BEING “AS GOOD OF PARENTS AS TEENAGERS”: INTERSECTING EXPERIENCES OF ADOLESCENT PARENTS

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Multiple identities intersect to create unique experiences and social positions\textsuperscript{1,2}

Interlocking structural systems create health & social disparities\textsuperscript{1,2}
- Most commonly studied: Racism, sexism, classism
- Less commonly studied: Ageism and its intersections (gendered ageism)\textsuperscript{3,4}
  - Roles
  - Responsibilities
  - Rights

Adaptive Mechanisms (culture, family)\textsuperscript{5}

\textsuperscript{1} Crenshaw, 1991; 1995
\textsuperscript{2} Bowleg, 2012
\textsuperscript{3} Pain, Hopkins, Smith, Pain, Marston, & Jones, 2010
\textsuperscript{4} Calasanti & Smith, 2015
\textsuperscript{5} Garcia Coll et al., 1996
229,715 adolescents under the age of 20 became parents in 2015\(^1\)
- 31\% are Latino youth

Adolescent parents:
- Less likely to graduate from high school\(^2\)
- More likely to live in poverty\(^3\)
- 30\% report clinical levels of parenting stress\(^4\)

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\(^1\) CDC, 2017
\(^2\) Ashcraft, Fernandez-Val, & Lang, 2013
\(^3\) Pittman & Coley, 2011
\(^4\) Larson, 2004
ADOLESCENT PARENTHOOD – SOCIAL SCRIPTS & IDENTITY

- Social scripts inform expectations and support for:
  - Parental roles and responsibilities\(^1\)
  - Adolescent roles and responsibilities\(^2\)

- Social scripts & adjustment are moderated by culture & gender\(^3\)

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\(^1\) Cabrera, Tamis-Lemond, & Bradley, 2000; Coltrane, 1997; Barclay et al., 1997
\(^2\) Arnett, 1999
\(^3\) Knight et al., 2011; Rafaelli & Ontai, 2004
ADOLESCENT PARENTHOOD – RIGHTS AND AGENCY

- Legal dependence to parental figures
  - Parenting choices \(^1\)
  - Sexual reproductive health & family planning \(^2\)
  - Personal and social choices \(^2\)

- Mandatory education \(^3\)
  - Until 16-19 years of age or
  - Until youth reach 10\(^{\text{th}}\) grade
  - School can impose specialized services

\(^1\) Mollborn & Jacobs, 2016
\(^2\) Manian, 2017
\(^3\) Education Commission of the States, 2017
STUDY GOALS

- To understand the intersecting experiences of adolescent parents:
  - What are the most salient **intersecting identities**?
  - What **interlocking systems** (parental and school systems) that prohibit or promote adjustment? And how?
**METHOD**

**Triangulating Focus Groups**
- 13 Adolescent parents (69% Female; 100% Latino; $M$ Age = 19.37)
- 17 Grandparents (82% Female; 94% Latino)
- 7 School staff (100% Female; 71% European American)

**Process**
- 5 focus groups: 2 adolescent, 2 grandparent, 1 school staff
- 3 phone interviews with Spanish-speaking grandparents
- Average length: 45 minutes
**METHOD**

**Script Development**
- Language and cognitive equivalence across groups
- Decentering translation techniques\(^1\)

**Transcription & Translation\(^2\)**
- Transcription in original language
- Translation by a team of bilingual native-Spanish speakers

\(^1\) Roosa, Knight, & Umaña-Taylor, 2012
\(^2\) Temple and Young, 2004
**METHOD**

**Coding**

- Qual-to-Qual coding technique\(^1\)
  - Conventional & directed content analysis\(^2\)^\(^3\)
  - Consensus coding

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\(^1\) Morse & Niehaus, 2009
\(^2\) Krippendorff, 2013
\(^3\) Hsieh & Shannon, 2005
RESULTS – QUALITATIVE MODEL

Intersecting roles & identities

Unique Social Context

Stereotypes and Assumptions

Contextual Demands

Adjustment
GOAL 1 – INTERSECTING IDENTITIES & ROLES

**Parenthood**
- Parent
  - Mother/father

**Age**
- Adolescent
- Student
- Daughter/Son

**Intersecting identities/roles**
- Parent-adolescent
- Parent-student
- Parent-daughter/son
- Mother-adolescent
- Father-adolescent
GOAL 2 – STEREOTYPES, ASSUMPTIONS, & DISCRIMINATION

Themes

- Adolescent
  - Maturity
  - Responsibility

  *Freq:* GP = 10; SS = 2; AD = 1

- Loss of adolescence

  *Freq:* GP = 13; SS = 3; AD = 2

Quotes

- “They think they now everything” (Grandparent)
- “Their brains aren’t thinking…” (School staff)
- “I think the fact that he's not responsible. Uh you know he got my daughter pregnant” (Grandparent)
- “She would get kind of conflicted, not jealous but, but feel bad about that she couldn’t do all the normal stuff”
GOAL 2 – STEREOTYPES, ASSUMPTIONS, & DISCRIMINATION

Themes

- Discriminatory messages regarding social prospects

Freq: GP = 0; SS = 0; AD = 4

Quotes

“We heard things like that... Like you, you're not gonna amount to anything, you're not gonna graduate high school, you're not gonna do anything... All of the negativity that we heard from my parents, or um teachers, or just anyone older than us....” (Adolescent)
GOAL 2 – CONTEXTUAL DEMANDS

**Themes**

- Imposed expectations & reduced freedoms  

**Freq:** GP= 10; SS = 2; AD = 1

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**Quotes**

“I tell her that they both need to progress, go out for the girl more than anything, be mindful of [the baby]. Be as good of parents as teenagers, and to be responsible, and to always be mindful of the girl.” (Grandparent)

Yea… well no. They get mad when I try to do something for me or we try to do something for our relationship and they're like, what about the kid? (Adolescent)
### GOAL 2 – CONTEXTUAL DEMANDS

#### Themes

- **Parenting advice**
  
  **Freq:** GP = 4; SS = 1; AD = 4

- **Grandparent control/gatekeeping**
  
  **Freq:** GP = 2; SS = 9; AD = 11

#### Quotes

- “I was willing to learn, willing to change, I mean this is my first time being a parent, especially so young, I needed the help, I needed any guidance I could get…” (Adolescent)

- “And we see a lot of power and control issues. You know, who’s gonna get to make the decisions for the baby and then, is the dad going to be allowed to be there, and what is his role gonna…” (School Staff)
DISCUSSION

- Multiple Perspectives
  - Conflicting and supporting perspectives & intentions

- Qualitative Data
  - Identify how intersectionality concepts inform adjustment
  - Highlight the importance of age as a social position factor
  - Duality of protective parenting as an oppressive AND adaptive system
### DISCUSSION – Stereotypes, Assumptions, & Discrimination

#### Contextual Demands
- Imposed expectations/reduced freedom
- Grandparent control/gatekeeping
- Grandparent advice

#### Stereotypes, Assumptions, & Discrimination
- Adolescence
- Loss of Adolescence
- Future prospects

#### Intersecting roles & identities
- Age X role X gender
DISCUSSION - LIMITATIONS

- Sample comprised of highly involved adolescent parents and grandparents
- Primarily Latina adolescent households
- Qualitative retrospective data reflects perceptions
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## RESULTS – UNIQUE SOCIAL CONTEXT

### Themes

- Dependence on others
  - GP = 7; SS = 2; AD = 2

- Coparenting Team
  - GP = 5; SS = 4; AD = 14

### Quotes

“...it’s not only like stressful, it makes you think like, how can I get out of this situation? Like, where can I go? I can’t go anywhere cause you know, I’m stuck there with my parents. Financially can’t afford it, you know?” (Adolescent)

“So you know my parents wanna do this but we wanna do something else so I guess we just like compromise.” (Adolescent)
RESULTS – CONTEXTUAL DEMANDS

Themes

- Balancing parenting & school
  - GP= 8; SS= 4; AD= 1

Quotes

“She goes to work at night and I have the baby in my room and as soon as she gets home it's like ‘okay take your baby because it's midnight and I have to go to sleep too’ and that's been one of her things is, ‘mom I'm tired. I have to go to school and, and go to work and still watch the baby.’” (GP)
RESULTS – CONTEXTUAL DEMANDS

Themes

- Adult-like traditional gender roles
  - $\text{GP} = 0; \, \text{SS} = 7; \, \text{AD} = 3$

Quote

“So, sometimes [the family] takes the [teen father] and it's a really good thing, and then sometimes it's quite the opposite, where the female usually is kind of expected to take on a lot of the housekeeping roles and things like that. Contribute to the home…almost seems like they’re paying to live there, to kind of do a lot of the work and a lot gets piled on them: cooking, cleaning, things like that.” (School Staff)