EXPLAINING FERTILITY INTENTIONS AMONG NON-ASSIMILATED HISPANIC IMMIGRANT WOMEN LIVING IN THE U.S.: A RATIONAL CHOICE REINFORCED BY SOCIAL IDENTITY?

by

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ABSTRACT

MARIA TERESA BARROS DE REDARD. Explaining Fertility Intentions Among Non-Assimilated Hispanic Immigrant Women Living in the U.S.: A Rational Choice Reinforced by Social Identity? (Under direction of SCOTT FITZGERALD and YANG CAO)

Research on the assimilation of Hispanic immigrants in the United States is abundant; however, fewer studies have examined the effect of assimilation on Hispanic immigrant women and childbirth. Prior research has documented that the fertility rate among Hispanics is higher than among other racial/ethnic groups in the United States. This analysis aims at understanding Hispanic women's motivation for childbirth from a sociological perspective. What motivates intentions for fertility among this minority? Can this be explained by the Weberian view of individuals' default role of an instrumental rational actor? If so, do Mead's perspectives of symbolic human interactions contribute to explaining fertility intentions and, thus, sub-sequent behavior? Using publicly available data from the National Survey of Fertility Barriers (NSFB) collected between 2004 and 2007, logistic regression equations were created using assimilation, human and social capital measures, and a social identity measure to assess motivations for childbirth among Hispanics, with a special emphasis on the non-assimilated sub-group. The results show that non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women have higher fertility intentions than the assimilated group and maximize social capital at larger family size than their assimilated counterparts. Motherhood social identity does not predict fertility intentions among non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women; however, it does so for the assimilated Hispanic women. The contribution of children as generators of social capital for their parents can

be a strategy for adaptation for non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women and, as such, an explanation for fertility intentions that draws on rational choice theories.

DEDICATION

Dedicado a todos los inmigrantes del mundo….Dedicated to all immigrants around the world

And to my dear parents Aurora and Arnaldo

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INTRODUCTION

Can sociological explanations help in understanding demography-related phenomena such as fertility? According to Schoen, Kim, Nathanson, Astone, and Fields (1999), fertility research would benefit from studying motivations for intentions behind behavior and the interplay between individuals and society. Fertility is at the center of what a society will become in the future in terms of its demographic characteristics. Fertility and migration are important factors that relate to the future of a nation.

From the perspective of assimilation, research on the assimilation of Hispanic immigrants in the United States is abundant; however, there is a gap in research related to Hispanic immigrant women and childbirth, and the effect of assimilation on these two topics. Although most research on immigration portrays Hispanic migrants as young males, recent waves of migration from Latin America incorporate new actors in the process; those new actors are increasingly women (Flores-Hernandez, 2009; Pearce, Clifford and Tandon, 2011). In 2008, the percentage of foreign born women who migrated to the United States as adults was slightly higher than foreign born men, roughly 51% vs 49 % respectively; many of these women are newcomers, and 24% of the total is Mexican (Pearce, Clifford and Tandom, 2011). This trend in the gender split is repeated for the years 2009 through 2014 (US Census Bureau, ACS). After examining these numbers, studying Hispanic immigrant women to the same degree that we study immigrant men becomes an essential task. Understanding the role of immigrant women, allows a better understanding of immigration in recent years (Pessar, 1999, Flores-Hernandez, 2009).

This study will investigate intentions for childbirth among the most vulnerable within this minority ethnic group. This analysis is aimed at understanding what factors may be behind high fertility rates among Hispanics and contribute to understanding this phenomenon nationwide, and especially, in regions that lack a substantial historical contact with this ethnic minority.

I will explore two possible theoretical frameworks in my research. One is based on the Weberian view of individuals' default role of an instrumental rational actor, *rational choice,* and another based on Mead's perspectives of symbolic human interactions as a mobilizer for behavior, *social identity.* Some interesting questions arise at the intersection of fertility and migration. Looking at the Hispanic group, 1) how do assimilated and non-assimilated Hispanic women differ in their intentions for childbirth? 2) what accounts for the intention to have children among non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women? Would their intention to have children be motivated by a desire of having access to a better life for them and their offspring and, as such, a rational response? If so, would this rational response be reinforced by social identity, in terms of importance of motherhood as a social role, emphasized by the fact that many of these women may be missing their children left abroad?

Using data from the National Survey of Fertility Barriers (NSFB) collected between 2004 and 2007, I will seek to explain what factors may account for the intention to have children among non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women in the US in the expectation that such an analysis can serve as a background for policymakers.

For the purpose of this study, the term immigrant will be used to refer both international and intercommunity[1] immigrants.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Fertility intentions

Fertility intentions are especially important for understanding fertility rates. I will focus on measuring fertility intentions because these and fertility behavior are strongly correlated in the United States (Morgan and Rackin, 2010; Barber, 2001; Schoen et al., 1999). Even if no perfect correlation exists between fertility intentions and fertility behavior, measuring intentions is a valuable tool, considering that intentions to have children are "significantly and consistently related to the odds of giving birth" (McQuillan, Greil, Shreffler, and Bedrous, 2015, p. 21).

In studying actual fertility, we are not always in a capacity to observe motivations behind behavior; there are several unforeseen factors involved in fertility behavior that escape future parents' control and produce unintended births (Bongaarts, 2001). For this reason, it is beneficial to focus on intentions in seeking theoretical explanations for fertility behavior. Schoen et al. (1999) argue that intentions for fertility have independent predictive power, and Bongaarts (2001) proposes a model in which final parity is the result of intended parity as a factor of several unforeseen life course events, such as fertility barriers, unwanted births, partner availability, acceptance of children's sex composition, and competing goals.

Bongaarts (2001) argues that due to the effect of gender composition and sex preferences, the number of children desired in developed countries is typically two. On the other hand, there is a strong relationship between social norms and the number of children considered as ideal, as suggested by life course theory (Elder, Johnson, and Crosnoe, 2003). In the United States, women in general desire not to be childless and

there is a decrease in fertility intentions with every child born; yet, research suggests that racial/ethnic sub-groups present differences in regards to fertility (McQuillan et al., 2015).

Regarding fertility intentions among Hispanic women in the United States, McQuillan et al. (2015) found differences between respondents who were interviewed in English and those interviewed in Spanish. Further research with the latter will yield a better understanding of fertility among this group, which represents basically non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women and is the most vulnerable.

Immigrants

In 2013, the United States received 989,910 immigrants, the highest number in the world, with Germany in second place with 468,823 immigrants for the same year (OECD, 2014). Understanding immigrants and their characteristics and motivation for behavior is a central task for understanding behavior among immigrants. A micro-level analysis developed by Jasso (2002) predicts that migration in material-focused societies occurs from poor countries to rich countries as a consequence of income inequality. In this sense, it could be assumed that an immigrant would be almost always an economic immigrant and hence, a rational actor.

Immigrants, in general, face emotional and psychological stress associated with the migration experience as they try to adapt to a new society and a new culture; this type of stress is known as acculturative stress. Many challenges in the process of acculturation "results in increased levels of acculturative stress among undocumented immigrants in comparison with their documented counterparts" (Arbona, Olvera, Rodriguez, Hagan, Linares, and Weisner, 2010, p 363). Some factors that contribute to acculturative stress

among non-assimilated Hispanic immigrants in the United States are social distance and discrimination resulting from the widespread assumption that Spanish speaking immigrants are a threat to future social cohesion and cultural identity of the country for they represent a barrier to a key aspect of the nation's cultural identity: the language (Weeks and Weeks, 2010; Massey, 2015; Chebel d'Appollonia, 2015). This situation feeds discrimination and adds another burden to the psychological well-being of immigrants (Chebel d'Appollonia, 2015). This, if repeated over time, becomes a vicious circle for it creates "resentment and distrust among targeted minority groups" (Chebel d'Appollonia, 2015 p 38) as a response.

In regards to fertility among migrants in the United States, research shows that migration affects fertility intentions in a specific way. According to Myers (2010, p. 1629) migration affects birth intentions and people "regard children as an adaptive strategy for or conduit to social capital" after their levels of social capital are negatively affected by processes of disruption and adaptation that migration creates. Myers (2010, p. 1627) argues that as a consequence of migration "couples will be more likely to change their intention to wanting a child".

Hispanic immigrants in the United States

Examining migration of Hispanics to the United States, Weeks and Weeks (2010) argue that migration from Latin America has increased each decade since 1940, and that the differences in demographics between Latin America (especially Mexico) and the United States, in addition to the increase in border enforcement since 2001, account for the increasing number of Hispanics living in the United States in recent years. According to these scholars, better economic standards and an aging population in the United States

attract young workers that Latin American economies are not in a capacity to absorb. Other authors argue that with the increasing violence resulting from drug trafficking and corruption in Central American countries, and income inequality derived from free trade agreements, millions of people from impoverished countries, El Salvador and Guatemala, have migrated to the United States in search of security and better economic standards (De La Pedraja, 2014).

After the end of the Bracero program in 1964, male workers crossing the Southern border of the United States to find work did not decline, and undocumented migration from Mexico and other Latin American countries rose (Weeks and Weeks, 2010). In Latin American countries, approximately 20 percent in a sample of 24 countries surveyed answered affirmatively when asked whether they would consider emigrating; the young were the most likely to do so (Lapop, 2015). Official estimates show that, in 2006, 9.6 million of a total of 11.9 million undocumented immigrants were from Latin America, and within this group, 7 million were estimated to be Mexicans (Weeks and Weeks, 2010). In 2010, there were about 11.7 million Mexican immigrants in the United States, and about 5 million from other Latin American countries combined (Massey, 2015). As a matter of concern, the poverty rate of the most vulnerable Hispanic population, Mexicans, increased from 20.8% in 1980, to 23.2% in 2010 (Mattingly and Pedroza, 2015).

Hispanic immigrants in the United States, in general, have been characterized as undereducated, hardworking and poor (Farley, 1999; Alba and Nee, 1999; Raijman and Tienda, 1999). Hispanics' poverty rate has been maintained at almost the same level for decades, from 21.4 % in 1980 to 22.1% in 2010 (Mattingly and Pedroza, 2015). The most

vulnerable within this group are Mexicans. Between 1980 and 1988, the percentage of Mexicans 25 or older who completed high school and four years of college was 45% and 6%, respectively, compared with 62% and 20.5% among Cubans, and 61.7% and 14.7 % among Central and South Americans (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco, 1995). Mexicans are the most disadvantaged compared to other Hispanics (Tran, 2015; Pearce, Cifford and Tandon, 2011; Chebel d'Appollonia, 2015).

In contrast, there is another group of immigrants that does not align with those characterizations. Immigrants in this group, in general, have a higher level of human capital (more educated, speak English, and have a higher SES compared to those with lower levels of education) and can be classified as "transnationals". Transnational migrants, of any origin, are individuals who move across international borders, settle, and establish social relations in a new country, while maintaining social, political, economic, and other cultural connections with their country of origin (Schiller, 1999; Weeks and Weeks, 2010). Thus, Hispanic transnational migrants may have higher levels of assimilation as well as of human and social capital than non-assimilated Hispanics.

Hispanic immigrant women in the United States

As of 2008, Mexicans were the largest group among Hispanic immigrant women in the United States (Pearce, Clifford and Tandon, 2011). There seems to be established informal networks for migrants coming from Mexico that are used by women. A study conducted in the rural region of Tlaxcala, presents results from interviews with several migrants' relatives living in the village of La Aurora. These results show that the migrants are not only men and that there is a link between those who have not yet made the decision to emigrate and an unauthorized migration network (Flores-Hernandez,

2009). In the specific case of these Mexican migrants, Flores Hernandez (2009) argues that globalization, namely neoliberal policies and deregulation introduced by the Mexican government and NAFTA in the countryside in the 1990s, left women in rural areas in a more vulnerable position because they were deprived of their right to own land and this fueled migration of women but also of Mexican men accompanied by their wives to the U.S., which marks a migration pattern different from previous decades, in which men migrated alone. Another study conducted by Nicholson (2006) interviewed thirteen undocumented immigrant women from Mexico and Central America who were living in Hudson Valley, New York, at that time. The common pattern in these interviews was that the immigrants had left their children behind to come to the United States in search of paid work to support the family left at home. Sometimes, they were following their husbands who were already in the US (Nicholson, 2006; Pearce, Clifford and Tandon, 2011). Two of the women presented in the study had had more children in the United States and one decided, along with her husband, to send their child to their home country (Oaxaca, Mexico), when the baby was fourteen months old (Nicholson, 2006). This is a sad reality that is not uncommon among lower-educated immigrant mothers, many of whom work in domestic services as live-in maids. Many of these immigrant women are economic migrants that work in the informal economy taking care of others' children while their own remain in their home countries, situation which is referred by Hodagenau-Sotelo (2001) as transnational motherhood.

In 2013, Latinos comprised "a quarter of all births, and 20 percent of all persons under age 5" in the United States (Massey, 2015). In the same year, the fertility rate of Hispanic or Latina mothers aged 15-44 in the US was above those of Whites and Blacks.

Hispanic mothers' total live birth rate within that age group was 72.9; Blacks reported 64.6, and Whites 58.7, for the same year (CDC, 2013). Foreign born Latinas' fertility rates in recent years have been higher than those observed in Mexico; as of 2007, the birth rate among Latinas in the United States increased and was close to 3 children per woman, from 2.7 in 2000, whereas in Mexico it was 2.4 in the same year (Weeks and Weeks, 2010). Additionally, among undocumented immigrant women, 29% are not in the labor force and reported that "they are responsible for raising children at home" (Pearce, Clifford and Tandon, 2011, p. 79).

North Carolina: an example at a local level

North Carolina is a relatively new destination for Hispanic immigrants that flourished after the economic expansion of the banking sector in the 1990s and its effects on the construction-related labor force (Weeks and Weeks, 2010). In regards to actual fertility, the data for North Carolina present high numbers in birth rates among Hispanic women. This state is among the ten that present the fastest growing Latino population in the United States (Pew Research Center's Hispanic Trends Project, 2013). Reports from the Pew Research Center (2014) show a nine fold increase in ten years for undocumented immigrants in North Carolina; this group went from 35,000, in 1995, to 300,000, in 2005. Data from 2010 to 2012 show that 13.6% of the population of North Carolina is foreign born. Of the foreign born population 51.5 % are from Latin America, and within this group, 29% are Mexican; among the foreign born, Latin American families have the highest percentage (26.9) below the poverty level (Furuseth and Smith, 2014). In North Carolina, immigrants from Latin America are a relatively new social phenomenon and, as such, cannot be compared to other major receiving areas that have historical processes of

acculturation and adaptation from the receiving society in which immigrants from Latin America have a historical presence. Portes (1999, p. 27) argues that the Northeast and the South of the United States are regions in which there is not a historical presence of Mexican immigrants that can help in cultural adaptation and familiarity with this minority, as is the case of regions where Mexican immigrants have been living and participating in the labor market for generations, such as Texas.

The total population of Hispanic origin in NC in 2013 was 824,868, of which almost half, 391,692, were foreign born. Among those between 18 and 64 years of age 57% of them spoke Spanish. The foreign born sex split for Hispanics in NC for that year was 49% male vs 51% female (US Census Bureau, ACS, 2013), which indicates that immigration of Hispanics in NC is not so different than the national trend and has a gender balance. This confirms the importance of studying immigrant women in this region.

The birth rate for unmarried mothers[2] of Hispanic ethnicity in North Carolina between 2009 and 2013 was 52.2; this means that of the total births to Hispanic mothers in that period, 52.2% of those mothers were unmarried. This rate is twice that of Whites, which is 26.5, and lower than 72.5 for Blacks, (NC State Center for Health Statistics, 2015). For the year 2013 alone, the birth rate for Hispanic mothers[3] in North Carolina was 20.1, also twice that of Whites, which was 10.3, and also much higher than that of Blacks, 13.3. The number of births among these three groups and the differences among the different Hispanic sub-groups by national origin are presented below (Figures 1 & 2)

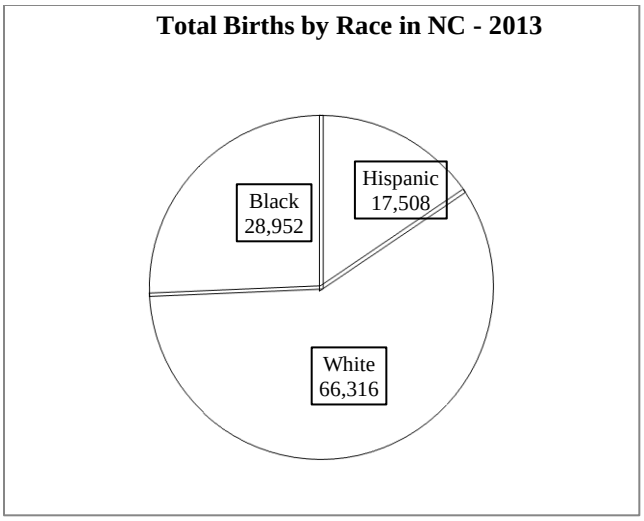

Figure 1 *Total Number of Births in NC in 2013 by Race*
Source: Births: Final Data for 2013. National Vital Statistics Report. 2. Own elaboration.

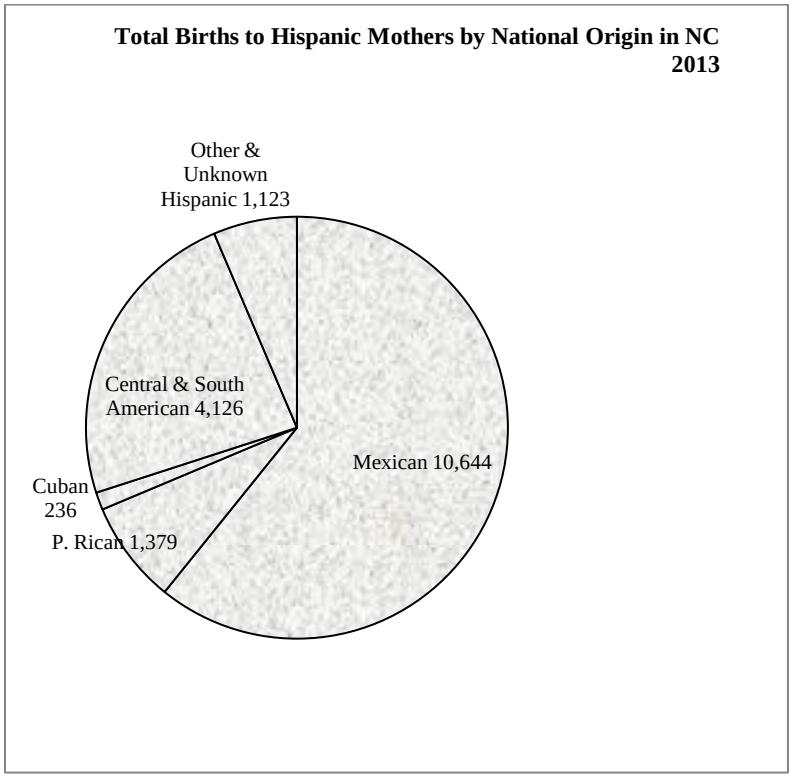

Figure 2 *Total Number of Births of Hispanics in NC in 2013 by National Origin*
Source: Births: Final Data for 2013. National Vital Statistics Report. 2. Own elaboration.

Among the women migrants, 9% of the undocumented Hispanic immigrants, who arrived in NC in 2008 or later, had babies in the United States between 2009 and

2010, as reported by the NC State Center for Health Statistics (2015). That is to say that they had babies not long after they had arrived. Additionally, Hispanics do not rank high in women's level of education and economic conditions when analyzing the data for Charlotte, North Carolina, compared to other known Latino areas where a more rooted and Americanized Hispanic population resides, such as Miami (Wang, 2007). This trend may suggest that immigrant women of Hispanic origin do not actively participate in the labor market and that they may be housewives and mothers.

According to Chebel d'Appollonia, "Hispanics in the United States tend to report higher levels of discrimination than other groups" (2015, p. 47). Considering that non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women may be subjects of triple discrimination, for being a Hispanic, an immigrant, and a woman, plus the fact that many of these women are unmarried, undereducated, undocumented and poor, then, it may be assumed that assimilated Hispanic women would be better equipped and positioned in society in terms of starting a family or wishing to have a baby than non-assimilated ones who may be experiencing high levels of acculturative stress. Following this assumption, the question of what factors account for fertility intentions among non-assimilated Hispanic women emerges as an important issue to investigate.

From the aforementioned data, some useful inquiries may arise that point to understanding motivations for childbirth within the most vulnerable among this minority group and serve as a background for public and social policy makers.

Assimilation and language use among Hispanics

Assimilation refers to the eventual integration of immigrants to mainstream society (Arzubiaga, Nogueron, and Sullivan, 2009). Portes and Rumbaut (2001) in their

theory of segmented assimilation emphasize the following important factors for a successful assimilation to occur: 1) pre-migration parents' human capital and class origins, 2) family structure and English language acquisition, and 3) post-migration social context. Regarding the English language acquisition and post-migration social context, a cultural aspect that may contribute to isolation and prevent successful integration of non-assimilated Hispanic immigrants to the US is a lack of a mainstream way of communication. Besides overcoming social rejection, the first task immigrants need to accomplish is the acquisition of the English language. Hispanics' English acquisition positively correlates with "time and generations spent in the United States" (Massey, Rumbaut, and Bean, 2006, p. 4). According to Rumbaut (1999, p. 190) and as reported in the 1990 census, 21% of the foreign born spoke English only, and 53% spoke it very well or well. In contrast, 26% reported not speaking English well or not speaking English at all; "the latter included the elderly, the undocumented, and the least educated among recent arrivals". The most recent data available from the US Census Bureau (2009) show an increase in the gap for the foreign born with limited English proficiency; for that year 52% spoke English less than very well.

Non-assimilated Hispanics are highly dependent on their children for connection to broader society and thus, are likely to view children as a social resource. Portes (1999, p. 30) argues that "children of immigrants often become their parents' parents as their knowledge of the new language and culture races ahead". Immigrant families' children born in the United States rapidly adjust and acculturate to American society by learning English, acquired by early participation in educational institutions, and use it as their preferred language (Lopez, 1999). Furthermore, "some US-born Latinos avoid social

settings where interaction is carried on mainly in Spanish" (Rodriguez, 1999, p. 427). According to this, there seems to be a strong link between foreign language preference and non-assimilated immigrants.

Based on these data, those respondents who were interviewed in Spanish will be used as a proxy intended to identify non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women. For investigating non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women's motivations for childbirth, I will situate my analysis within two theoretical frameworks: rational choice and social identity.

Rational choice

Fertility Intentions and Social and Human Capital

Every aspect of human behavior, even fertility, can be understood using the logics of economics. By this criterion, individuals maximize behavior to get the most advantageous and profitable results (Becker, 1976). Economic migrants are largely supposed to be rational actors; according to microeconomic theories, the decision to migrate is made by rational actors after evaluating cost against benefits in expectation of net gains (Massey, 1999). In regards to fertility, some theories point to the economic cost parents have to confront while raising children and the cost associated with women's lack of opportunity to participate in the labor market; yet those theories seem to be weak in terms of explaining motivations for childbirth (Schoen et al., 1997). An assumption can be made in regards to the low level of human capital (education) of non-assimilated parents based on the positive relationship between education and assimilation (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001); and hence, to the possible contribution of children of these parents to their families' human capital. Assuming that every child will have free access to

education until 12th grade and will learn English, then families' human capital would increase with every child born.

From the perspective of social capital, networks that connect people can act as resource generating tools. Social capital is described by Lin (2002) as crucial for individuals to achieve goals. In the case of immigrant families, children born in the United States help their parents to connect to their new society because they rapidly acquire the language of their country of birth and are thus, bilinguals, and often act as interpreters in social interactions between US institutions (such as schools, banks, stores, hospitals, and welfare) and their parents. Furthermore, these children will be automatically connected to structural contexts for they are granted citizenship independently of their parents' immigration status (Weeks and Weeks, 2010). In that regard, the children of immigrant families seem likely to be effective mediators between the two cultures and effective generators of social capital for their parents.

According to Myers (2010), couples will be more likely to have children as an effect of post-move-related disruptions in social connections and relations, especially in international and intercultural migration, where potential parents regard childbirth as a strategy for adaptation that leads to social connection and thus, to social capital. Immigrants' children seem to be the agents of collective institutional socialization for their parents, which may suggest a theoretical approach to rational choice theory of social exchange in which the reward is not only obtained as economic return, which can be the case when a new family member will bring more economic resources to the family unit once reaching working age, but also in terms of giving birth to a future citizen of their host country in exchange for connection to the new society they are immersed in and lack

connection to, in the case of international migrants with no legal status in the US. Perceived lack of physical and cultural connection to mainstream society as well as acculturative stress may also be associated with a desire for having access to strong blood ties with the same. Individuals accumulate social capital as a consequence of being part of a broader social structure, such as a nation (Portes, 1998).

Bourdieu (1989) incorporates the perception of social space, as related to habitus, as an important component of social reality that goes beyond the analyses of structural social space (objective-positivist) and symbolic interactions (subjective-interpretive). In examining motivations for childbirth among non-assimilated Hispanic women, I will consider this relational perception of social reality. That is, how advantageous these immigrants perceive their host country from their relative position of past disadvantages and present opportunities. This approach can test the theoretical effectiveness of the rational actor concept, since even though they live in poverty according to the United States' parameters they differ from this perspective in their subjective interpretation of their new environment; they may see themselves and their offspring as resourceful and advantaged in comparison with what their habitus (or long-lasting relationships they were involved in) used to be in their home countries. From the social capital perspective, Myers (2010) found that higher levels of social capital increase the likelihood of having intentions for childbirth. Looking at the Hispanic immigrant experience in the US from an in-group perspective, it could be argued that Hispanics, even though they lack social capital, see themselves as resourceful simply for being in this country, which is richer than their home countries in Latin America. Furthermore, "92% of all Hispanics see the United States as a land of opportunity" (Massey, 2015, p. 6) and first- generation-

immigrant Hispanics, especially those with lower levels of education, have more positive views of and are more trustful of the United States' institutions and the "*American Dream"* than second and third-generations, who are more sensitive towards and more critical of discrimination (Chebel d'Appollonia, 2015).

According to Schoen et al. (1997) "individuals who place a high priority on children as a social resource are more likely to have a child". Additionally, motherhood may act as an effective strategy that prevents women from deportation. There were 438,000 deportations in 2013, the highest in recent decades (Tran, 2015), and recent deportation rates show a gendered pattern, being higher for men than for women; analysis of data carried out by Colegio de la Frontera Norte, in Mexico, finds that 89% of the deported Mexican immigrants sent back home were men (Doering-White et al., 2014).

Social identity

Fertility Intentions and Motherhood Social Identity

In examining intention and behavior as resulting from meaningful interactions, I will consider social identity as a possible theoretical explanation for fertility intentions. Theories of social identity describe social processes in which an actor's response will be determined by an already established set of meanings which, when maintained, reduce individuals' existential uncertainty (Burke and Stets, 2009). To further investigate the social identity approach, and specifically, social identities of Hispanic women linked to motherhood, I will center on motherhood identity as a self-perceived social role. Motherhood identity should be central in explaining variability in fertility intentions and subsequent behavior related to childbearing that may ultimately influence fertility rates in the same way that life course events fundamental values about fertility do (McQuillan et

al., 2015). The salience and centrality of social identity and its role in guiding intentions and subsequent behavior is based on the concept of identities as a cognitive schema (Stryker, 2008). The link between the relevance of social expectations for individual experience and identity theory suggests that "more salient and more central identities should guide intentions more than less salient and less central identities" (McQuillan et al., 2015, pg 23).

McQuillan et al. (2015, p. 31) examined the relationship between importance of motherhood and fertility intentions among women in the United States and found that "higher levels of importance of motherhood are associated with higher fertility intentions" and that the importance of motherhood identity mediates the relationship between social and demographic characteristics and fertility intentions. Looking at the intersection of social identity and marital status, Pessar (1999, p. 61) argues that for married or cohabiting immigrant women, patriarchal patterns of social identity that are common among Latinas, in which women indentify primarily with motherhood, were more likely to be maintained after migration, "even when the women worked outside the home". From this perspective, investigating whether social identity contributes to explaining childbirth for non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women living with a spouse or partner seems to be an important contribution to research in this area.

HYPOTHESES

Based on the literature reviewed, both rational choice and social identity theoretical approaches seem to provide key elements that are known to be of importance for investigating motivations and trends among non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women as well as differences between them and their assimilated counterparts. By measuring the effects of assimilation (language), human capital (income and education), social capital (number of children) and social identity (motherhood social identity) on fertility intentions, controlling for marital status (married or cohabiting vs all else) and employment status, I can test the effectiveness of these predictors on fertility intentions among Hispanic women.

According to McQuillan et al. (2015), Hispanic women differ from White women in their intention for childbirth; and within the Hispanic group, they found differences based on language used, which suggests that there may be differences based on assimilation; the following hypothesis is designed to test the effect of assimilation on fertility intentions among Hispanic women in the US:

H1.- Non-assimilation is positively associated with fertility intentions among Hispanic women.

The following three hypotheses are derived from a rational choice theoretical approach and are intended to explain fertility intentions among non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women. From the perspective of a rational actor, fertility intentions will be based on comparing benefits vs costs.

From the human capital perspective that relates to education, it is expected that people with lower levels of education will be more likely to have higher fertility

intentions because children can buffer their parents' disadvantages in terms of low human capital. The following hypothesis is intended to assess whether the relationship between non-assimilated Hispanic women level of education and fertility intentions is an exchange response from a rational actor that contribute to explain intention for childbirth among non-assimilated Hispanic women:

H2.- Education is negatively associated with fertility intentions among non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women.

Based on the economic cost of raising children, it would be expected that families with higher income would have more intentions for childbirth because they can absorb the costs. The following hypothesis will allow measuring the strength of the rational choice approach as guiding intentions in economic terms:

H3.- Family income is positively associated with fertility intentions among non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women.

Investigating reasons why people want to have children in the United States, Schoen et al. (1997, p. 348) found that "the social capital value of children is a motivation for childbearing" and argue that "the larger their number, the greater the potential return", though this is limited by biological and economic reasons. Bongaarts (2001) argues that due to the effect of gender composition and sex preferences, the number of children desired in developed countries is typically two. Additionally, there is a strong relationship between social norms and the number of children considered as ideal, as suggested by life course theory (Elder, Johnson, and Crosnoe, 2003). In the United States, women in general desire not to be childless and there is a decrease in

fertility intentions with every child born; yet research suggests that racial/ethnic sub-groups present differences in regards to fertility (McQuillan et al., 2015).

On the other hand, according to Meyer (2010), fertility intentions among migrants are affected by processes of disruption and adaptation. Examining the effect of migration on fertility intentions, Myers' (2010, p.1641) results show a 253% increase in the odds of changing birth intentions from No to Yes, for intercommunity movers. The effect of this would be greater for international migration (Myers, 2010). According to this, migration may have a strong positive effect on childbirth intentions for people with lower post-move levels of social capital (at the micro level), which is specifically the case for Hispanic immigrants in the US. For a woman in a vulnerable position (non-assimilated, which means recent arrival immigrant, and Hispanic), intentions for childbirth after having two (the number of children considered as a typical family in the US) or more children is a strategy for adaptation; in this sense, it is a rational choice.

The hypothesis below aims at testing the effect of number of children on fertility intentions. In my analysis, I will examine whether intentions for childbirth are affected by every child born once reaching two children compared with having one or no child, and how. Due to the contribution of children as generators of social capital for their parents:

H4.- Fertility intentions among non-assimilated Hispanic immigrants do not decline for women with two or three children compared to women with one child or childless.

Finally, from the social identity theoretical approach, the following hypothesis is designed to test the contribution of motherhood social identity in explaining fertility intentions among non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women:

H5.- Motherhood social identity increases the likelihood of having intentions for childbirth among non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women.

DATA AND METHODS

Data

I perform a secondary analysis based on the first wave of the National Survey of Fertility Barriers (NSFB). The data from NSFB is a nationally representative telephone survey of women age 25-45 that was conducted between 2004 and 2007 and includes completed interviews with 4,786 women randomly selected .

The data were collected by the Survey Research Center at The Pennsylvania State University and the Bureau of Sociological Research at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and are being released and are archived with the Population Research Institute at Penn State University.

The dataset is based on a sample selected to be representative of all female adults living in households with a land line telephone in the contiguous United States. A random-digit dialing (RDD) sample design was used with the telephone numbers purchased from Survey Sampling, Inc. and includes an over-sample of Latinas drawn from Census tracts with more than 40% minorities. The dataset was released in segments during the data collection phases of the study. Each segment was a representative sample of the population. Interviewing was conducted by the Survey Research Center (SRC) at Penn State and the Bureau of Sociological Research (BOSR) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The overall response rate to the main interview, based on AAPOR response rate (AAPOR 2006) and revised to include screening eligibility estimates, was 37.2%. The screener response rate was 53.7% (McQuillan et al., 2015).

I conduct my analysis using a purposive sample of 826 women who described themselves as being Hispanic. I also split this sample into two sub-samples: 266 non-

assimilated Hispanic women based on interviews conducted in Spanish and 560 assimilated Hispanic women based on interviews conducted in English.

Concepts and Measures

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable *fertility intention* is operationalized using a dummy variable indicating intention for childbirth vs no intention for childbirth. The DV is based on the question: "Do you intend to have a baby?" As argued by Myers (2010) and following the model proposed by Bongaarts (2001), fertility behavior can be predicted using intentions, which measure motivations independently from unforeseen life course events. According to this model, intentions have the power to persist in time (Bongaarts, 2001). Additionally, intentions for childbirth as a predictor for childbirth go beyond the mediating role between life course characteristics and actual childbirth due to being less dependent on external circumstances that may escape potential parents' control (Schoen et al., 1999).

Independent Variables

I distinguish between non-assimilated Hispanics and assimilated Hispanics based on *language*, and created a dummy variable for *non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women* for examining the effect of non-assimilation on the dependent variable. I also use *number of children* as a measure designed to capture the effect of social capital, and *years of education* and *income*, as measures of human capital to assess the impact of rational choice as a mobilize for fertility intentions. In addition, I use *motherhood social identity,* to assess the contribution of social identity to explaining fertility intentions among Hispanic women. I include demographic and control variables.

i. Non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women

I use *linguistic assimilation* (English vs Spanish) as a way to identify *non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women.* According to Rumbaut (1999, p. 183), "language preference is a key index of cultural assimilation", and "high level of Spanish usage is greatly associated with immigration" (Rodriguez, 1999, p. 427). I limit the scope of assimilation to language assimilation, or the use of the English language, and build my study on the premise that Spanish-speaking respondents are mainly and foremost, *non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women.* I rely on Spanish language use as a measure of non-assimilation, and as a proxy for identifying Hispanic immigrant women. There seems to be a very strong correlation between intercultural migrants and language use. Data available from the US Census (2009) show that among the natives, 90% spoke English only and 10% spoke a language other than English, among whom 2% spoke English "less than very well"; whereas among the foreign born 16% spoke English only and 84% spoke a language other than English, of which 52% spoke English "less that very well". Based on these data, those respondents who were interviewed in Spanish are used as a proxy intended to identify non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women. The reference group is assimilated Hispanics.

ii. Rational Choice

iia. Human Capital

Income

I use family income as another possible predictor of fertility intentions. According to economic theories, income should have an effect on fertility intentions. However, considering that the relationship benefits vs cost would be influenced by the fact that the

United States grants citizenship and access to welfare to all children born in its territory, as well as primary and secondary education for children at no economic cost for parents, it would be expected that income may not exert much influence on fertility intentions in the United States. This variable is logged and measured in a 12 points scale ranging from *less than $5,000 to $100,000 or more*, using the mid-points dollar value for the year 2004 (McQuillan et al., 2015).

Years of Education

According to Becker (1994, p. 324), "human capital is embodied knowledge and skills". Education is a widely accepted measure of human capital that links earnings to years of education (Becker, 1993). The human capital approach to fertility and migration is based on the post-move processes of disruption and adaptation and depends on the amount of disruption in human capital, this being stronger for international migration, as a long-distance move, than for short moves (Myers, 2010). Furthermore, based on this, I assume that human capital would suffer greater disruption if the move involves two cultures and two languages. I assume that the lower the level of education the greater the disruption. This independent variable is mean-centered ranging from 1 to 22 years of schooling. I expect to capture the effect of non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women's level of education on fertility intentions.

iib. Social Capital

Number of Children

This independent variable is used based on Becker's (1991) assumption that a couple's decision to have children depends on the utility-maximizing expectation of comparing benefits and costs and seeing children as investment capital. Yet, stronger than

seeing children only as an investment promising an economic return or consumer durables, children are also deemed to generate social capital for their parents because they provide social ties that facilitate access to resources and personal relationships. To measure the expectation of return from children as generators of social capital, I created an ordinal variable for the number of children that includes three categories: women with *2 children, 3 children,* and *four or more children.* Women with *one or no child* will be the reference group, indicating that women intending to have up to two children may have additional known motivations for fertility intentions, such as social norms (Elder, Johnson, and Crosnoe, 2003) and/or gender composition expectations (Bongaarts, 2001).

iii. Social Identity

Motherhood social identity

To measure the strength of motherhood social identity, I use McQuillan's *importance of motherhood* scale that ranges from 4 to 16, in which the higher the number the more important the *motherhood social identity*. McQuillan et al. (2008) developed the importance of motherhood scale measure after they found that this measure "varied little by such indicators of social class as education and economic hardship" among US women. The scale is based on five questions with four questions in a Likert-type scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree) and a fifth question that ranged from not important to very important. The Likert-type questions are 1)"Having children is important to my feeling complete as a woman", 2) "I always thought I would be a parent", 3) "I think my life is or will be more fulfilling with children", and 4) "It is important for me to have children"; the last and fifth question is "How important is each of the following in your life…raising children?". I use the imputed importance of motherhood scale as a measure

of *motherhood social identity* to find answers for the question: Does social identity linked to motherhood account for high fertility intentions among non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women?

iiii. Demographic and Control Variables

I use the demographic characteristics *age* and relationship status *married or cohabiting* because these two independent variables are known to be important determinants of fertility intentions. Women ages 20 to 34 are associated with childbirth (Dye, 2005). Age shows a .48 negative bivariate association with fertility intentions (McQuillan et al., 2015). For biological reasons, age is considered an indisputable predictor of childbirth intentions. Age is also a predictor of migration (Myers, 2010). In regards to marital status as a predictor of fertility, research shows differences among the groups (Schoen et al., 1997). I also include control variables that relate to employment status. According to several scholars, immigrants are rational actors seeking better economic opportunities for them and their families (Nicholson, 2006; Weeks and Weeks, 2010; Pearce, Clifford and Tandon, 2011; Massey, 2015). These controls are the dummy variables *employed full-time, employed part-time,* and *unemployed.*

In addition, I use *race/ethnicity* (Hispanic) as a way to isolate my sample and for testing hypothesis 1.

Method of Analysis

After selecting my sample, I created two dummy variables, one for the outcome fertility intentions, and another for non-assimilated Hispanic women. I created and analyzed contingency tables to observe trends and differences among Hispanics' based on assimilation, marital/relationship status, number of children, education, and income.

I use an independent sample t-test to look for significant differences between assimilated and non-assimilated Hispanics for all the variables in my analysis.

Based on my observations, I use three separate sets of nested models of binary logistic regression for testing my hypotheses. I use binary logits because it is a nonlinear probability model for analysis that assumes the log odds as a linear function of the explanatory variables. Its functional form is:

$$Ln\frac{p}{(1-p)} = \alpha + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \ldots + \beta_k x_k$$

In the first set, I test the effect of human and social capital predictors: non-assimilation, family income, years of education, and number of children, plus the demographic variables age, relationship status, and employment status on fertility intentions among Hispanic women. Then, I add motherhood social identity to assess the contribution of the social identity predictor in the full model. These two models allow me to test hypothesis 1.

In the second set, I repeat the models used for testing the Hispanic group as a whole, but using only completed interviews for the assimilated sub-group to observe for trends and differences based on assimilation.

In the third set of nested models, I test hypotheses 2, 3, 4, and 5, focusing on the non-assimilated Hispanic women sub-sample. I use the same predictors applied on the sample Hispanic women, but use three nested models to assess the contribution of the rational choice derived predictors as well as the social identity derived predictor to explaining fertility intentions among the sub-group non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women. In the first model, I test hypotheses 2 and 3 that refer to the human capital predictors; in the second model, I test hypothesis 4 that refers to the social capital

predictor; and finally, I test hypothesis 5 for assessing the effect of motherhood social identity using a full model.

I used this method of analysis because it allows estimating likelihood of occurrence based on empirical data from continuous and dichotomous variables (Allison, 1999; Field and Miles, 2010). The logit is an efficient technique to test categorical dependent variables using the ML method, which is recommended for individual-level data (Allison, 1999, pg 16). I use the MLE expecting to find coefficients for the intercept and each of the explanatory variables because it maximizes the likelihood of observed data as a function of α_s and $\beta_{s..}$ Under fairly conditions, MLE are asymptotically efficient (as sample size increases, the variance becomes smaller than all other estimators), asymptotically normal (statistical inferences become more straightforward), and consistent (asymptotically unbiased and as sample size increases, the variance approaches zero) (Allison, 1999; pg 16; Field and Miles, 2010). I tested main effects of all the predictors.

I intend to assess the strength of the rational choice approach for explaining intentions for childbirth among non-assimilated Hispanic women as guiding a purposive behavior driven by the search for social and human capital, as well as the contribution of motherhood social identity to explaining fertility intentions among this group.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics of all variables in the study and significant differences between assimilated and non-assimilated Hispanic women are presented in Table 1. The two sub-groups present equal characteristics with regard to fertility intentions, age, and motherhood social identity; 35 percent in both groups do intend to have a child, average age for both groups is 34 years with a standard deviation of approximately 6 years, and motherhood social identity, measured according to McQuillan et al.'s (2008) importance of motherhood scale, shows a mean of 12.7 which is above the mid-point, for both groups; however, they differ in the standard deviation with this being .60 lower for the non-assimilated group, which indicates that non-assimilated Hispanic women are more homogeneous in terms of motherhood social identity.

Regarding the other predictors, years of education shows significant differences in means: at the .001 confidence level, the average is 4.13 years higher for the assimilated group than for their non-assimilated counterparts, which confirms the positive association between level of education and assimilation presented in the literature. Income is another predictor that shows significant differences between the two groups: at the .001 level of confidence, the assimilated group average for annual family income is above the mid-point (US$30,000) in a 12 points scale, whereas the non-assimilated group is below that mid-point; this statistic also confirms the undisputable positive association between education and income, since the non-assimilated group presents a lower level of education on average than the assimilated one.

In regards to the number of children, assimilated Hispanics have significantly fewer children than the non-assimilated group at the .05 confidence level. On average, the

latter has more than two children; whereas the assimilated group has an average of less than two. Significantly more assimilated women are childless or have one child (41% vs 22 %), and significantly more non-assimilated women have three children (27% vs 20%) and more than three children (17% vs 10%).

As for the control variables, significant differences at the .01 level were found for relationship status married or cohabiting and for employment status employed part-time, indicating that a greater proportion of non-assimilated Hispanic women are married or cohabiting (.82 vs .73) and working part-time (.19 vs .11) in comparison to assimilated Hispanic women. On the contrary, significantly more assimilated Hispanic women are employed full-time (.57 vs .26). For the unemployed, the test shows a significant difference between assimilated and non-assimilated, the latter showing no unemployment status at all.

Table 1. Means and Std Deviation of Dependent, Independent, and Control Variables by assimilation

	Assim. Hispanic Women		Non-Assim. Hispanic Women	
	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev
Dependent Variable	0.35	0.48	0.35	0.48
Fertility Intentions				
Independent Variables				
Human and Social Capital				
Family Income	7.81	2.93	5.06***	2.34
Years of Education	14.23	2.58	10.10***	4.00
Number of Children	1.84	1.42	2.40*	1.27
0 -1	0.41	0.49	0.22**	0.41
2	0.29	0.45	0.35	0.48
3	0.20	0.40	0.27*	0.44
More than 3	0.10	0.31	0.17***	0.37
Social identity				
Motherhood social identity	12.74	2.36	12.73	1.76
Controls				
Age	33.97	5.81	33.75	5.68
Married or Cohabiting	0.73	0.45	0.82**	0.38
Employed FT	0.57	0.50	0.26*	0.44
Employed PT	0.11	0.31	0.19**	0.40
Unemployed	0.02	0.15	0.00***	0.00
N	560		266	

Independent samples t-test indicates significant differences between assimilated and non-assimilated Hispanic Women, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p <.001.

To assess the impact of each predictor on fertility intentions for the entire sample of Hispanics, I constructed a binary logistic regression equation with nested modeling, which is presented in Table 2. The first model predicts fertility intentions among Hispanics by non-assimilation, family income, education, and number of children, controlling for demographics, and employment status. The second model includes all the variables in the first model plus motherhood social identity.

Table 2. Logistic Regression Model Predicting the Probability of Having Fertility Intentions Among Hispanic Women in the United States.

	Model 1		*Model 2*	
	Coeff	*SE*	*Coeff*	*SE*
Non-Assimilated Hispanic	.63**	(.27)	.63**	(.27)
Rational Choice Predictors				
Family Income	.06	(.04)	.05	(.04)
Years of Education	.01	(.04)	.00	(.04)
Number of Children				
Two Children	-.16	(.18)	-.20	(.18)
Three Children	-.64**	(.21)	-.71**	(.22)
Four or More Children	.51	(.29)	.49	(.29)
Social identity Predictor				
Motherhood social identity			.09	(.05)
Controls				
Age	-.15***	(.02)	-.15***	(.02)
Married or Cohabiting	-.37	(.26)	-.44	(.26)
Employed FT	.00	(.24)	.02	(.24)
Employed PT	.02	(.33)	.02	(.33)
Unemployed	1.35	(.84)	1.34	(.84)
Intercept	3.70***	(.80)	2.63**	(.98)
- 2 Log L	622.262		622.018	
N=826				

Note: * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

For the first regression equations, the results show that non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women significantly increase their odds of having fertility intentions by 88 percent [$e^{.6307}$=.88] in comparison to the assimilated group. This finding strongly supports the first hypothesis that non-assimilation exerts a positive effect on fertility intentions among Hispanic women. The results show that family income and years of education were not significant predictors of fertility intentions among Hispanics. Respondents were equally likely to have intentions for childbirth regardless of their level of education and income. Besides non-assimilation, number of children and age were significant predictors of fertility intentions within this ethnic group. The number of children as a predictor presents mixed results. For Hispanic women with three children

the odds of having fertility intentions significantly decreases by 47 percent [1- $e^{-.639}$=1 - .528 = .47], whereas for women with two and for those with four or more children, the odds of having fertility intentions do not differ compared to Hispanic women having one or no child. Age was negatively associated with fertility intentions and predicts that for Hispanic women, the odds of having fertility intentions decrease by 14 percent [1 - $e^{-.1521}$=1 - .859 = .14] for every year of increase in age.

Once the motherhood social identity predictor was included in the regression model, the odds of having fertility intentions for women with three children decrease by 50 percent [1- $e^{-.7050}$=1 - .494 = .50]. The rest of the predictors do not change. For the control married or cohabiting, the second regression shows a decrease (going from 31 percent in the first model to 35 percent) in the odds of having fertility intentions, although these numbers showed not to be statistically significant. Motherhood social identity has no effect on fertility intentions among Hispanics. These findings demonstrate that among Hispanic women in general, non-assimilation, age, and the rational choice variable number of children are better predictors of fertility intentions than the social identity variable.

For comparison purposes, I constructed another binary logistic regression equation with two nested models using the sub-sample assimilated Hispanic women. The first model predicts fertility intentions by family income, education, and number of children controlling for demographics, and employment status. The second and full model includes all the aforementioned variables and motherhood social identity to assess the contribution of the social identity measure as a predictor of fertility intentions among

assimilated Hispanics. Results for the second logistic regression for the sub-group assimilated Hispanic women and are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Logistic Regression Model Predicting the Probability of Having Fertility Intentions Among Assimilated Hispanic Women in the United States

	Model 1		*Model 2*	
	Coeff	*SE*	*Coeff*	*SE*
Rational Choice Predictors				
Family Income	.06	(.05)	.04	(.05)
Years of Education	.07	(.06)	.07	(.06)
Number of Children				
Two Children	-.27	(.23)	-.34	(.23)
Three Children	-.75**	(.29)	-.88**	(.3)
Four or More Children	-.14	(.35)	-.12	(.35)
Social identity Predictor				
Motherhood social identity			.16**	(.06)
Controls				
Age	-.17***	(.03)	-.17***	(.03)
Married or Cohabiting	-.9**	(.31)	-1**	(.32)
Employed FT	-.07	(.3)	-.04	(.3)
Employed PT	-.13	(.44)	-.18	(.45)
Unemployed	1.49	(.89)	1.48	(.89)
Intercept	3.93***	(1.07)	2.1	(1.26)
- 2 Log L	411.28		403.49	
N=439				

Note: * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

The regressions performed on the assimilated Hispanics sub-sample show that family income and years of education were not significant in predicting fertility intentions among this group. For the variable number of children, the effect of having three children resulted significant (at the .01 confidence level) in predicting fertility intentions among assimilated Hispanic women. In particular, results for the assimilated women show a curious pattern since fertility intentions do not significantly decline for women with two children and for those with four or more children. On the contrary, there is a drop in fertility intentions at the three children category, which presents the odds of

having fertility intentions reduced by 53 percent [1 - $e^{-.7502}$= 1 - .472 = .53] compared to those with one or no child. Regarding demographic and control variables, for every year's increase in age, an assimilated Hispanic woman decreases the odds of having fertility intentions by 16 percent [1 - $e^{-.1740}$= 1 - .840 = .16]; whereas for married or cohabiting, the odds of having fertility intentions is significantly reduced by 59 percent [1 - $e^{-.8983}$= 1 - .407 = .59]. No significance was found for employment status among assimilated Hispanic women.

Once the motherhood social identity predictor was included, the odds of having intentions for childbirth significantly increased by 17 percent [$e^{.1574}$=1.17] for every one unit increase in the importance of motherhood scale. Other predictors found significant in the previous model remained basically the same.

For testing hypotheses 2, 3, 4 and 5, I constructed another binary logistic regression equation with three nested models using the non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women sub-sample. The first model predicts fertility intentions by family income and education, controlling for demographics, and employment status. The second model includes all the variables in the first model plus the social capital measure number of children. The third and full model includes all the aforementioned variables and motherhood social identity to assess the contribution of the social identity measure as a predictor of fertility intentions among the target population. Results for the third set of logistic regression parameter estimates for the non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women sub-sample are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Logistic Regression Model Predicting the Probability of Having Fertility Intentions among Non-Assimilated Hispanic Immigrant Women in the United States

	Model 1		*Model 2*		*Model 3*	
	Coeff	*SE*	*Coeff*	*SE*	*Coeff*	*SE*
Rational Choice Predictors						
Family Income	.03	(.08)	.06	(.09)	.06	(.09)
Years of Education	-.02	(.05)	-.06	(.05)	-.04	(.05)
Number of Children						
Two Children			.11	(.30)	.13	(.30)
Three Children			-.49	(.33)	-.41	(.34)
Four or More Children			-1.17*	(.51)	-1.18*	(.51)
Social identity Predictor						
Motherhood social identity					-.13	(.11)
Controls						
Age	-.15***	(.03)	-.12***	(.04)	-.12***	(.04)
Married or Cohabiting	.96	(.51)	1.25*	(.56)	1.35*	(.57)
Employed FT	.66	(.41)	.29	(.45)	.32	(.45)
Employed PT	.31	(.47)	.14	(.51)	.14	(.51)
Unemployed	.00	.	.00	.	.00	.
Intercept	3.45**	(1.20)	2.30	(1.27)	3.94*	(1.87)
- 2 Log L	215.670		193.577		192.117	
N=266						

Note: * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001.

Logistic regressions performed on the non-assimilated sub-sample show that family income as well as years of education were not significant in predicting fertility intentions among this group. These results show no support for hypotheses 2 and 3. Age was the only significant predictor of fertility intentions in the first model along with the intercept that was significant at the .01 level of confidence. For every year's increase in age, a non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant woman decreases the likelihood of having fertility intentions by 14 percent [1 - $e^{-.1537}$= 1 - .858 = .14]. In the second model, the variable number of children also presents mixed results. In general, the effect of having two or more children resulted significant (at the .001 confidence level) in predicting fertility intentions among non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women. In particular,

fertility intentions do not significantly decline for women with two and three children. The drop in fertility intentions only occurs at the four or more children category, which presents fertility intentions reduced by 69 percent [1 - $e^{-1.1656}$= 1 - .312 = .69] compared to those with one child or childless. This finding supports the fourth hypothesis, and indicates that the number of children is the only rational choice predictor that exhibits significance among the three presented, which confirms that the value of children as social ties conducting to social capital for their parents predicts fertility intentions among non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women.

Among the remaining variables, age was negatively associated with fertility intentions and predicts results similar to those found in the first model; for every year's increase in age, a non-assimilated Hispanic woman decreases the likelihood of fertility intentions by 11 percent [1 - $e^{-.1175}$=.889 = .11]. Another variable that significantly predicts fertility intentions among this group is being married or cohabiting that is associated with a 249 percent [$e^{1.2486}$=3.485] increase in the odds of having fertility intentions for women living with a partner or married, compared with women who are not married or cohabiting.

Once the social identity predictor was included, in the third and full regression model, all predictors found significant in the previous model remained basically the same and motherhood social identity variable does not show significance. These results contrast with the significant and positive effect that motherhood social identity exerts when testing the assimilated sub-group. For married or cohabiting women, the increase in the odds of having fertility intentions went slightly higher, being at 287 percent [$e^{1.3535}$=3.871], once the motherhood social identity predictor was added. What is

interesting regarding this predictor is that while for the entire Hispanic sample the effect of being married or cohabiting on fertility intentions is negative and not significant, the same effect is positive and significant for the non-assimilated Hispanics sub-sample.

In the first model, no predictor but age was found significant, which demonstrates the importance of introducing the social capital measure number of children for predicting fertility intentions among non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women. Once this variable is introduced in the second model, two predictors become significant in different directions: negative for number of children at the four or more category, and positive for being married or cohabiting. Finally, once the motherhood social identity predictor is introduced in the full model, its predictive power remains the same.

In sum, the results support hypotheses 1 and 4, confirming that when testing the entire Hispanic group, non-assimilation is a significant predictor of fertility intentions, and that the contribution of children as generators of social capital predicts that fertility intentions among non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women with two and three children remains the same as for women with no or just one child. The latter differs from the results obtained for the Hispanic group as a whole and for the assimilated Hispanics sub-sample, in which fertility intentions present a drop at the three children category. Hypotheses 2, 3, and 5 were not supported. This indicates that income, education, and motherhood social identity do not have an effect on the outcome variable among non-assimilated Hispanics.

DISCUSSION

As argued by Schoen et al. (1997), although research on fertility decline is abundant, little attention has been shed on motivations for fertility. I attempt to contribute to fill in part of that gap, this time focusing on Hispanics living in the United States, an ethnic group that is known for having high fertility rates. For that purpose, I propose a set of hypotheses that are aimed at finding sociological explanations for understanding the effect of predictors derived from the rational choice perspective, as well as from the social identity point of view as motivators for fertility intentions among this ethnic group. Building on empirical research reviewed in the literature, there should be differences within ethnic sub-groups in regards to fertility patterns and also in regards to the different levels in which motherhood identity is important in women's lives and can predict fertility intentions. With this research, I attempt to expand on those ideas and, specifically, find theoretically founded explanations for what motivates intentions for childbirth particularly among non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women, represented by those who speak Spanish as their preferred language.

The hypotheses in this study are aimed at testing for differences among Hispanic women in regards to their intentions for childbirth based on linguistic assimilation; investigating the effect, if any, of assimilation, non-assimilation, income, education, parity, and motherhood social identity as possible predictors of fertility intentions among Hispanics; and finding theoretical explanations for motivation for childbirth among non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women.

The t-test and the logits confirm that differences based on linguistic assimilation do exist among the Hispanic sub-groups. The effect of motherhood social identity on

fertility intentions is different for the two sub-groups, being positive and significant for the assimilated women and with no effect for the non-assimilated ones. Another difference was found in terms of strength and direction regarding the effect of the demographic variable of married or cohabiting on fertility intentions, being positive and significant for the non-assimilated Hispanic women, negative and significant for the assimilated sub-group, and showing no effect when testing the Hispanic group as a whole. Another difference that is worth of attention is that for the number of children predictor at the two children category, Hispanic women as a whole as well as assimilated Hispanic women present a negative effect on fertility intentions compared to the reference group (0 or 1 child), whereas the same effect is positive for non-assimilated Hispanic women. All these findings show clear evidence that differences exist and are consistent with the literature reviewed that argues that there are differences between racial/ethnic sub-groups in regards to fertility patterns.

Regarding the hypotheses presented, I found support for two of these hypotheses, 1 and 4. As stated in hypothesis 1, the results demonstrate that non-assimilation has a positive effect on fertility intentions among Hispanics. Since non-assimilated women are used as proxy for immigrants, then, the effect may be caused by both non-assimilation and the condition of being an immigrant, which is consistent with Myers' (2010) argument that migration has an effect on intentions for fertility.

In regards to hypothesis 4, that among non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women fertility intentions will not decline for women with two (eventually reaching three children) and for women with three (eventually reaching four children), in comparison with non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women with one or no child, I found support

and the results demonstrate that the contribution of children as generators of social capital for their parents among non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women seems to be the reason why intentions for fertility among this group are different from results obtained in previous research in which the decline occurs typically among women with two children, and also from the results obtained in this study when using the assimilated sub-group, which presents a preference for smaller families than their non-assimilated counterparts, with fertility intentions declining for women with three children. Among the non-assimilated sub-group, the decline in fertility intentions occurs for women with four or more children. Since previous research shows that connection to structural society (i.e., membership, community involvement, etc), as measures of social capital, discourage fertility intentions, then, the opposite would be expected for non-assimilated immigrants. That is, lack of or fewer connections to structural society should encourage fertility intentions among this group. Since the disruption of social capital is expected to be greater for long-distance moves, immigrants may maximize social capital with larger families. According to this logic, the results obtained suggest that fertility intentions among non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women are, in part, a purposive behavior driven by the search for social capital. However, there is a possibility that the results would have been affected by the difference in sample size between assimilated and non-assimilated Hispanics, being 439 for the assimilated sub-sample vs. 266 for the non-assimilated one. Future research would benefit from testing assimilated and non-assimilated equal size samples, though there are some difficulties in reaching a comparable number of non-assimilated Hispanic women, given the barrier that the use of a foreign language presents.

I found no support for hypotheses 2 and 3; thus, income and education showed not to be significant predictors of fertility intentions among non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women. Furthermore, these predictors did not show significance in either of the two Hispanic sub-groups. Regarding income, these results are consistent with findings presented in previous research. Both McQuillan et al.(2015) and Schoen et al. (1997) present results in which family income was not a significant predictor of fertility intentions. However, Myers (2010) found that income is a significant positive predictor of changing fertility intentions from no to yes for intercommunity migrants; yet the obtained results in my study differ from that. I addressed earlier some reasons for which I believe income should not have an effect on fertility intentions that refer to the relationship benefits vs cost in the United States, where access to welfare is granted to all children born in its territory, as well as free primary and secondary education for children, which differ from the characteristics shared by some Latin American countries in which social resources such as welfare are scarce. In this sense, based on the obtained results, income appears not to be a matter of concern for non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women when it comes to having fertility intentions. On the other hand, the results for years of education show inconsistency with regard to previous research in which this independent variable was found to be significant and positive in predicting fertility intentions. For Hispanics, education does not have an effect on fertility intentions. It appears that there are some cultural factors at play that should be addressed by future research.

No support was found for hypothesis 5, suggesting that motherhood social identity does not contribute to explaining fertility intentions among non-assimilated

Hispanic immigrant women and that higher fertility intentions among this group for the women in the two children category, in comparison with their assimilated counterparts, appear to be purely a result of a rational choice motivated by the search for social capital. Other untested explanations for fertility intentions among non-assimilated Hispanic women not accounted for in my study might be connected to fertility rates being higher in Latin America, though this is unlikely since the main sending country in that region, Mexico, presents lower fertility rates than those of foreign born Latinas living in the United States. Additionally, the effect of transnational motherhood might, in part, be another untested explanation for fertility intentions not addressed by this study.

CONCLUSIONS

For intercultural migrants, low levels of education do not provide a solid background to successfully acquire a second language through which they can connect to mainstream society and ultimately assimilate in ways that allow access to resources in a context that otherwise would likely to be minimal, and so would the chances of accumulating social capital. Thus, this study demonstrates that non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women, the sub-group that presented a significantly lower level of education among Hispanic women, may have higher fertility intentions than the assimilated group as a result of a rational choice process motivating future behavior as a strategy for adaptation. The results obtained suggest that this rational choice process will depend on context, perspectives, and circumstances, rather than on culture of origin itself. Why do non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women maximize social capital at larger family size than their assimilated counterparts? The answer may well be because of their context - being in a country richer than their home country; their circumstances - being non-assimilated; and their perspectives - their hope for a better future and opportunities for their children. All this relates to Bourdieu's concept of relational space regarding the perception of social reality.

Motherhood social identity is not a predictor of fertility intentions among non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women. As such, social identity associated with motherhood does not appear to reinforce the effect of rational choice among this group. On the contrary, social identity linked to motherhood is a significant predictor of fertility intentions only among the assimilated sub-group.

There are limitations regarding validity due to the use of cross-sectional data for seeking explanations for intentions, which would be better assessed by a longitudinal study. On the other hand, a longitudinal study conducted by Schoen et al. (1999) found that fertility intentions are a good predictor of fertility behavior; however, that study used a non-Hispanic Whites and Blacks sample. Another limitation is that the reliability of the responses related to the importance of motherhood may be compromised due to the use of self-reports from a varied Hispanic population which may include undocumented immigrant women, who may be responding under pressure for socially desired answers that would be linked to the social perception of their presence in the United States primarily as economic migrants and not merely as of permanent settlers having children. An additional limitation is that we have to rely on translation of the responses for the non-assimilated sub-group; this may compromise accuracy. Also, the meaning of the questions used to measure motherhood identity may be interpreted differently by the two sub-groups, assimilated and non-assimilated; though this is unlikely since they share the same ethnic/cultural origin. Finally, this study presents two additional limitations: a) validity may be compromised due to the assumption that Spanish language preference correlates with Hispanic immigrant and b) the representativeness of the sample may be another shortcoming due to the use of telephone land lines. The majority of Hispanic immigrants use mobile phones, mainly as a floating population and also to lower costs.

Despite these limitations, there are important implications that can be derived from this analysis. At the national level, this study demonstrates the importance of implementing a comprehensive immigration reform in the United States. If non-assimilated Hispanic immigrant women would have a recognized way of accessing the

larger community social resources, such as becoming a member of a community group, they may have family sizes similar to their assimilated counterparts and not be motivated to have children as a way of accessing social capital in their host country. At a local level, social and public policymakers working on immigration in North Carolina would benefit from this insight with regards to population growth, multiculturalism, and developing public policies suited for a diverse population with new characteristics.

More research is needed in order to determine if the findings presented in this study for non-assimilated Hispanic immigrants are the effect of migration and, if so, if they are repeated over time and also across cultures, or if they describe specific characteristics that can be attributed to Hispanics only. I think that it would be beneficial if further studies consider more specific data on foreign-born women such as country of origin, length of stay in the United States, and whether they have children currently living in their home countries while they are abroad and have had more children born in the United States. I think those data are important, given the non-sedentary characteristic of this population, and would allow finding answers for more specific questions such as whether there are differences concerning fertility patterns among the sub-groups based on national origin, region, time spent in the United States, and most importantly, whether having more children than assimilated Hispanics is a consequence of migration in terms of not living with all of them in the United States because of leaving some of their children in their home countries. Yet the latter idea seems to be linked to motherhood social identity, which was found not to be a significant predictor of fertility intentions among this group in particular.

As a final conclusion, more specific research in this area is needed to confidently establish theoretical explanations for the inquiries presented in this study. Nonetheless, I hope this research demonstrates the value of incorporating knowledge from different disciplines to the study of fertility and that sociology can contribute to understanding motivations for childbirth among immigrant women and thus, cooperate with demographers and policymakers in their efforts to design more efficient strategies for incorporating and integrating immigrants, especially women, into broader society. This ultimately would prevent the maintenance and reproduction of a fragmented society and benefit who will be a significant proportion of tomorrow's citizens of the United States, the children of immigrants.

Endnotes:

1. According to US Census Bureau data, Puerto Ricans are not considered foreign born; therefore, they are intercommunity Hispanic immigrants.

2. The formula for a five-year birth rate is the ratio of the number of births within that period divided by the midyear population at risk for that period expressed as a percentage. Birth to unmarried mother is a birth to a woman who has never been legally married or who has been widowed or legally divorced from her husband in excess of 280 days. For unmarried Hispanics, the formula is

$$\frac{total\ number\ of\ births\ to\ unmarried\ Hispanic\ mothers\ 2009{-}2013}{total\ number\ of\ births\ to\ Hispanic\ mothers\ 2009{-}2013}\ x\ 100$$

(Source: Vital Statistics, 2013, Vol. 1. NC Dpt. of Health and Human Services Division of Public Health. State Center for Health Statistics, December 2014).

3. For a single year, the formula for calculating birth rate of Hispanics is

$$\frac{total\ number\ of\ births\ to\ Hispanic\ mothers\ in\ 2013}{total\ population\ of\ Hispanics\ in\ 2013}\ x\ 1000$$

(Source: Vital Statistics, 2013, Vol. 1. NC Dpt. of Health and Human Services Division of Public Health. State Center for Health Statistics, December 2014).

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APPENDIX A: CORRELATION MATRIX OF ALL VARIABLES - HISPANIC WOMEN

	Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	*Fertility Intentions*	1										
2	*Family Income*	.02	1									
3	*Ys. Of Education*	-.07	.26*	1								
4	*Non-Assimilated Hispanic*	.01	-.41*	-.36*	1							
5	*Number of Children*	.35*	-.17*	-.22*	.18*	1						
6	*Motherhood Social Identity*	.02	.11*	.00	.00	.18*	1					
7	*Age*	.37*	.09*	.03	-.02	.24*	.05	1				
8	*Married or Cohabiting*	.09*	.27*	-.11*	.10*	.14*	.17*	-.02	1			
9	*Employed Full Time*	-.04*	.33*	.18*	-.28*	-.24*	-.04	.07*	-.10*	1		
10	*Employed Part Time*	.01	-.14*	-.03	.12*	.03	.00	.05	.01	-.37*	1	
11	*Unemployed*	-.02	.01	.00	-.08*	-.01	.02	.04	-.03	-.11*	-.05	1

Note: * p<.05

APPENDIX B: CORRELATION MATRIX OF ALL VARIABLES - NON-ASSIMILATED HISPANIC WOMEN

	Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	*Fertility Intentions*	1									
2	*Family Income*	-.04	1								
3	*Ys. Of Education*	.08	.33*	1							
4	*Number of Children*	.32**	-.05	-.22**	1						
5	*Motherhood Social Identity*	.10	.10	.06	.12	1					
6	*Age*	.32**	.03	.02	.29**	.01	1				
7	*Married or Cohabiting*	-.11	.23**	-.04	.06	.17**	-.05	1			
8	*Employed Full Time*	-.05	.13	.17**	-.14*	-.03	.10	-.18**	1		
9	*Employed Part Time*	.05	-.07	-.01	-.01	-.01	.16**	-.03	-.29**	1	
10	*Unemployed*	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.

Note: * p<.05 ** p<.01

APPENDIX C: CORRELATION MATRIX OF ALL VARIABLES - ASSIMILATED HISPANIC WOMEN

	Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	*Fertility Intentions*	1									
2	*Family Income*	0.03	1								
3	*Ys. Of Education*	0.21	0.4	1							
4	*Number of Children*	-0.38	-0.12	-0.38	1						
5	*Motherhood Social Id*	0.01	0.12	0.00	0.27	1					
6	*Age*	-0.4	0.11	0.02	0.23	0.07	1				
7	*Married or Cohabiting*	-0.17	0.38	-0.03	0.15	0.17	0.00	1			
8	*Employed Full Time*	0.04	0.27	0.18	-0.23	-0.04	0.04	-0.03	1		
9	*Employed Part Time*	0.01	-0.13	-0.03	0.04	0.01	0.00	0.00	-0.40	1	
10	*Unemployed*	0.05	-0.03	-0.06	0.02	0.02	0.07	-0.01	-0.18	-0.05	1

Note: * p<.05 ** p<.01 ***p<.001