a high school students. Each participant received a digital camera to take photos for 2 discussion sessions. Participants discussed select photos in relation to self-generated topics. **Results:** One overarching theme, double standards in expectations about sexual communication, and 2 related subthemes, contrasting gender expectations in sexual desire and pleasure and confirming ideologies in sexual taboos and disconnections, emerged during discussions. **Discussion:** The persistence of a double standard placing responsibility for sexual protection on young women indicates a need to design health education programs centered on a critical examination of gendered and sexual expectations. **Translation to Health Education Practice:** Research findings on gender inequities should be translated to health education practice. In sexuality education this means conducting activities that address subjectivity and agency as they are accorded to participants in their everyday lives.

BACKGROUND

Young Latinas living in the United States experience the highest teen birth rate of any major ethnic/racial group in the United States, at 70.1/1000 births, in comparison to an overall U.S. teen birth rate of 39.1/1000.[1] Unfortunately, these odds are often highlighted at the expense of other outcomes, such as that young Latinas are more likely to engage in positive academic behaviors (e.g., homework, prepare for exams, participate in activities outside the classroom), have a higher grade point average, and complete high school on time,[2] as well as become English proficient in less time than young Latinos.[3] Research has identified protective factors associated with education that promote positive sexual and reproductive health outcomes among young Latinas, including high self-esteem experienced through school connectedness and intention to go to college. Participation in sports, in particular, is noted as a protective factor for young Latinas in terms of bolstering self-esteem and promoting positive educational and sexual health outcomes.[4-6] In addition, results from the U.S. Youth Risk Behavior Survey conducted among students in grades 9 to 12 showed that, comparatively speaking, more Latino than Latina students reported ever having had sexual intercourse (52.8% of young Latinos versus 45.4% of young Latinas) and having had sexual intercourse with 4 or more partners during their lives (18.0% of young Latinos versus 10.4% of young

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Latinas).[7] However, despite the educational and sexual risk behavior odds, the particular burden of teen pregnancy and birth bears heavily on double standards of sexuality, writ small and large[8] for young Latinos and Latinas.

Indeed, the sexual practices and health outcomes of young Latino/as living in the United States are oft critiqued as being culturally scripted according to double standards.[3,9-11] The script for young Latinos is that they assert their masculinity and sense of influence and accomplishment through leadership in sexual encounters, whereas young Latinas are held responsible for maintaining family tradition, pride, and dignity by deferring to men on sexual matters and ignoring their own sexual desires and pleasures.[12,13] García[14] highlights another kind of double standard faced by young Latinas, found in sexuality education curricula. Though sexual health education programs position young Latinas as being particularly at risk of teen pregnancy, the programs create a double bind for young women through their reliance on dominant discourses of sexuality.

A double standard largely colors the design of these programs, such that young Latinas are prioritized as objects for the promotion of long-term contraception, sexual responsibility (and consequently propriety), and pregnancy prevention, while they are denied a subjectivity and agency in conceptualizing and expressing their sexual desires. *Sexual subjectivity* and *agency*, respectively, refer to a person's capacity to feel connected to her sexual desires and in charge of her sexual decision-making process.[15] In the meantime, young men are left by the wayside as desiring subjects and are often ignored in health education and prevention efforts.[16] Likewise, Sisson[17] pointed to a major gap in the development of sexual health education programs between those designing the programs (adult professionals) and the "world teenagers know."[17(p623)] The gap is exacerbated by messages parlayed (those focusing on performance of risk behaviors) and information and skills needed to negotiate sexuality on the ground.[18]

One of the reasons for the disconnect between what is said by sex educators and what adolescents need to hear is a myopic focus on discrete sexual attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, such that deeper understandings of the ways in which everyday lived experiences inform sexual practices are overlooked.[19-21] Holistic understandings that situate sexual understandings and practices as part and parcel of participants' everyday lives are needed to construct truly comprehensive sexuality education programming.[22] One approach that may be used to frame a more holistic picture is Photovoice.

Photovoice is a participatory visual data collection technique in which participants take and discuss photos related to a community-identified issue of concern.[23] It is especially useful as an exploratory and arts-based approach to engage youth in developing and evaluating sexual health promotion messages and health education programs.[24] Photovoice projects are commonly broken up into 3 or more sessions. The first session entails a review of ethical issues associated with photo taking, focusing especially on possible risks incurred by those photographed and photographers themselves and how to obtain the proper consent to take and use a photo in a research study.[25] At the end of the session, participants generate topics to guide picture taking and follow-up discussion for subsequent sessions and receive digital or disposable cameras for photo taking. Participants are given some time to take photos, eventually joining together as a group to discuss select photos in subsequent sessions. Photos are discussed in these sessions using SHOWeD discussion prompts.[23] SHOWeD stands for "What people *see* in the photo," "What is really *happening* in the photo," "How this relates to participants' *own* experiences and lives," "*Why* the situation, concern, or issue exists," and "What can be *done* about the situation." Photos are displayed and viewed by the group, with participants discussing the photos in relation to the identified session topic.

Photovoice has become an accepted approach for community-based participatory research in the context of investigations on Latino/a youth health. For example, one project focused on the immigration experiences and quality of life of recently arrived Latino/a adolescents adapting to a new high school in rural North Carolina.[26] The approach was also used to explore the intersection of immigration, masculinity, and sexual risk behaviors among recently arrived young Latinos, also living in North Carolina.[27] Finally, another study used the approach to explore Latina mothers' understandings of their children's health.[28] To our knowledge, no other studies have incorporated Photovoice to examine the Latino/a youth perspectives on communicating and learning about sexuality.

PURPOSE

In this article, we examine local constructions of gendered expectations, focusing in particular on the ways in which double standards played out or were "done"[29] in a Photovoice-based study, *Para un Futuro Mejor* (For a Better Future), which examined young Latino/a participants' perspectives on communicating and learning about sexuality in school and family settings. The study was guided by a social constructionist theoretical perspective, in which sexuality is understood as a "set of practices and performances, constituted through language or discourses."[30(p5)] Here, double standard discourse notably permeates (and genders) the ways in which participants talk about sexuality, with young women positioned as passive recipients of young men's sexual desires and possessing lower levels of desire than men.[31-34]

METHODS

Setting

Data presented in this article were collected in 2009 during a Photovoice project conducted with students affiliated with the Public Health Club (PHC), an already established after-school club organized by native Spanish-speaking English-language learners. Located at a public high school in a mid-sized city in Massachusetts, students established the club as a venue for sexual and reproductive health promotion. *Para un Futuro Méjor* was a collaborative project established among this articles' coauthors, club members, and 2 high school faculty member sponsors.

Over the past 20 years, the city in which the high school is located has ranked at number 1 or 2 in Massachusetts for highest teen birth rates. Though Massachusetts had one of the lowest teen birth rates in the United States at 19.5/1000 in 2009, the rate in the city is much higher, at 72.1/1000.[35] In 2008, 66% of teen births in the city were to Latinas, in comparison to lower percentages for their black (22%) and white (10%) peers.[35] In addition, in 2005, the AIDS-related mortality rate for Latino/as (29/100 000) in the city was more than double the statewide rate (13/100 000).[36]

Sample

Two student leaders (one young man and one young woman) of the PHC assisted with participant recruitment. English-language learners in all high school grades were invited to voluntarily participate. The only specific criterion for recruitment was that a gender-stratified sample be recruited so that there might be an equal representation of boys and girls in discussion groups. Twenty (20) members of the PHC, including the 2 leaders of the club, chose to participate in the project during the recruitment session. The average age of participants was 17 years old. Of 10 girls who attended the recruitment session, 8 attended the first Photovoice session, and 6 completed all 3 sessions. Of 10 boys who attended the recruitment session, 8 attended the first Photovoice session, and 5 completed all 3 sessions.

Participants all self-identified as Latino/a and, more specifically, as Puerto Rican and/or Dominican. Though participants did self-identify as such on a demographic data collection form collected at the beginning of the project, they spoke of themselves as "Latino/a," "Hispanic," "Spanish-speaking," or as "girls" and "boys" during Photovoice discussions, rather than identifying themselves as being of a particular ethnicity. Though at times participants did use the phrase "in my culture" during discussions, they did so through an aggregative perspective in comparison to what they perceived to be dominant, white, and/or native English-speaking culture. This may be due to the initial structure of the group, in which we recruited participants from a school club that prioritized English-language learning and, in the context of the project site, Spanish-speaking students. For the rest of this article, we use the terms *girls* and *boys* to refer to participants because they spoke of themselves in this way and we would like to reflect their experiences using their own vernacular.

Procedures

Photovoice sessions were organized by gender, with 3 sessions for girls followed by 3 sessions for boys. During the recruitment session, the project's principal investigator (PI; the first author of this article) and a research assistant (a PhD student of the PI) distributed bilingual (Spanish/English) assent and consent forms at an appropriate reading level and read these aloud with participants before they were signed. Those under the age of 18 were asked to have consent forms signed by their parents/guardians. Participants received $15 and a meal for participating in each session. The study was approved by human subjects review panels at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and University of Massachusetts Boston.

Once recruitment activities were completed, the PI and research assistant facilitated 3 Photovoice sessions per group at 2 organizations serving Latino families, both located near the high school base for the PHC. The first session was devoted to familiarizing the group with ethical issues involved in photographing others, topic selection, and camera distribution and practice taking pictures. Participants were required to have assent and consent forms signed by all identifiable individuals in photos and to bring these with them to discussion sessions. At the end of the first session, participants brainstormed possible topics for discussion by being prompted by the PI and research assistant to think about topics that came to mind when they thought about learning and communication about sexuality. From the start, girls' conversations revolved around a discussion of double standards in learning, communication, and expectations. Through facilitated discussion, the girls refined their Photovoice topics to (1) desire and pleasure and (2) communication about sexuality. Boys' conversations centered on a discussion of sexual taboos, as well as the need for using protection (i.e., condoms and birth control) during sexual intercourse. Through facilitated discussion, boys refined their Photovoice topics to (1) family issues and taboos and (2) communication about protection. We loaned each participant a digital camera, and participants discussed initial ideas for photos and taking practice pictures. Participants were given 1 week to take up to 20 photos for the next 2 sessions.

Girls took an average of 14 photos for the desire and pleasure topic and 5 photos for the communication about sexuality topic. On average, boys took 2 photos for the family issues and taboos topic and 6 photos for the communication about protection topic. Each participant chose 2 photos to present and discuss per session, which were identified by participant-selected titles. SHOWeD

questions[23] were used to prompt discussion. Photos were displayed on a large screen at the front of the room, and participants discussed select photos in relation to the week's topic. The PI and research assistant both took field notes, during and after the sessions were completed, to describe participant use of language and identification of key issues and analytical constructs arising during the sessions.

Data Management and Analysis

All digital photos taken by participants were downloaded to the first author's computer and sorted by group (girls or boys), topic, and participant. Participant discussions were digitally recorded. Recordings were transcribed verbatim by native Spanish-speaking undergraduate students, employed by the second author of this article, whom she trained in qualitative transcription methods. Recordings transcribed into Spanish were subsequently translated by into English by 2 independent translators (from the same group of students) to validate the translation. Words that did not translate well were replaced with words that held a similar meaning to ensure that the underlying concept was retained. Transcripts were then back-translated (English → Spanish) by 2 other translators (from the same group of students) to obtain consensus for translation.

All participants identified in this article were assigned pseudonyms and identifiable features in photos were blocked out to protect individual identities. Transcripts, field notes, and digital photos were all considered data sources, with data analyzed using intertextual and thematic narrative analysis[37] to identify emergent themes within and across the data.

Coding involved 2 steps. We first reviewed the text of all transcripts and field note documents line by line, as juxtaposed with corresponding photos if possible, to identify relevant themes. Broad themes signaled topics to be reported and published from the project. Our analytic aim was to identify contrasting and common confirming responses and representations among the participants. These were indicated as narrative themes and were identified based on recurrent patterns of meaning. One theme that arose in this review was double standards, as revealed in participant talk and visual representations. We reviewed and analyzed the data again in light of this key theme to discern subthemes used by participants as focal points for meaning making on double standards in learning and communicating about sexuality.

RESULTS

Our analysis yielded 2 subthemes in relation to double standards: (1) contrasting gender expectations in sexual desire and pleasure and (2) confirming ideologies in sexual taboos and disconnections. In this article, we present text extracts from participants' discussion and corresponding photos to detail participants' understandings of double standards.

Contrasting Gender Expectations in Sexual Desire and Pleasure

Double standards of propriety. When the girls decided that they would like to talk about pleasure and desire, together we considered the sorts of photos they might take and then participants practiced taking pictures. They relayed a general unease about the negative consequences of proclaiming their sexual desires, fearing that they might be perceived as "desperate" and, worse, as "bad" or "a ho," as a result. One participant remarked,

> You know a girl, if she's expressing, to a boy especially, that she wants sex, before he expresses to her that he's interested . . . or, not just sex, but you know, anything . . . kissing or making out or whatever. . . . Intimacy . . . If she expresses it first, she's seen as possibly desperate. You're supposed to wait for a boy to come to you.

Girls asked why it was that boys could talk openly, even with bravado, about their sexual desires, whereas they felt that the practice was off limits. Girls spoke of the double standard they faced from parents and family members, but also from friends and peers, regarding public expressions of pleasure and desire. Resistance to this expectation resonated in one girl's comment when she said that it "pissed her off" that she felt so constrained in this regard.

Serving as visual cues of this embodied constraint, girls' photos taken for the session on pleasure and desire were largely implicit in nature, with photos symbolically or broadly representing the topic. One participant, Cara, took a photo of friend and coparticipant Ana. Picture 1, entitled "Greedy," depicts Ana smiling with a mouthful of sugarcoated fried dough (a favored childhood snack of the girls) and with powdered sugar smeared all over her face. According to Cara, the image was meant to convey Ana's immense enjoyment of the "snack." If the photo did not explicitly represent sexual pleasure, the talk and laughter surrounding it conveyed what was publicly inexpressible to represent the constraint that girls experienced on this front. "Greedy" is replete with contrasting cultural images. The photo is striking because it depicts Ana as insatiable, as one young Latina who cannot control her cravings (hence the snack all over her face), despite the expected propriety of wearing a military-like Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) uniform (as she does in the photo). The photo, with Ana wearing the JROTC uniform while also visibly enjoying the messy snack, highlights the double standards that Ana faces related to expressions of sexual pleasure and desire.

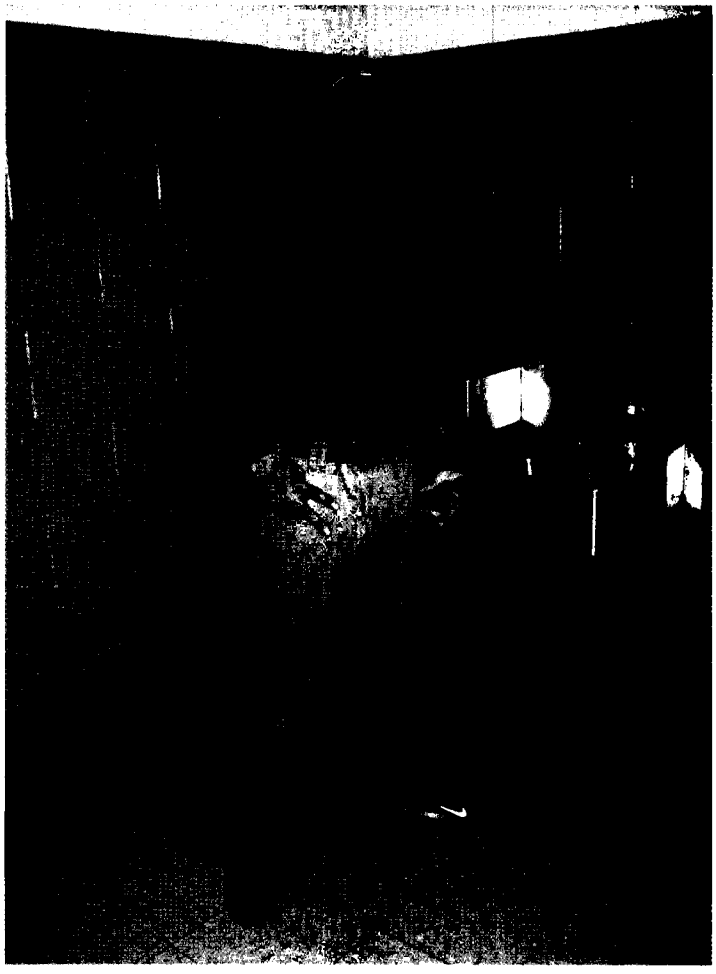
Further highlighting discrepancies in expectations for young men and women, the JROTC also figured into one conversation with boys during Photovoice sessions. How-

PICTURE 1 Greedy (color photograph available online).

ever, rather than taking photos with the JROTC uniform included as a signifier of sexual control or propriety, boys instead spoke of their intent to join the military as taboo within their families. The sexual did not figure into this conversation. One boy, Josä, elaborated: "It's like telling your father or your mother that you wanna go to the Navy. *That's* a taboo. Because they won't say yes, they'll say, 'Not you!'" A double standard in sexual propriety was highlighted, with boys struggling to speak about or take photos of sexual taboos, whereas girls easily spoke of and visually depicted the topic, even though they had not chosen it as a topic for themselves.

Double standards of playing the field. In contrast to negative associations with expressing their own sexual pleasures and desires, girls' photos highlighted boys' sexual agency. For example, the idea of "being a player" was the subject of one photo. Picture 2, entitled "Bestie," depicts a young man in a baseball uniform, standing in a high school hallway and "throwing up" a gang sign. When asked to discuss what they were seeing in the photo, the girls responded that the boy depicted in the photo was on the high school baseball team and a close friend of the photographer, Ana. However, when asked to talk about what was really happening in the photo, the girls discussed the multiple meanings of being a "player," in relation to this and other young Latinos. The girls explained that the young man was a player, in both the literal and figurative senses of the term. To the girls, being a player meant "having many girls," as one participant exclaimed, "just like him!" Linking the sexual connotations of being a player to being able to act upon one's pleasures and desires—hold agency in sexual relationships—one of the participants said that the young man depicted in the photo was also about to play a sport that gave him a lot of pleasure. When asked to talk about the photo in relation to their own lives, Ana responded that though she also liked sports and thought that more teens should be involved to keep them "off the streets," she herself did not play any official sports.

Instead, the young women referred to girls who played official sports as "tomboys," with contrasting gender implications for these players. Though playing sports in an official capacity could mean that a girl might derive a certain



PICTURE 2 Bestie (color photograph available online).

amount of pleasure from her athletic accomplishment, in discussing tomboys the girls used descriptors such as "sweaty," "dirty," and "not interested in boys." Tomboys might publicly enact pleasure derived through sport, but they do so in disregard of common expectations. The girls critiqued a double standard that affords boys sexual allowances through heightened masculinity, "playing the field" in both senses of the term, while also adhering to a more stringent standard for tomboys. Ironically, the girls' Photovoice session on desire and pleasure was only partially attended due to a baseball game taking place that day. Halfway through the session, most of the girls stood to excuse themselves, saying that they "had to go cheer for the boys."

Confirming Ideologies in Sexual Taboos and Disconnections

Knowing better. When discussing why double standards existed in their lives, and similar to what García[14] found in her study analyzing Latina girls' responses to sexuality education curricula, girls participating in the study claimed that most everyone expects them to "know better" than boys when it comes to sexuality and to act accordingly. Girls and boys both referenced dominant understandings that placed sexual responsibility and blame for "risky behavior" squarely on young women's shoulders. Speaking of what she had learned from her family and in her health education class, one girl said, "Girls are told to be really shy and not want sex, but when a girl gets pregnant ... usually it's the woman that's blamed."

Boys articulated similar understandings. At one point while they were choosing discussion topics, several boys provided hypothetical reasons for not knowing about the type of birth control method that their sexual partner was using. One boy said, "Boys don't talk to girls about birth control." Another boy, Cristian, said, "Boys usually think that the girl is the one who needs to protect herself" in sexual relationships because "she is the one that gets pregnant." Indeed, this conversation transpired even though participating boys were avid members of the PHC, which had engaged in activities focused on partners' joint responsibility for contraception.

Girls and boys both spoke of learning and communication about sexuality within the family as disparately

apportioned according to one's biological capacity for pregnancy. One boy, Luis, noted: "Girls are told different things than boys. Yeah. Because they can get pregnant, that's scary shit, stuff like that." Another boy relayed contrasting experiences for girls and boys in his family regarding communication about sexuality:

> I think it's different because with my uncle, like they both have ... I have a boy cousin and girl cousin and ... like my uncle had the talk with my boy cousin. I was there. Like he told him, like "I don't mind if you do it but do it carefully." But he never talked to my girl cousin about it and she was way older, so I think it's different. Like he didn't wanna talk to her about it because she might have like the idea, like, "Oh, I should try it."

Communication about sexuality: Disconnection or rite of passage?. In contrast with the expectation that girls protect themselves in sexual relationships lest they become pregnant, girls spoke of contradictory messages received regarding learning and communicating about sexuality. They spoke of messages received saying that they should "keep quiet," lest they risk being thought of as a "drama queen," as self-centered, or as sexually promiscuous. In turn, several girls voiced a preference for hanging out with boys. Ana explained: "I feel comfortable talking more to guys than I do to girls ... 'cause girls, like, they tend to judge you ... and ... look for dramas, and boys they just ... they already know about all that stuff ..."

Another participant summarized her experiences communicating about sexuality with her female family members: "If you talk to your family about something, then they'll wonder why you're asking. ... They automatically assume you're doing it." And another described her fear of the consequences from talking with her mother about sexual matters: "When you tell your mom certain stuff, you know, you don't want to tell them [mothers], because you're gonna be scared, like oh, they're gonna get mad! Are they gonna hit me?" A fourth participant added: "Or she's gonna spread it—to your whole family!! I hate when that happens!" Cara reported that her mother told her not to have sex, providing her with little knowledge to work with in forming sexual relationships. Another participant, Monaique, also spoke of the threat of her mother spreading stories as a sort of surveillance and controlling mechanism to quell her curiosity for knowledge about sexuality. Knowledge, positioned discursively as a weapon against teen pregnancy in prevention campaigns, was contrastively considered here: something taken for granted that boys have but seen as fueling the fire of girls' sexuality.

One participant, Dania, took a photo that visually depicted a sexual communication *disconnect*[32] for girls in the family setting. Picture 3, entitled "Message in a Bottle," depicts a soda bottle with a rolled up piece of paper stuck inside. When asked to discuss what was really happening in her photo, Dania likened the message in the bottle to the way that communication about sexuality went for girls. She explained that "Before, people used to communicate through that ... kind of like you could send a message on a piece of paper, and put it in a bottle and wait for it to get somewhere in the ocean." Another participant elaborated with a chuckle:

PICTURE 3 Message in a bottle (color photograph available online).

> You don't want nobody to know what you doing, what you got written on it. You don't know how the paper got in the bottle, who sent it, and it stays out at sea. Yeah, like if you wanna send somebody a secret message, or whatever.

Whereas girls spoke of partaking in a limited and indirect style of communication about sexuality, especially with female family members, boys did not seem to relate to these difficulties. Indeed, though they had chosen taboos as a topic for one Photovoice session, they were unable to articulate taboos related to sexual communication. For example, as mentioned previously, Cristian indicated a difficulty in taking pictures to represent taboos in sexual communication, because this was not something that informed his sense of sexual subjectivity, a common sentiment among the boys. Instead, he spoke of experiencing quite open communications about sexuality between him and his mother:

> Me and my mom have a very open relationship. I remember the first time we talked about using condoms. I was twelve. ... I remember that she brought some condoms to the house ... she brought the condoms to my brother and then I saw it, I was like, "What is that?" And then she started talking to me about it.

For boys, then, the initiation of communication about sexuality figured as a sort of rite of passage, whereas for

girls it was seen as something dangerous, as something from which girls needed protection. Contrasting expectations reinforced a gendered double standard on sexual responsibility.

DISCUSSION

Expressions of sexuality are culturally specific, in part influenced by the system of ideas and values that inform gender expectations and the "doing" of gender.[29] Differences in the ways that young Latinas and Latinos describe their own experiences learning and communicating about sexuality reflect enculturated double standards,[38–40] as evidenced in our findings. Our first subtheme—contrasting gender expectations in sexual desire and pleasure—underscores the influence of these double standards. Girls' discussion of double standards of propriety and double standards of playing the field highlights how they can be silenced when it comes to public expressions of desire, whereas boys are encouraged or celebrated for similar expressions. However, though critical, girls' talk also reinforced double standards. Consequently, expectations that girls remain passive about expressions of pleasure and desire were more than just constitutive of silencing mechanisms. They were also taken up or constituted by the girls themselves, in effect circumscribing their own sexual practices.[41]

Relaying double standards of propriety, girls' comments underscored the theoretical construct of sexual scripting,[42] because they reckoned that the dominant script held them as the arbiters of sexual respect.[43] Wilkins[44] has noted a tendency in ethnic communities to place responsibility for communal respect and sexual integrity on women. Their sexual integrity is reliant on a moral superiority maintained through chastity. Girls' conversation surrounding the "Greedy" photo, as well as the visual contradictions of a young woman wearing a JROTC uniform while clearly relishing her messy snack, exemplified these double standards of propriety. Indeed, Pérez[45] notes the increased commonality of working-class Latina youth participation in the JROTC, because the young women are targeted for recruitment through a prevention discourse that holds them to be at risk of becoming unwed teenage mothers and, thus, in need of control. This language is not lost on parents: "As parents grow increasingly concerned with their adolescent daughter's sexuality, JROTC participation can be regarded as another way of preserving their daughter's chastity and honor. . . ."(p63) The JROTC thus offers young Latinas like Ana a route to sexual integrity and moral superiority.

Girls also spoke of double standards related to playing the field. The "Bestie" photo and girls' discussion surrounding the photo depicted an intertextual layering of visual symbols and dominant discourses on Latino masculinity. The young man figured within the photo wears a baseball uniform, which can be seen as representing a golden opportunity for young Latinos—the dream of being a baseball star.[46] Yet a gang sign is also thrown into relief, symbolizing another opportunity for enacting masculinity that is quite available to young men in the study community. The young man is described as both a baseball player and a sexual player, someone who is able to competently express his sexual desires and who is known to "get around," sexually speaking. Faulkner and Mansfield[47] present a similar use of the term *player* in their own study focusing on Latina youth talking about sexuality. Double standards were evoked through girls' discussions of positive versus negative connotations of being a player, with girls who are players receiving the much more negative label of being a "ho." However, though critical of this double standard, they maintained the standard through their critical remarks on tomboys, which mirrored the conflation of sex, gender, and sexual orientation found in this construct.[48] However it is important to note that the tomboy identity, like other identities, is a flexible construct. Others commented that by socially positioning themselves as tomboys some Latina girls are able to resist or challenge the double standard that they remain submissive or quiet about their pleasures.[49–51]

Further talk related to a second subtheme on double standards—confirming ideologies in sexual taboos and disconnections—continued this heterosexual comparison to convey the sense that the world not only puts a double standard in place but doubly burdens girls because of the moral imperative of "knowing better." In particular, the Photovoice sessions highlighted the double standard that girls maintain responsibility in (hetero)sexual practice. The biological fact that girls were at risk of becoming pregnant seemed to weigh most heavily on participants' minds, perhaps in response to statistics commonly broadcast about the study city, in which young Latinas experience inordinately high rates of teen pregnancy and birth. In this regard, a "moral panic" regarding teen pregnancy and birth[52,53] played out on the ground in learning and communicating about sexuality. A similar moral panic on teen pregnancy is found in South Africa, with girls largely held responsible for the problem of pregnancy. This has resulted in a tough love approach to addressing girls' sexuality.[54] Likewise, the moral panic resonates in Brazil, where young women's sexuality is targeted for control in specific relation to their potentially negative biological outcomes.[55]

Both girls and boys in this study spoke of girls being the ones who were expected to manage the biological consequences of sexual interaction. Conversely, boys were positioned as "not knowing any better," as if to say that they could be sexually active and be openly proud of it, whereas girls were expected to know better and be wise to the difference. The persistence of a double standard that placed the overwhelming responsibility for sexual protection on girls in the study discussions, despite both girls' and boys'

involvement in PHC sex education activities, suggests the strength of heterosexist cultural norms, to say nothing of biological determinism, in gender ideology.

Speaking specifically about learning and communicating about sexuality in the family context, girls spoke of feeling disconnected from their families, whereas boys articulated a sort of communicative rite of passage in their families with regard to learning about sexuality, with their discussions focused on the open communications about sexuality they had experienced in the home. Wilson et al[56] identify a similar phenomenon in their study focused on Latino fathers' roles in communicating about sexuality with their children. Discussions surrounding the "Message in a Bottle" photo particularly highlighted a communicative disconnect for girls, a disconnect that has previously been highlighted in the public health literature[32,33] and has led to the development of sexual health interventions prioritizing Latino communities and focused at the family level. For example, one such intervention—*Rompe el Silencio* (Break the Silence)—works from a female- and family-centered approach to provide a culturally relevant HIV intervention in Latino communities.[57]

STUDY LIMITATIONS

Our method of participant recruitment for the *Para un Futuro Méjor* project is a clear limitation of the study. Specifically, we recognize that it is problematic that student participants were affiliated with a Public Health Club, which may have influenced their perceptions of sexuality and sexual health and may not be representative of the high school or Latino/a youth population.

TRANSLATION TO HEALTH EDUCATION PRACTICE

Double standards in gender expectations, and learning and communicating about sexuality, serve to create a double bind for girls,[16] because they are expected to both keep quiet about their own pleasures and desires and maintain sexual propriety and agency in managing sexual relationships (especially in terms of using contraception). The bind works to girls' detriment: they are "damned if they do, damned if they don't"[58] when enacting sexual agency.

The difficulty, locally and cross culturally, is that the biological reality of pregnancy for young women perceived to be at risk of teenage pregnancy translates into health education efforts—in both family and school settings—that prioritize prevention by shielding them from knowledge and/or skills that might help develop their agency in negotiating sexual relationships. A moral panic regarding teenage pregnancy[53] undergirds this approach and sets up contrasting subject positions for young men and young women.[38] These contrasting positions offer different gendered ways of seeing the world and ways of being in the world—which can have broad implications for the morality of sexual experience,[39] as well as for the development of successful strategies for sexuality education and health promotion.

In order to design and implement sexuality education programs that are more resonant with Latino/a youth it is critical that we understand the ways that uneven power dynamics inform gender expectations and affect the ways that they learn and communicate about sexual standards and practices. Teachers of middle and high school health education courses must provide learning opportunities for Latino/a students to explore their own understanding and critically examine gender ideologies. Tolman and colleagues[30] emphasized the fundamental nature of gender to all things sexual to construct of model of adolescent sexual health that seeks to address gendered power imbalances. In health education practice, this means that we should move beyond a focus on the sexual to investigate the ways in which subjectivity and agency are accorded to girls and boys in their everyday lives, conducting activities that include a broader focus on gender, power, subjectivity, and agency.

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