



Looking at the Big Picture: An Analysis of Children's Family Drawings Across Culture

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WILD
WILBOURN INFANT LAB AT DUKE

Introduction

- Families serve as children's primary socializing agents¹
- Different culture have different family structures
 - U.S. culture emphasizes individualism²
 - Nicaraguan culture emphasizes *familism* (prioritization of family above the self)³
- Still a need to explore conceptualization of family from perspective of children themselves
- Children's drawings are reflective of their environment and culture²
 - By age 5 or 6, children have a collection of symbols for the things in their environment⁴

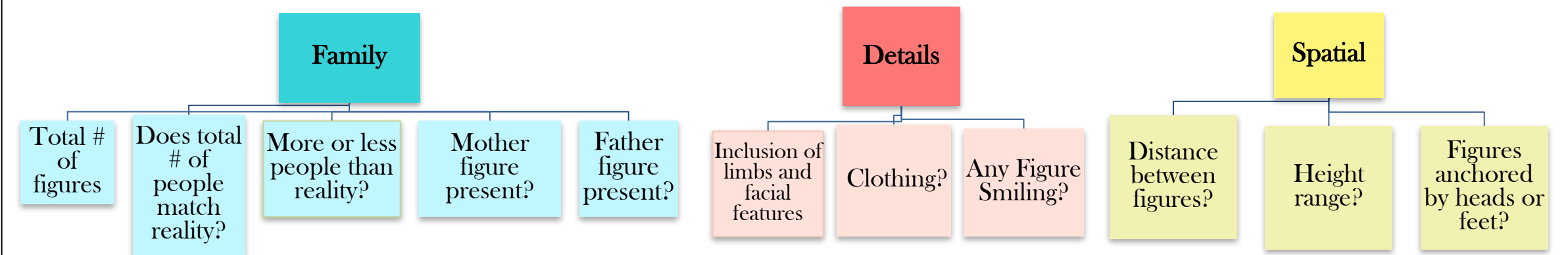
Research Questions

How do family drawings differ between children in the U.S. and Nicaragua in terms of:

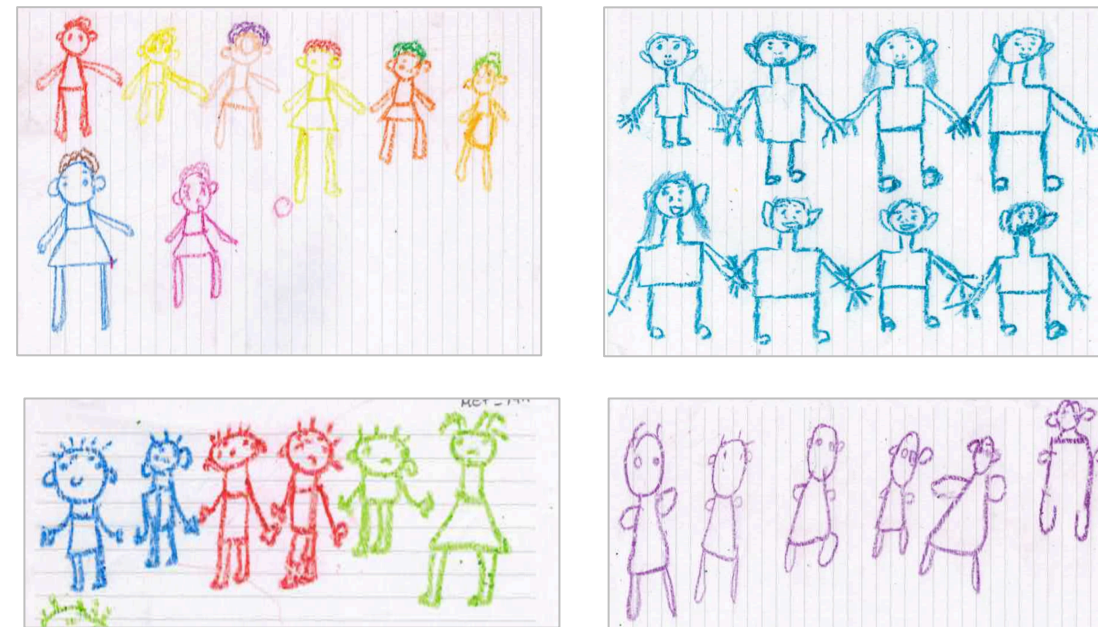
- What family members they include?
- What details they include?
- How figures are spatially arranged?

Methods

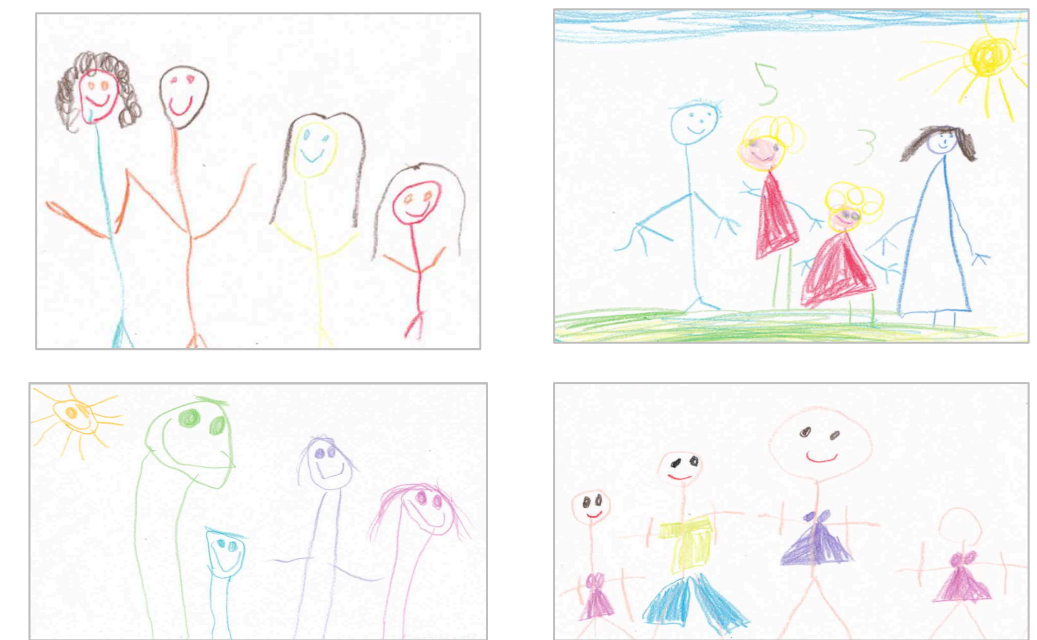
- Participants:** 127 U.S. children ($M = 5.05$ years), 22 Nicaraguan children ($M = 8.68$ years)
- Procedures:** Children asked to "draw a picture of [their] family" & drawings were coded:



Examples from Nicaraguan Sample:



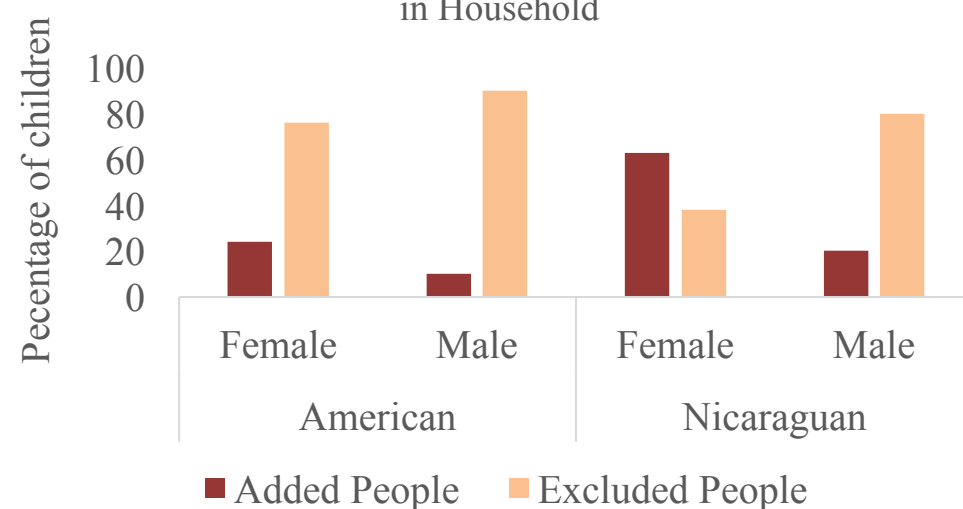
Examples from U.S. Sample:



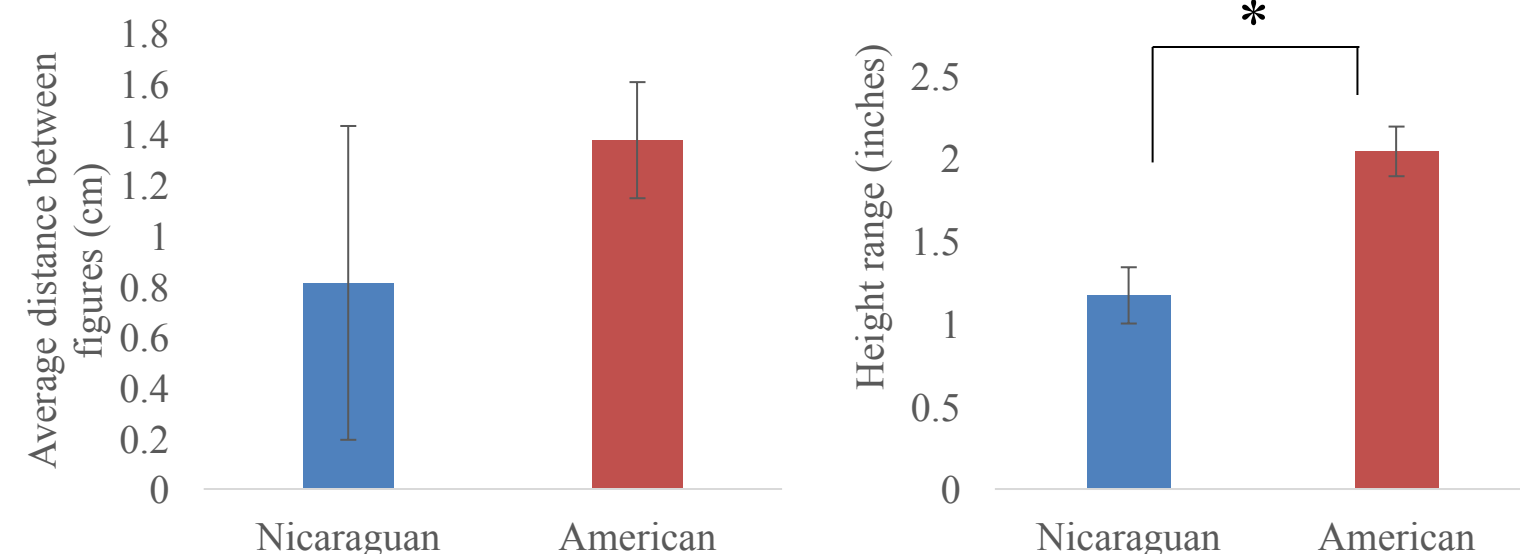
Results

Family Members Included

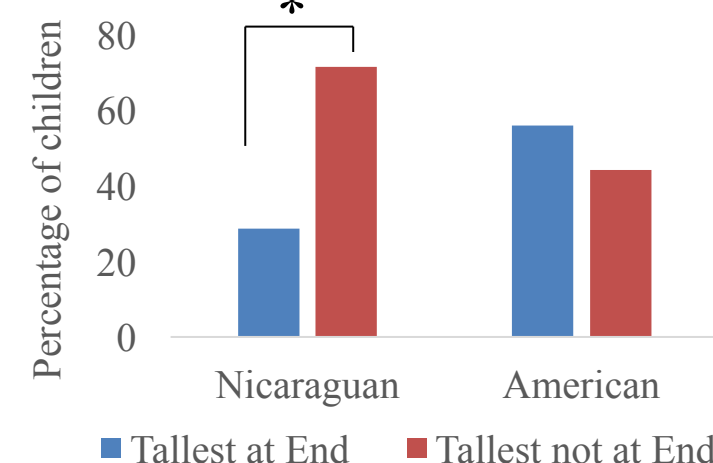
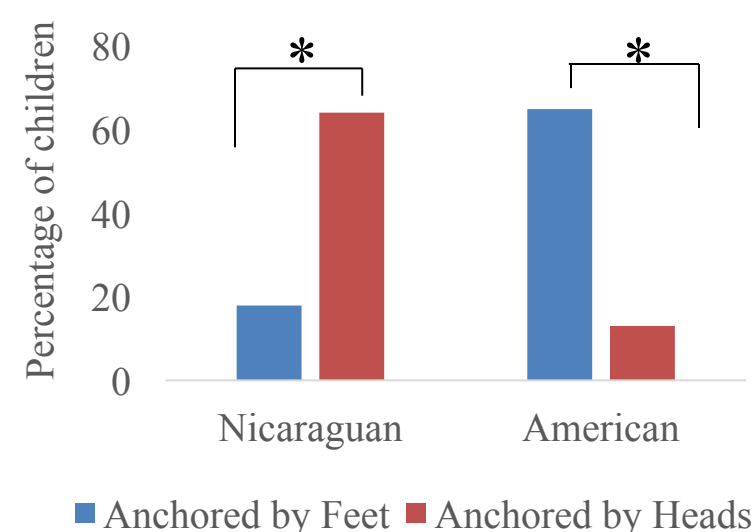
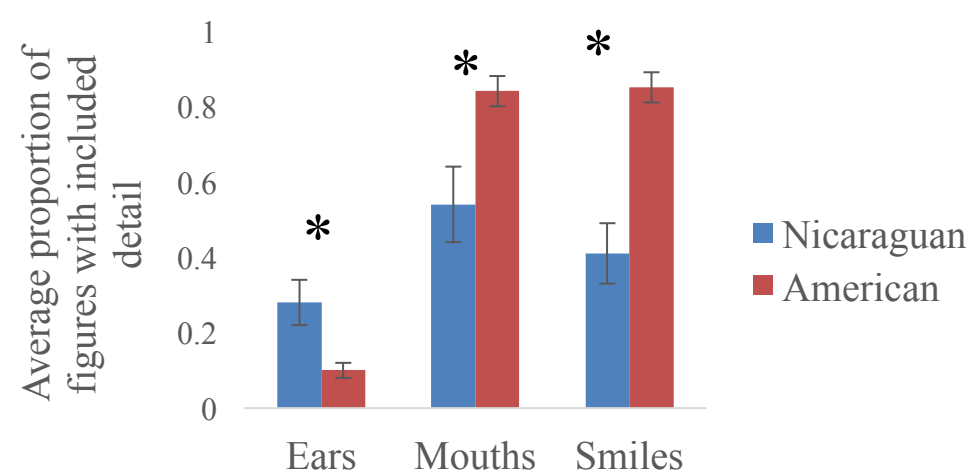
Number of Figures in Drawing compared to Number in Household



Spatial Arrangement



Details Included



Discussion

- There are systematic differences in the ways children from the U.S. and Nicaragua choose to represent their families through their drawings
- This suggests there may be cross-cultural differences in family conceptualizations
- Future Directions:**
- Have children label which figure represents which family member
- Connect drawing characteristics to family characteristics measured using a questionnaire

References

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