

Low-Income Latino Mothers' and Fathers' Control Strategies and Toddler Compliance

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We explored children's compliance to their mothers' and fathers' control strategies in a sample of 49 Latino toddlers and their immigrant parents during a cleanup task. We report 3 sets of findings. First, both mothers and fathers primarily used direct and indirect commands to elicit compliance. Second, there was no difference in the type of control strategies mothers and fathers used with their daughters versus sons. Mothers who used praise and indirect commands had children who complied more, whereas mothers who used direct commands and incentives had children who were less compliant. Toddlers were more compliant to their fathers than mothers, and girls were more compliant to their mothers than were boys. Third, mothers who used more direct control strategies also strongly endorsed the value of *respeto*. These findings highlight the importance of examining the variation in Latino mothers' and fathers' control strategies.

Public Significance Statement

Child compliance is a precursor to self-regulation and a foundational skill for future academic success. Though the use of directive control is frequent and appears normative for Latino families, it is associated with toddler noncompliance.

Keywords: parental control, compliance, *respeto*, immigrant, Latino

Compliance, the ability to resist tempting impulses, regulate frustration, delay gratification, and carry out actions consistent with parental standards (Kochanska, 1993), is predictive of children's self-regulation and is associated with later behavioral and social functioning (Kochanska, Coy, & Murray, 2001; Spinrad et al., 2012) and school success (Denham, Warren, Salisch, Chin, & Geangu, 2010; Morrison, Ponitz, & McClelland, 2010). A child's ability

to comply with caregivers' requests emerges between 12 and 18 months (Dix, Stewart, Gershoff, & Day, 2007). Though noncompliance is relatively normative in toddlerhood, defiance (e.g., tantrums, aggressive noncompliance) signifies dysregulated behavior and has been linked to long-term behavior problems (Kuczynski & Kochanska, 1990). Therefore, examining the ways in which parents help their toddlers comply with their requests is important for understanding the precursors of self-regulation.

Parental behaviors and practices have been strongly implicated in promoting children's compliant behavior (see Owen, Slep, & Heyman, 2012 for a review). Studies with middle-class families show that children whose mothers use indirect control strategies (e.g., suggestions and distraction) are more likely to exhibit regulatory behaviors (e.g., inhibitory control) than children whose parents use direct control strategies (e.g., directives and verbal commands;

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Houck & Lecuyer-Maus, 2004; LeCuyer-Maus & Houck, 2002). Because these studies do not typically control for a host of contextual factors (e.g., socioeconomic status) that might also be related to self-regulatory behaviors, their generalizability to low-income, ethnically diverse families is limited. Further, the small body of research including low-income, ethnically diverse families suggests that many low-income parents do not use directives, and when they do, they do not seem to have the same negative effects on children as they do among White families (Ispa et al., 2013). Moreover, there is limited research on whether mothers and fathers differ in the strategies they use to elicit compliance with their sons and daughters and how sons and daughters differentially comply to each parent.

We focus on Latinos because they are the largest ethnic group in the U.S. and the most likely to live in poverty. Studies of low-income Latino parents find that they emphasize deference and respect for elders as central socialization goals for their children (Calzada, Huang, Anicama, Fernandez, & Brotman, 2012). Latino mothers have been shown to employ more controlling and directive parenting behaviors compared to White mothers (Chaudhuri, Eastbrooks, & Davis, 2009; Fuligni & Brooks-Gunn, 2013). However, other studies that include Latino mothers suggest that they employ control strategies that are more consistent with the warm, sensitive strategies that have been demonstrated to be most beneficial for White children (Brady-Smith et al., 2013). The few studies on Latino families focus on older children, and those that include young children (e.g., Ispa et al., 2004, 2013) do not examine the cultural context of rearing children. Moreover, Latino fathers are not included in any study of how parents socialize their children to comply. This omission is notable because fathers' contributions to children's development is independent from mothers'; therefore, excluding fathers in research likely underestimates parental effects. Furthermore, a majority of Latino children live in two-parent households where fathers are actively engaged in child-rearing activities (Cabrera, Shannon, & Tamis-LeMonda, 2007; Cabrera, Hofferth, & Chae, 2011; Fry & Gonzales, 2008; Rowe, Coker, & Pan, 2004; Turner, Guzman, Wildsmith, & Scott, 2015).

To address the gaps in the literature, we draw data from a study of low-income Latino mothers, fathers, and their toddlers during a cleanup task, which requires that the child carry out a sustained activity based on a directive from their parent (Kochanska & Aksan, 1995). During these interactions, children have opportunities to practice self-regulation. Parents who strongly believe that children should be deferential to adults might use more directive control strategies (i.e., "put it away") when eliciting child compliance compared to parents who do not hold such beliefs. Because mothers and fathers interact with children in different ways, we explore whether there are differences in how fathers and mothers use control strategies with their toddlers and whether there are differences in compliance by child gender. We frame our study using the bioecological model of human development, which suggests that children's proximal interactions in the home environment with their mothers and fathers influence their development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). We also use a cultural perspective that parents' cultural beliefs influence the socialization practices they choose to employ, including the control strategies they use with their children in daily activities (Livas-Dlott et al., 2010). We ask the following questions: (a) What control strategies do Latino mothers and fathers use to help their toddlers comply with their requests during a cleanup task? Do mothers and fathers differ in the types of control strategies they use with their sons and daughters? (b) Are parents' control strategies related to children's compliant behaviors? and (c) Are mothers' control strategies correlated with the cultural value of *respeto*?

Control Strategies in Latino Families

A challenging aspect of the literature on parental control is the lack of consensus on how to define it and, consequently, how to measure it. In general, parental control refers to the demands and restrictions parents place on children (Halgunseth, Ispa, & Rudy, 2006) and typically includes both positive and negative parental behaviors (Conger, 2009). Some scholars distinguish between psychological control of children's thoughts and feelings and behavioral control of children's actions and behaviors (Pomerantz & Wang, 2009). Others use terms such

as high power assertion (e.g., harsh, intrusive discipline) and low power assertion (e.g., suggestions; Kochanska & Knaack, 2003), and still others use terms such as positive (e.g., teaching, encouraging, and guiding) and negative control (e.g., the use of anger, harshness, and criticism; Karreman, van Tuijl, van Aken, & Deković, 2006).

Research on the control strategies low-income Latino parents use to help young children comply is relatively rare (Koenig, Cicchetti, & Rogosch, 2000; Smith, Calkins, Keane, Anastopoulos, & Shelton, 2004). A review of the literature revealed that, as a group and including children of all ages, Latino parents use control strategies that can be categorized as nonpunitive (e.g., rule setting, monitoring, directing, modeling, and physical guidance) and punitive (e.g., physical/verbal punishment and psychological punishment; Halgunseth et al., 2006). A large-scale study of low-income ethnically diverse mothers and their toddlers enrolled in Early Head Start found that Mexican American mothers were more intrusive (Ispa et al., 2004) and demonstrated higher amounts of directiveness and controlling behaviors than White mothers during a play task (Chaudhuri et al., 2009; Fuligni & Brooks-Gunn, 2013; Ispa et al., 2013; Livas-Dlott et al., 2010) and adhered to similar dimensions of warmth and authoritative as White parents (Brady-Smith et al., 2013). These findings suggest that low-income Latina mothers may be more controlling than White mothers; however, it is unclear whether Latino fathers exhibit similar patterns of controlling parenting behaviors. We address this gap in this study.

Parental Control Strategies, Compliance, and Child Gender

Theories of gender suggest that parents of young children treat their children differently based on their gender (Ruble & Martin, 1998), with both mothers and fathers employing more warm, sensitive strategies with their daughters than their sons. For example, in a sample of two-parent middle-class Israeli parents with toddlers, fathers were significantly more likely to use warm (e.g., praise, redirection of attention) and sensitive control strategies (e.g., adapting to child's needs, supportive presence) with their daughters than their sons (Feldman & Klein, 2003). Stud-

ies of American families with toddlers show that mothers use more directives and negative control strategies (including intrusiveness, threats, and force/restriction) with their sons and more gentle guidance (including suggestions, explanations, and verbal assistance) with their daughters (Crockenberg & Litman, 1990; Lindsey & Caldera, 2005). However, a recent meta-analysis on gender-differentiated parenting found few differences in parental control of boys and girls (Endendijk, Groeneveld, Bakermans-Kranenburg, & Mesman, 2016), with the exception that parents of toddlers were slightly more controlling with their boys than with their girls.

Research with low-income families is more limited, yet has similar findings. For example, one study of low-income, ethnically diverse fathers and their 24-month-olds from the Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Project found that fathers overwhelmingly used regulatory language, particularly direct commands, with their toddlers to elicit compliance (Malin, Cabrera, Karberg, Aldoney, & Rowe, 2014). Furthermore, in line with research that suggests boys receive more direct commands than girls, fathers of boys used more regulatory language than fathers of girls (Malin et al., 2014).

There is also evidence to suggest that there may be gender differences in the way children respond to parental control. Studies of toddlers have shown that girls demonstrate more committed compliance, less situational compliance, and less passive noncompliance than boys (Kochanska & Aksan, 1995; Kochanska & Kim, 2013). Whether these differences in compliance and control are parent- or child-driven is unclear. Research on gender socialization in Latino families suggests that Latino parents socialize their daughters in ways that are marked by "traditional" gender-related roles and expectations (e.g., expectations to help around the house, wear feminine clothing, and play with dolls), whereas boys often have more privileges and less restrictions (Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004). Such differences in socialization may result in varying rates of compliance by child gender. Given the dearth of research in this area, we merely explore whether Latino mothers and fathers use different strategies with their sons and daughters, while also exploring differences in rates of compliance by child gender.

Parental Control Strategies and Child Compliance in Latino Families

Studies of White middle-class families find consistent associations between parental control strategies and children's compliant behaviors. Overall, mothers who use high power-related control strategies (e.g., direct commands) seem to be less effective than mothers who employ low-power or nonintrusive strategies (e.g., warmth, support, guidance, distractions, and sensitive responsiveness) in promoting self-regulation and evoking child compliance (Feldman & Klein, 2003; Houck & Lecuyer-Maus, 2004; LeCuyer-Maus & Houck, 2002). Nonintrusive control strategies, such as reasoning, may be effective because they are autonomy granting and provide toddlers with a choice, making children feel like a partner in a reciprocal interaction rather than a subordinate in a unilateral one (Crockenberg & Litman, 1990).

However, studies with ethnic minority mothers show mixed results (Ispa et al., 2004; Pomerantz & Wang, 2009; Wood, Grau, Smith, Duran, & Castellanos, 2017). In a small-scale study of 24 low-income Mexican American mothers and their 4-year-old children, Livas-Blott and colleagues (2010) found that mothers used predominantly direct verbal commands during naturalistic observations of daily play activities in the home, as opposed to strategies that incorporated reasoning, explanation, or choice. While the commands were almost never given in the context of anger or negative affect, they were direct and clear and allowed little room for discussion. Children were observed to be compliant immediately after maternal direct commands most of the time. Another study of ethnically diverse toddlers and their mothers found that maternal use of direct, intrusive strategies was not negatively related to Mexican American children's engagement with their mother, though they were for children of all other ethnic groups (Ispa et al., 2013). Still, other studies suggest that patterns of control and compliance in Latino families are more similar to middle-class White families than different. For example, one recent study of adolescent Puerto Rican mothers and their 24-month-old toddlers found high levels of control were related to child defiance, while maternal guidance predicted child compliance (Wood et al., 2017).

The few studies that include low-income fathers of young children have shown that fathers use more directives and less bargaining, affection, and justification than mothers (Blandon & Volling, 2008; Malin et al., 2014; Power, McGrath, Hughes, & Manire, 1994; Volling, Blandon, & Gorvine, 2006). However, none of these studies analyzed their data by ethnic group. Therefore, whether Latino fathers' use of control strategies is related to children's compliance is an empirical question that has not been yet addressed in the literature.

Cultural Beliefs and Parenting Control Strategies

The ecocultural framework suggests that cultural values and beliefs about child rearing are important sources of variation in parenting practices between Latino parents and others (Garcia-Coll & Pachter, 2002). The cultural value of *respeto*, characterized by obedience, deference, decorum, and public behavior, is a core Latino value emphasized by Latino parents (Calzada, Fernandez, & Cortes, 2010). Compared to European American mothers of the same socioeconomic status, Latino mothers have been shown to focus more on the socialization of *respeto* than personal development, use more directives, employ spanking more often, use less negotiation, and give lower priority to children's autonomy development (Calzada et al., 2010; Calzada et al., 2012; Cardona, Nicholson, & Fox, 2000; Carlson & Harwood, 2003; Halgunseth et al., 2006).

Based on an ecocultural framework that parents' cultural beliefs guide their parenting practices and behaviors, we expect that parents who highly endorse the cultural value of *respeto* will use more directives and control strategies, which emphasize obedience and deference to authority rather than gentle or sensitive strategies. However, this topic of research is not well developed. Although a review of the literature on parental control strategies found that Latino parents emphasize *respeto* as a primary socialization goal for their children regardless of national origin (Halgunseth et al., 2006), we found no studies to support the association between endorsing *respeto* and using directive control strategies to elicit compliance. Therefore, in this study we explore how the value of *respeto* is

related to the control strategies Latino immigrant parents employ with their children.

Current Study

The current study seeks to extend the literature on parental control and child compliance by examining the control strategies that low-income Latino mothers and fathers use to help their children comply with their requests during a cleanup task; it also seeks to explore how these control strategies are related to early indicators of children's self-regulation. In our first research question, we explored what control strategies mothers and fathers used to help their children comply with their requests during a cleanup task. Within this question we also explored the role of child gender by examining the types of control strategies low-income Latino mothers and fathers used with their sons and daughters. In our second research question, we investigated how sons and daughters responded to maternal and paternal bids for compliance and tested whether mothers' control strategies were related to children's compliant behavior. In our third research question we tested how maternal control strategies were related to the cultural value of *respeto*. Based on ecocultural theories that posit that cultural beliefs such as *respeto* are related to parenting practices, we expected that mothers who highly endorse the cultural value of *respeto* would use more directive and nonnegotiable strategies to elicit compliance. However, because there is no empirical research testing this hypothesis, we explored descriptively whether these variables were associated. Finally, given the mixed findings in the literature that show support for both positive (e.g., Livas-Dlott et al., 2010) and negative (e.g., Wood et al., 2017) associations between directive control strategies and toddler compliance, we did not make a specific hypothesis but rather tested whether there was a correlation between type of control strategy mothers used and children's compliance.

Method

Participants

Participants were 49 U.S.-born toddlers (53% female) 24–31 months of age ($M = 2.31$ years, $SD = .28$) of Latino heritage and their foreign-

born mothers ($n = 47$) and fathers ($n = 19$). Both children and parents were recruited from early care centers in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. Table 1 presents demographic information for the participating families. Overall, mothers and fathers were on average 30 ($M = 30.21$) and 33 years old ($M = 33.88$), respectively. Over half of the participating parents were of Salvadorian origin (56% of mothers and 61% of fathers), and 95% of both mothers and fathers were foreign born. In terms of education, 56% of mothers and 50% of fathers had less than a high school degree, while 29% of mothers and 28% of fathers had a high school degree. At the time of the interview, 94% of fathers and 60% of mothers were employed. All mothers and fathers were Spanish-language dominant.

Procedure

Data collection included child assessments, mother and father interviews, and home visits during which videotaped observations of mother-child and father-child interactions were obtained. Data collection ran from July 2012 to October 2015. All data were collected in the family's primary language by a bilingual, female research assistant who visited the participants in their homes. Informed consent was obtained from each parent. Parents were interviewed and videotaped separately engaging in two activities: a 10-min semistructured free play task followed by a cleanup task, which is the focus of the present investigation. The order of which parent went first was randomized, and only the focal parent and the child were asked to stay in the room for the interaction. Siblings were discouraged from being in the room during the interaction, and a second research assistant engaged with them in a separate room when possible. During the free play tasks, parents were asked to sit on a mat with his or her child, ignore the camera, and play with age-appropriate toys designed to stimulate talk and play. Afterward, a researcher asked the parent to tell their child to clean up by putting the toys back in the bags. The task was completed when all the toys were cleaned up.

Clean up tasks are often used in studies of compliance. The act of cleaning up poses a regulatory challenge for children because it requires the child to interrupt a pleasant activity and engage in the often unpleasant activity of

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics

Variable	%	<i>M (SD)</i>	Range
Mother characteristics (<i>n</i> = 47)			
Age		30.21 (5.48)	19–40
Foreign born	95		
Age moved to the U.S.		21.09 (6.36)	4–31
Age at first birth		23.05 (5.79)	16–38
Number of children (mother has)		2.07 (.894)	1–5
Ethnicity			
Salvadorian	56		
Mexican	16		
Honduran	9		
Guatemalan	7		
Other	12		
Education			
Less than nine years	42		
Less than high school	14.3		
High school/GED	28.6		
Some college	4.8		
College degree	4.8		
Graduate school	2.4		
Employed	60		
Father characteristics (<i>n</i> = 19)			
Age		32.88 (5.27)	25–46
Foreign born	95		
Age moved to the U.S.		21.29 (3.75)	16–27
Ethnicity			
Salvadorian	61		
Mexican	15		
Honduran	15		
Other	9		
Education			
Less than nine years	33		
Less than high school	16.7		
High school/GED	27.8		
Some college			
College degree			
Graduate school	5.6		
Employed	94		

cleaning up. Unlike a prohibition task, which requires the child to inhibit a prohibited act (e.g., “don’t touch that!”), the cleanup task provides the child with the unique challenge of carrying out a sustained activity based on a directive from their parent, which some research suggests is more difficult (Kochanska & Aksan, 1995).

Measures

Coding parental and child behaviors. Two non-Latino bilingual research assistants coded the cleanup tasks. Each coder determined a single code for each control event and a single

code for each child response after a minimum of three passes through the entire videotaped session. During the first pass, coders watched the entire cleanup interaction to become familiar with it. During the second pass, coders marked the time of each control event and coded each control event and child response. During the third pass, scores were double checked. If there was a disagreement as to whether a control event had occurred, the tape was reviewed with the entire research team. The coding schemes are described in more detail in the following sections. Of all coded cases, 25% were double coded and checked for reliability. Reliability was assessed across all categories for

both parental control and child compliance. The Kappa coefficients (Cohen, 1960) were .90 for both parental control and child compliance.

Parental control strategies. Control strategies were coded from videotapes of the cleanup task with a coding scheme from the work of Livas-Dlott et al. (2010) that has been used previously with low-income Latino mothers and fathers (Malin et al., 2014). Two trained researchers coded the videos using an event-based coding scheme in which each parental control event was coded (e.g., direct command), as was the contingent child response (e.g., situational compliance). Observed parental control strategies included direct commands (e.g., spoken directive), indirect commands (e.g., suggestion or question), praise (e.g., positive feedback for compliance), incentives/bribery (e.g., parent uses desirable things/privileges to achieve desired behavior), modeling (e.g., parent shows child how to do something), and neutral physical discipline (e.g., tapping child's arm). Videos were also coded for compromise/negotiation (e.g., letting the child do something with conditions), permitting misbehavior (e.g., ignoring generally agreed upon misbehavior), reasoning (e.g., parent sets a limit and explains why it is important), redirection/distraction (e.g., parent reorients child's behavior or attention), and threats (e.g., verbal directive with a consequence), though these five strategies occurred too infrequently and were not included in descriptive tables.

Child compliance. Compliance was coded from videotapes of the cleanup task using a coding scheme developed by Kochanska and Aksan (1995) and shown to be reliable with low-income samples (Kochanska & Kim, 2013). Each episode of child compliance/noncompliance was coded as one of the following five possibilities. *Committed compliance* was used if the child cleaned up upon the parents' first request and did not require any reminders. A code of *situational compliance* was given if the child was generally cooperative but needed constant reminders to stay on task. Importantly, situational compliance differed from committed compliance in that it was not wholehearted in nature but still demonstrated cooperation. Situational compliance codes were checked during the third pass of the tape as children who received a situational compliance code for a given response often needed more

than one reminder to stay on task. *Passive non-compliance* was used if the child was reluctant to comply, was generally unresponsive, or ignored parents' prompts. *Refusal/negotiation* was used if the child overtly resisted cleaning up, argued and negotiated, and did not cleanup. A code of *defiance* was given if the child refused to clean up and was defiant or aggressive or threw a tantrum. Overall compliance and noncompliance composites were also created such that committed and situational compliance were summed to create an overall compliance composite, while passive noncompliance, refusal/negotiation, and defiance were summed to create an overall noncompliance composite.

Respeto. Respeto was measured using a parent report on the respeto subscale of the Mexican American Cultural Values Scale (MACVS, Knight et al., 2010). The MACVS was developed to measure values associated with traditional Mexican culture and Anglo culture; however, it has been used across Latino groups with a reported Cronbach's alpha of .75 (Gonzales et al., 2011). The respeto subscale is composed of seven items and emphasizes the importance for children to defer to parents both in their behavior and in conceding to parents' knowledge on decisions. Participants were asked to rate how much they agree or disagree with each of the items (e.g., "children should always be polite when speaking to any adult," "children should never question their parents' decisions," and "children should follow their parents' rules, even if they think the rules are unfair") from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*completely*). A higher score indicated stronger endorsement of the value. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha for the respeto subscale was .75.

Analytic Plan

To address our research questions, we first conducted descriptive analyses of the control strategies that mothers and fathers used with their toddlers as well as toddlers' compliant or noncompliant responses. We included the top six control strategies based on the frequency in which they were observed. We conducted *t* tests to determine whether there were differences between mothers and fathers and boys and girls. Next, we conducted bivariate correlations to determine associations between maternal control strategies, child compliance, child gender,

and respeto. Fathers were omitted from the correlational analysis due to small sample size.

Results

Mothers' and Fathers' Control Strategies

There were six primary types of control strategies mothers and fathers used during the cleanup task: direct commands, indirect commands, modeling, incentives/bribery, neutral physical discipline, and praise (see [Appendix A](#) for definitions and examples). The most frequently used strategies by both mothers and fathers were direct commands (e.g., "put that away") and indirect commands (e.g., "let's clean up together"), followed by praise (e.g., "good job!"). More than one third (36%) of all strategies fathers used were direct commands, and almost half (46%) were indirect commands.

Table 2 shows the types of control strategies mothers used with their toddlers and whether these strategies varied by child gender. Overall, mothers overwhelmingly used direct and indirect commands when attempting to elicit compliance from their toddlers. Of the 387 events identified as maternal control strategies, 181 were coded as direct commands and accounted for 47% of the total strategies, while indirect commands ($n = 154$) accounted for 40% of the strategies across all mother-child interactions. There were 20 instances of the use of praise, accounting for 5% of the overall control strategies across all mother-child interactions. Finally, the strategies that accounted for the remaining 8% are as follows: 14 instances of incentives/bribery, accounting for 4% of the overall control strategies, and 9 instances each

of modeling and physical discipline, accounting for 2% of the overall control strategies, independently. An independent samples t test revealed that mothers gave significantly more direct commands when interacting with their sons ($M = 5.19$, $SD = 3.33$) than their daughters ($M = 2.77$, $SD = 2.29$); $t(43) = 2.95$, $p = .005$. There were no other gender mean differences among the remaining control strategies used by mothers.

To test whether a few mothers were responsible for the majority of a given strategy, we examined the frequency in which each strategy was used within a given interaction. Ninety-one percent (43 mothers) used at least one direct command during the cleanup task, while 89% (42 mothers) used at least one indirect command. Thirty percent (14 mothers) used praise at least once, while 25% (12 mothers) used an incentive or bribe at least once. Finally, 17% (eight mothers) used modeling at least once, while 16% (seven mothers) used a form of neutral physical discipline at least once to elicit compliance during the cleanup task.

Table 3 shows the types of control strategies fathers used with their sons and daughters. Of the 205 events identified as paternal control strategies, 73 were coded as direct commands and accounted for 36% of the total strategies, while 93 indirect commands accounted for 46% of the total strategies across all father-child interactions. There were 15 instances of the use of praise, accounting for 7% of the overall control strategies. The remaining 11% of overall control strategies was composed of 13 instances of incentives/bribery (6%), six instances of modeling (3%), and five instances of neutral

Table 2
Mothers' Control Strategies by Child Gender

Control strategy	All mothers ($n = 47$)		Mothers of daughters ($n = 27$)		Mothers of sons ($n = 20$)	
	% of all strategies	M (SD)	% of all strategies	M (SD)	% of all strategies	M (SD)
Direct command	47	3.85 (3.02)	39	2.77 (2.29)**	54	5.19 (3.33)**
Indirect command	40	3.28 (2.38)	46	3.23 (2.27)	34	3.33 (2.58)
Praise	5	.426 (.744)	5	.385 (.752)	5	.476 (.750)
Modeling	2	.192 (.449)	3	.192 (.402)	2	.190 (.512)
Incentive	4	.298 (.548)	4	.269 (.533)	3	.333 (.577)
Neutral physical discipline	2	.192 (.495)	3	.231 (.587)	2	.143 (.359)

** $p < .01$.

Table 3
Fathers' Control Strategies by Child Gender

Control strategy	All mothers (<i>n</i> = 47)		Mothers of daughters (<i>n</i> = 27)		Mothers of sons (<i>n</i> = 20)	
	% of all strategies	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	% of all strategies	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	% of all strategies	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)
Direct command	36	3.84 (3.98)	39	3.57 (2.23)	34	4.00 (4.81)
Indirect command	46	4.89 (2.71)	53	4.86 (3.02)	42	4.92 (2.64)
Praise	7	.790 (1.81)	2	.143 (.378)	10	1.17 (2.21)
Modeling	3	.316 (.582)	2	.143 (.378)	3	.417 (.669)
Incentive	6	.684 (1.42)	3	.286 (.488)	8	.917 (1.73)
Neutral physical discipline	2	.263 (.733)	2	.143 (.378)	3	.333 (.888)

physical discipline (2%). *T* tests revealed no significant child gender differences among the control strategies used by fathers.

Ninety percent of fathers (17 fathers) used at least one direct command during the cleanup task, while 100% (19 fathers) used at least one indirect command. Twenty-six percent (five fathers) used praise, modeling, and incentives/bribery at least once to elicit compliance during the cleanup task. Finally, 16% (three fathers) used neutral physical discipline at least once. Overall, there was no significant mean difference between how many direct commands mothers or fathers used with their children. However, fathers (*M* = 4.89, *SD* = 2.71) gave significantly more indirect commands to their children than mothers did (*M* = 3.28, *SD* = 2.38); *t*(62) = -2.40, *p* = .019.

Children's Compliance in Response to Mothers' and Fathers' Control

Next, we examined the patterns of compliance children generally displayed during the

cleanup task. Table 4 shows the percentage of child compliance in response to mothers' and fathers' control strategies. Overall, children complied significantly more often with their fathers (*M* = 6.79, *SD* = 4.5) than their mothers (*M* = 3.85, *SD* = 2.62); *t*(63) = -3.422, *p* = .001. There were no significant mean differences in rates of noncompliance by parent gender. Moreover, children significantly engaged in more situational compliance with their fathers (*M* = 4.84, *SD* = 4.71) than their mothers (*M* = 2.74, *SD* = 2.40); *t*(64) = -2.396, *p* = .019. There were no other significant differences in child contingent compliance between mothers and fathers.

Due to the small number of fathers in our sample, we examined child gender differences in compliance to maternal bids only. An independent samples *t* test of children's compliant responses showed that boys (*M* = 2.52, *SD* = 2.09) exhibited significantly more passive non-compliance as a response to maternal bids for compliance than girls (*M* = 1.46, *SD* = 1.30);

Table 4
Children's Contingent Compliant Behaviors

Compliance response	With mothers (<i>n</i> = 47)			With fathers (<i>n</i> = 19)		
	% of all responses	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Range	% of all responses	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Range
Compliance						
Committed	12	1.11 (2.06)	0-8	17	1.95 (2.20)	0-8
Situational	31	2.74 (2.40)	0-8	43	4.84 (4.71)	0-20
Total overall compliance	43	3.85 (2.62)	0-9	60	6.79 (4.50)	2-21
Noncompliance						
Passive	22	1.94 (1.76)	0-7	26	3.00 (3.04)	0-11
Negotiation/refusal	23	2.06 (2.62)	0-10	11	1.21 (1.26)	0-4
Defiance	12	1.06 (1.66)	0-7	3	.368 (.955)	0-4
Total overall noncompliance	57	5.06 (4.26)	0-16	40	4.58 (3.44)	0-13

$t(45) = 2.13, p = .038$. Likewise, boys ($M = 3.19, SD = 3.43$) exhibited significantly more refusal/negotiation response to maternal bids for compliance than girls, ($M = 1.15, SD = 1.16$); $t(45) = 2.84, p = .007$. Boys also exhibited significantly more instances of defiance ($M = 1.62, SD = 2.01$) than girls ($M = 0.62, SD = 1.17$) in response to maternal bids for compliance, $t(45) = 2.14, p = .038$. Lastly, an independent samples t test of children's overall compliance revealed that boys ($M = 7.33, SD = 4.93$) displayed significantly more instances of overall noncompliance toward their mothers than girls ($M = 3.23, SD = 2.47$); $t(45) = 3.71, p = .001$.

We then used Pearson product-moment correlations to examine associations among the six most frequently occurring maternal control strategies, child compliance, and child gender to test whether mothers' control strategies were related to child compliance (see Table 5). Maternal direct commands were significantly and positively correlated with child noncompliance, $r = .671, p < .01$, and significantly and negatively correlated with child gender, $r = -.403, p < .01$. Maternal indirect commands, $r = .355, p < .05$, and maternal praise, $r = .479, p < .01$, were significantly and positively correlated with child compliance. Maternal incentives were significantly and positively correlated with child noncompliance, $r = -.334, p < .05$. Moreover, child noncompliance was significantly and negatively correlated with child gender, $r = -.484, p < .01$, such that being a boy was associated with more noncompliance.

Maternal Control Strategies and Respeto

To address our third research question, we conducted Pearson product-moment correlations. We examined the associations among the six most frequently occurring control strategies and maternal endorsement of the cultural value respeto (see Table 5). Maternal endorsement respeto was significantly and positively correlated with maternal direct commands, $r = .360, p < .05$, such that higher endorsement of respeto was associated with greater maternal use of direct commands.

Discussion

There were three goals of this study: (a) to provide a descriptive portrait of the control strategies low-income Latino mothers and fathers used with their toddlers to elicit compliance and explore whether the use of strategies varied by child gender; (b) to test whether mothers' and fathers' control strategies were correlated with toddler's compliant behaviors, and (c) to test whether mothers who strongly endorsed the cultural belief of respeto used more directive control strategies than mothers who did not. To answer our first research question, we examined the type and frequency of control strategies mothers and fathers used with their sons and daughters in the cleanup task. Our finding that both mothers and fathers primarily use direct and indirect commands to elicit compliance is in line with previous research with Latino populations (Livas-Dlott et al., 2010;

Table 5
Bivariate Correlations Among Maternal Control Strategies, Child Compliance, and Respeto

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Direct command		-.236	-.039	.021	.277 [†]	.179	.038	.671**	.360*	-.403**
2. Indirect command			.153	.153	-.048	-.230	.355*	.178	-.114	-.022
3. Praise				.271 [†]	-.051	-.226	.479**	-.077	-.160	-.062
4. Modeling					-.060	.027	.062	.232	-.225	.002
5. Incentives and bribery						.186	.077	.317*	.215	-.059
6. Neutral physical discipline							-.112	.231	.089	.089
7. Overall compliance								-.334*	-.035	.196
8. Overall noncompliance									.262 [†]	-.484**
9. Respeto										-.348*
10. Child gender										

Note. A higher MACVS respeto subscale score (on a scale from 1–5) indicates stronger endorsement of the value. Father and mother MACVS score correlated significantly, $r(12) = .545, p < .05$. Child gender is coded boy = 0, girl = 1.

[†] $p < .1$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Malin et al., 2014) and suggests that Latino parents often use a combination of directives and suggestions to elicit compliance. Yet parents employed a range of strategies to encourage children to comply, many of which map on to common conceptualizations of both positive (e.g., praise and modeling) and negative (e.g., bribery) parenting dimensions from existing literature on middle-class families (Bindman, Hindman, Bowles, & Morrison, 2013). When looking at differences between mothers and fathers, we found that fathers' use of direct and indirect commands was the same for both boys and girls. In contrast, mothers used more direct commands with their sons than their daughters, which is consistent with previous research on ethnically diverse mother–infant dyads (Crockenberg & Litman, 1990; Lindsey & Caldera, 2005). Still, very few of the parents in this sample employed harsh or power-assertive strategies such as threats, shame, guilt, or negative physical discipline, which occurred at such a low frequency they were omitted from further analyses. Moreover, control strategies that require higher levels of cognition and language such as reasoning or negotiating also occurred at a low frequency. This suggests that mothers and fathers were employing developmentally appropriate control strategies that were neither very harsh nor developmentally inappropriate. Further, parenting is dynamic in nature, and many parents alter their control strategies based on the responses of their child. As such, this study accounts for how children respond to each parental bid for compliance but does not address how parents may change their strategies over an interaction. Future research should continue to explore how mothers' and fathers' control strategies, as well as their effectiveness at eliciting compliance, vary across cultural and socioeconomic contexts, all while emphasizing the dynamic and dependent nature of parent–child interactions.

To answer our second research question, we examined children's rates of compliance to maternal and paternal requests to clean up. Our finding that children were predominantly non-compliant is in line with previous research on 2-year-olds and suggests that noncompliance at this age is normative. Existing research has shown that defiance in the second year of life is not associated with defiance 6 months and 2 years later (Calkins, 2002; Kuczynski &

Kochanska, 1990), nor is it associated with low maternal sensitivity (Calkins, 2002; Donovan, Leavitt, & Walsh, 2000). Even so, the cleanup task provided the dyad with a unique scenario that they have likely carried out before—that is, to clean up toys or interrupt a pleasurable activity for one significantly less so. As such, parents in our sample have likely experienced their toddlers' noncompliance before and have most likely employed similar control strategies in the past to those we observed in this study.

Our examination of gender differences revealed that girls were more compliant than boys to both their mothers and fathers, consistent with previous research (Kochanska et al., 2001; Power et al., 1994). Girls may surpass boys in compliance for a myriad of reasons, though some scholars have implicated boys' delayed development of language compared to girls (Power et al., 1994). It may also be that the cultural expectations for boys are different than those of girls such that it may be more normative and expected for boys to display noncompliance. Consistent with previous work (Feldman & Klein, 2003), our results indicate that children are more compliant with their fathers than their mothers. This may imply that children either attempt to enhance their regulatory capacity in interactions with fathers or that fathers find ways to elicit more compliant behavior from young children. Future research should examine how fathers' control strategies may differentially encourage compliance compared to those used by mothers.

We also examined the bivariate correlations of the six most frequently employed maternal control strategies, child compliance, and child gender. Our finding that maternal use of indirect commands (e.g., “which toy do you want to put away first?”) and praise (e.g., “good job!”) were correlated with child compliance is in line with existing literature on middle-class families that the use of low-power assertive strategies such as indirect commands are most effective for eliciting compliance because they support the child's autonomy while encouraging compliance (Feldman & Klein, 2003; Houck & Lecuyer-Maus, 2004; LeCuyer-Maus & Houck, 2002). However, this is somewhat at odds with the small but growing body of literature on low-income Latino families, which suggests that the use of direct rather than indirect commands may be more normative and effective for

eliciting child compliance (Ispa et al., 2013; Livas-Dlott et al., 2010). Still, we also found that the use of direct commands (e.g., “put that away now”) and bribery (e.g., “we can get ice cream if you put that away!”) were associated with noncompliance. Our results lend support to a large body of literature that suggests the use of direct commands without explanation seem to be the least effective type of control strategy when the aim is to elicit compliance (Braungart-Rieker, Garwood, & Stifter, 1997; Kuczynski & Kochanska, 1990; Lindsey & Caldera, 2005; Wachs, Gurkas, & Kontos, 2004). Our findings show that direct commands may in fact be normative due to their high frequency use but may not be the most effective strategy for eliciting compliance. It should be noted, however, that causality cannot be claimed; previous research has shown that mothers of preidentified behaviorally difficult preschoolers were more negative and controlling of them in a cleanup task, suggesting that noncompliance may elicit more intrusive, controlling parenting (Campbell, March, Pierce, Ewing, & Szumowski, 1991). Future research should continue to explore how mothers’ and fathers’ control strategies, as well as their effectiveness at eliciting compliance, vary across cultural and socioeconomic contexts.

We also examined how the cultural value of respeto was related to maternal control strategies. Mothers who emphasized respeto and deference to authority figures might also demand obedience from their children and use more direct commands (e.g., “do this”) than indirect commands, which do not seem to require total obedience. Our finding that higher maternal endorsement of respeto was associated with the use of more directive parenting is in line with previous literature (e.g., Calzada et al., 2010) and suggests that the cultural value of respeto may be used to inform Latino parents’ control strategies, which previous literature has shown are more directive in nature (Livas-Dlott et al., 2010). It may also be that mothers who highly endorse respeto and expect complete deference from their children may use more direct control strategies and fewer indirect or gentle guidance strategies to encourage compliance. Our finding that respeto was associated with child gender was unexpected and goes against existing literature that suggests mothers of daughters socialize them with more traditional values (Raffaelli

& Ontai, 2004). While the current study is limited by sample size and its correlational nature, more research is needed to examine how cultural values inform parenting practices, how they are related to child gender, and in what contexts they are beneficial for child outcomes.

A few limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings of this study. First, this study used a small convenience sample of low-income Latino mothers, fathers, and their children, which limited the type of analyses we could conduct and may have hidden important relations in our sample. For example, more difficult children may elicit more direct and harsh control strategies from their parents. However, in this study we were unable to control for child characteristics such as temperament, which would clarify whether parents employed strategies tailored to their child’s disposition. Moreover, the sample of fathers who participated was limited. Nevertheless, the preliminary findings we report suggest that future studies should continue to strive to include fathers as their inclusion gives us a better understanding of how parents’ input is related to children’s regulation. Second, the cleanup task was not naturalistic, thus limiting ecological validity. Some research suggests that child compliance varies across tasks even with the same parent (Schneider-Rosen & Wenz-Gross, 1990). It may be that compliance is more accurately assessed not in a single scenario but rather across multiple scenarios. Future research should examine if and how compliance depends on the context and demands inherent to diverse situations. Third, there is vast heterogeneity in the Latino population, including variations in country of origin, immigration status, and levels of acculturation. These variations are often linked to parents’ socialization strategies. For example, there is some evidence to suggest that, for less acculturated Latino mothers, controlling maternal behavior is less strongly linked to poor child outcomes (Carlson & Harwood, 2003; Ispa et al., 2004). While acculturation status is outside of the scope of the current study, taken together these studies suggest that, for some low-income Latino mothers, the use of higher power assertion and more directive control strategies may be normative and effective in that it tends to elicit compliance compared to indirect and less power-assertive strategies. As such, it is important to note that there may be culturally specific

variations in the patterns of control and compliance Latino mothers and their children engage in. Finally, this study is correlational in nature. While parental control strategies may likely influence children's compliance, we must note the probable bidirectional and dyadic nature of these parent-child interactions.

Despite these limitations, this study offers important insights in the patterns of control and compliance in a low-income Latino immigrant sample of mothers and fathers and their toddlers. In line with previous research using similar samples, Latino parents predominantly use commands to elicit compliance, and mothers who more highly endorse the cultural value of respeto may also use more direct commands with their toddler, thus giving them fewer opportunities to practice self-regulation. This is particularly important for low-income children who may already be at risk for dysregulation (Blair & Diamond, 2008). Our findings also demonstrate the importance of examining mothers' and fathers' socialization practices separately as children often respond in different ways to their mothers and fathers. Lastly, these findings highlight the need for more research that examines the intersection of parental control, cultural values, and child compliance in diverse cultural and socioeconomic samples.

Resumen

Exploramos el cumplimiento de los niños con las estrategias de control de sus madres y padres en una muestra de 49 niños latinos y sus padres inmigrantes durante una tarea de limpieza. Reportamos tres resultados. Primero, tanto las madres como los padres utilizan principalmente comandos directos y comandos indirectos para provocar el cumplimiento. Segundo, no hubo diferencia en el tipo de estrategias de control que las madres y los padres usaron con sus hijas contra hijos. Las madres que usaron elogios y los comandos indirectos loían niños que cumplían más, mientras las madres que usaban comandos directos e incentivos loían niños que cumplían menos. Todos los niños cumplían más con los pedidos de sus padres que con los de sus madres, pero las niñas cumplían más con sus madres que los niños. Tercero, las madres que usaron más estrategias de control directas también respaldaron firmemente el valor del respeto. Estos resultados resaltan la importancia de examinar la variación en las estrategias de control de las madres y los padres latinos.

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Appendix A

Parental Control Strategies

Parenting practice	Definition	Example
Direct command	Spoken directive	"Put that away!"
Indirect command	A directive given without using an infinitive or a directive conveyed through suggestion or questioning	"Let's clean up together!" "Which toy do you want to put away first?"
Praise	Positive feedback to child for behavior and compliance	"Wow, you're doing such a good job!"
Modeling	Parents show child how to do something using actions or behaviors	Parent models clean up often accompanied by a verbal narration or prompt to watch
Incentives/bribery	Parents use desirable things or privileges to achieve a desired behavior	"If you clean up, we can go get ice cream."
Neutral physical discipline	Enforcing a command nonverbally with neutral physical actions	Moving child's arm/body, tapping, or touching with the goal of redirection

Note. Definitions from Livas-Dlott et al., 2010.

(Appendices continue)

Appendix B

Child Compliance Coding Scheme

Kochanska and her colleagues (Kochanska, 2002; Kochanska & Aksan, 1995; Kochanska et al., 2001) identify varying types of compliance that reflect differing underlying motivations. According to this conception, children may either express committed compliance, which is the most advanced form of compliance and requires wholehearted acceptance of the agenda of another, or situational compliance, which is the lack of sincere commitment but still appears to be cooperative and nonoppositional. Often, situational compliance is gradually replaced with committed compliance over early childhood. Researchers have argued that while both are types of compliance, the two are motiva-

tionally distinct, and only committed compliance is associated with the internalization of rules and norms. On the other hand, noncompliance is parsed out into three categories: passive noncompliance, refusal/negotiation, and defiance. Passive noncompliance reflects a sense of reluctance to comply, typically accompanied by ignoring directives or intervention, though no resistance is apparent. Refusal and negotiation are characterized by more overt resistance, while defiance is characterized by overt rejection (Kochanska & Aksan, 1995).

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