

Cultural Values and Intergenerational Value Discrepancies in Immigrant and Non-Immigrant Families

Jean S. Phinney, Anthony Ong, and Tanya Madden

The goal of this research was to explore the generality of developmental processes related to intergenerational value discrepancies across 701 families from immigrant and non-immigrant groups. In a study involving 471 immigrant families (197 Armenian, 103 Vietnamese, and 171 Mexican) and 230 non-immigrant families (95 African American and 135 European American), adolescents and parents reported their endorsement of values pertaining to family obligations. We examined similarities and differences at three levels of analysis, from the general to the group-specific. Results provide evidence for general developmental processes (family obligations were endorsed more by parents than by adolescents in all groups), processes associated with immigration (the intergenerational value discrepancy generally increased with time in the United States), and processes that are unique to each ethnic group.

INTRODUCTION

Recent increases in the proportion of immigrants in the U.S. population (Portes & Rumbaut, 1990; Schoeni, McCarthy, & Vernez, 1996; Smith & Edmonston, 1997) provide valuable opportunities for understanding processes of psychological change in individuals and groups across cultural contexts (Rogler, 1994). Yet mainstream American psychology has not dealt extensively with immigration, perhaps because, like the study of culture (Shweder, 1990), it poses challenges to the search for universals in human behavior and development. Researchers concerned with development within immigrant families are faced with questions about the level of generality of their models and findings: What processes are unique to particular immigrant groups? What generalizations are possible across immigrant groups? What developmental processes are common across both immigrant and non-immigrant groups?

Researchers interested in immigration must also deal with the fact that adaptation among immigrant families in the United States is a complex, multidimensional process (Portes, 1997). In place of the generally uniform assimilation process assumed for earlier immigrants, more recent immigrants show diverse patterns of adaptation within and across groups (Rumbaut, 1994; Zhou, 1997). The children of immigrants in particular differ widely in the extent to which they show positive developmental outcomes in the United States (Zhou, 1997).

Adolescent children of immigrants face especially complex issues, as they must deal with exposure to possibly conflicting sets of cultural values while simultaneously negotiating the developmental transition to adulthood (Chiu, Feldman, & Rosenthal, 1992). Be-

cause the rates of adaptation following immigration may vary between parents and adolescents (Portes, 1997), intergenerational discrepancies in cultural values may increase. To understand the processes of adaptation for these adolescents, we must take into consideration their different contexts: those related to belonging to a particular ethnic group, those associated with being an immigrant, and those pertaining to adolescent development generally (Garcia Coll et al., 1996; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993). An approach that considers different levels of analysis can lead to a better comprehension of the generality of processes of adaptation across diverse immigrant groups and also across immigrants and non-immigrants. In their classic work on value orientations, Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) point out the importance of considering different levels of analysis. The present study used such a multilevel approach in a study of cultural values and intergenerational value discrepancies from 3 immigrant groups (Vietnamese, Armenian, and Mexican) and 2 non-immigrant groups (European American and African American) in Southern California.

Values represent central or desirable goals that serve as standards to guide the selection or evaluation of behavior, people, and events (Smith & Schwartz, 1997). The values of the society in which children are raised provide a framework that shapes parental behaviors and interactions with children and the resulting developmental outcomes (Kagitcibasi, 1996; Super & Harkness, 1997). Within all cultures, parents engage in practices aimed at socializing the child to become a responsible adult member of the society (Whiting &

Whiting, 1975). Yet the patterning of values varies widely across cultural groups (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961). Two fundamental values that have been shown to differentiate European American culture from most non-Western cultures are individualism and collectivism (Hofstede, 1980; Kagitcibasi, 1996, 1997; Kim, Triandis, Kagitcibasi, Choi, & Yoon, 1994). These underlying values shape the processes of development through the ways in which parents socialize their children (Greenfield & Cocking, 1994).

Collectivism can be defined by an emphasis on group interdependence, harmony in interpersonal relations, and conformity to group norms (Triandis, 1990, 1995). Collectivist values are characteristic of the cultures of the 3 immigrant groups studied in the current research, Vietnamese, Armenian, and Mexican. Vietnamese culture, based in Confucian and Buddhist roots, is strongly collectivist; the family structure is typically patriarchal, and children are expected to obey their parents and fulfill their obligations within the family (Matsuoka, 1990; Nguyen & Williams, 1989; Rosenthal, Ranieri, & Klimidis, 1996). Adult children are expected to remain at home until they marry, and to follow the advice of their elders in matters of dating, marriage, and career choice; individual autonomy is subordinated to the needs of the family. For example, in a study of Vietnamese immigrants in the United States, Nguyen and Williams (1989) found that Vietnamese Americans endorsed conforming to parental authority more and were less supportive of adolescent autonomy than were their European American counterparts. Zhou and Bankston (1994) found that Vietnamese immigrant parents emphasized obedience, industriousness, respect for elders, and helping others.

Armenian culture is similarly characterized by a traditional family structure that includes clear parental authority, strong family ties among extended family members, and a sense of obligation to the family (Bakalian, 1993; Bamberger, 1986–87). Children are typically expected to live at home until they marry, and there is pressure to marry within the ethnic group. Although their collectivist cultural values in some ways parallel those found in Vietnamese families, the Armenian immigration experience differs substantially, characterized by a lower proportion of refugees and a higher socioeconomic status.

Mexican Americans come from a predominantly Catholic culture that is considered to be collectivist (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Hofstede, 1980). They have been described as having a strong emphasis on family interdependence and reliance on an extended family system (Marin & Marin, 1991; Sabogal, Marin, Otero-Sabogal, Marin, & Perez-Stable, 1987). The family is hierarchical, with the father assuming the domi-

nant role (Ramirez, 1989; Rueschenberg & Buriel, 1989). Okagaki and Sternberg (1993) found that Mexican parents valued conforming behaviors in their children more than did European-American parents. Chia et al. (1994) showed that Mexican college students valued family cohesion more than autonomy.

When families from these backgrounds immigrate to the United States, they are confronted with a culture with very different attitudes about the obligations of children toward their parents (Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam, 1999). European American adolescents hold values reflecting the greater individualism of American culture. Although they also have obligations to their parents and families, they expect greater equality with their parents and less emphasis on obedience. Young people typically move away from home at the end of adolescence, and there is less expectation that grown children will physically care for elderly parents. In keeping with these expectations, European American parents encourage less interdependence in their children than do parents in collectivist cultures (Greenfield & Cocking, 1994; Okagaki & Sternberg, 1993).

It is interesting to note that African American families occupy a position that shares some characteristics with both immigrants and European Americans. As a result of their many generations in the United States, African Americans have been exposed to the individualistic values of the dominant culture. Harrison, Wilson, Pine, Chan and Buriel (1990), however, argue that African Americans, like other ethnic groups of color in the United States, have stressed collective values and group solidarity as a response to exploitation and blocked opportunities. Parents emphasize interdependence and sharing as socialization goals for children. This observation is consistent with the finding that African American children are more willing to share within a group (Sims, 1979), and that African American college students score higher on collectivism than do European Americans (Gaines et al., 1997). Close ties with the extended family are important (Hatchett & Jackson, 1993; White & Parham, 1990). Thus, in comparison to the other groups of interest, African Americans may possess intermediate values, sharing individualistic attitudes with the larger society and collectivist attitudes with recent immigrants.

Differences between the values of the culture of origin of immigrant families and those of the larger society provide an ideal opportunity to study the generality of processes of change that occur with acculturation (Greenfield & Cocking, 1994; Rogler, 1994). Such changes may be attributed to a number of factors, including place of birth, age at migration, and length of time in the new culture. Immigrants who arrive as adults have been socialized into the culture of origin

throughout their early life. As a result, they hold on to their cultural values and practices more strongly than do their children (Liebkind, 1992; Rosenthal et al., 1996; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993). Immigrant parents have more difficulty in learning a new language than do their children (Portes & Schauffler, 1994). Within their home and community, they typically have less contact with the larger society than do children, who are exposed to new values in school and among peers from other backgrounds. As a result, adults adapt to American culture at a slower rate than those who arrive as children or who are born in the United States, a pattern that Portes (1997) calls "dissonant acculturation." This pattern can be seen in a study of immigrant Vietnamese adolescents and their parents by Nguyen and Williams (1989), who found that Vietnamese parents endorsed traditional cultural values significantly more strongly than did their adolescent children.

In addition to differences between adolescents and their parents, there are likely to be differences among adolescents in relation to their place of birth. Foreign-born (first generation) immigrants have been found to endorse family obligations more strongly than do those born in the United States (second generation) (Sabogal et al., 1987). Those born outside the United States, even if they arrived at an early age, have a self-identification based on their country of origin, for example, Mexican, or Vietnamese. In contrast, their U.S.-born peers more often have a compound identity, for example, Mexican American, or simply American (Rumbaut, 1997). The identity of foreign-born Americans of Mexican descent is more strongly linked to the culture of origin than is the identity of those born in the United States (Gurin, Hurtado, & Peng, 1994). In comparison, adolescents born in the United States are likely to feel more American and may, in turn, develop attitudes and expectations closer to those of their non-immigrant peers.

The factors influencing changes in values are interrelated within immigrant families. Children born in the United States are more likely to have parents who have been in the United States longer than the parents of foreign-born adolescents; conversely, children born abroad are likely to have more recent immigrants as parents. These differences define cohorts of immigrant families who differ in length of time in the United States: one cohort of longer term residents with a U.S.-born adolescent, and another cohort of more recent arrivals with a foreign-born adolescent. Because of the different rates of change associated with dissonant acculturation (Portes, 1997), the discrepancy between the attitudes of adolescents and parents in regard to family obligations may be greater in the first cohort than in the second. Evidence from Vietnamese families supports

this view. Nguyen and Williams (1989) found that parents' values did not vary with length of time in the United States, but adolescents' values did; as a result, the gap in values between immigrant parents and their children increased with years in the United States.

In addition to the acculturation process, adolescents in immigrant families are experiencing a transition to adulthood. A central feature of adolescent development in Western and economically developed countries is the process of individuation and increasing autonomy (Grotevant & Cooper, 1985; Hauser, Powers, & Noam, 1991; Steinberg, 1990). Individuation involves the young person's developing awareness of his or her own attitudes, opinions, and identity as distinct from those of his or her parents. This process is linked to disagreements with parents, as adolescents establish areas of personal jurisdiction (Laursen & Collins, 1994; Smetana & Asquith, 1994).

The process of individuation has been studied largely with European American families, and it may occur differently in other cultures (e.g., Kurtz, 1992). Kagitcibasi (1996) suggests that as collectivist cultures develop economically and are exposed to Western values of individualism, family members may become more financially independent, yet remain interdependent emotionally. In a study of adolescents in Hong Kong, a society which is economically developed but rooted in Chinese culture, Yau and Smetana (1996) found that adolescent-parent disagreements occur as a part of development. They suggest that such disagreements serve an individuating function; however, the ways they are expressed are influenced by the cultural context (see also Wainryb & Turiel, 1994). Fuligni and colleagues (1999) found no differences between immigrant and non-immigrant adolescents in the United States in their perceptions of disagreements with parents. If parents and adolescents independently report their values, however, discrepancies may be found even if there are not open disagreements.

In summary, the goals of the present study were to examine intergenerational value discrepancies in families from 3 immigrant groups and from a comparison sample from 2 nonimmigrant groups. In contrast to studies that have relied on adolescents' reports of parental values (Feldman, Mont-Reynaud, & Rosenthal, 1992; Fuligni et al., 1999), the present study independently assessed both adolescent and parent endorsements of values. Our first question was whether value discrepancies in immigrant families increase over time in the United States as a result of the more rapid acculturation of adolescents. Our second question was whether this process is general across the 3 immigrant groups. Our final question was whether intergenerational value discrepancies in

immigrant families are greater than those in non-immigrant families.

METHOD

Participants

The participants were 701 families, including adolescents (263 males and 438 females) and their parents, from five ethnic groups: Armenian ($n = 197$), Vietnamese ($n = 103$), Mexican/Mexican American ($n = 171$), African American ($n = 95$), and European American ($n = 135$). Participants were from middle- and working-class communities in the Los Angeles area. Socioeconomic status (SES) was calculated from the parents' report of each parent's education and occupation, and participants were assigned to one of four categories. Parent respondents reported the educational level of each parent on a 4-point scale: 1 = some secondary school or less, 2 = completed secondary school, 3 = some college, 4 = college or graduate degree. They also reported occupational level for each

parent on a 4-point scale: 1 = unskilled work, 2 = skilled work, 3 = white collar, and 4 = professional. (The scale included a description and examples of each level.) Educational level and occupational level were then averaged, and four categories were created for purposes of analysis. Occupation or education alone was used if the other information was missing. Adolescents' report of parental occupation was used when parental data were missing (see Table 1).

SES categories differed significantly among ethnic groups, $\chi^2(12, N = 701) = 304.3, p < .001$. A majority of the European American, African American, and Armenian families were middle class, whereas for the Vietnamese and Mexican families, a majority were working class. Because of these differences, SES was included in the analyses. Demographic characteristics of the sample are shown in Table 1.

Procedures

Middle schools and high schools were identified in which at least two of the five ethnic groups of interest

Table 1 Characteristics of Sample, by Ethnic Group

	Armenian ($n = 197$)	Vietnamese ($n = 103$)	Mexican ($n = 171$)	African American ($n = 95$)	European American ($n = 135$)
Adolescents					
Age, years: <i>mean (range)</i>	14.4 (12–17)	14.9 (13–18)	14.6 (13–18)	14.7 (13–18)	14.6 (12–18)
Gender					
Male	77 (39%)	41 (39%)	68 (40%)	31 (32%)	46 (35%)
Female	120 (61%)	62 (61%)	103 (60%)	64 (68%)	89 (65%)
Parental SES					
Unskilled work and/or little education beyond elementary	16 (8.3%)	40 (38.5%)	86 (52.8%)	1 (1.1%)	2 (1.4%)
Skilled work and/or some secondary education	45 (23.3%)	28 (30.4%)	58 (35.6%)	13 (14.3%)	23 (16.9%)
White-collar work and/or some college education	85 (44.0%)	18 (19.6%)	15 (9.2%)	40 (44.0%)	46 (33.8%)
Professional work and/or college or graduate education	47 (24.4%)	5 (5.4%)	4 (2.5%)	36 (39.6%)	65 (47.8%)
Parental marital status					
Married	172 (88.2%)	87 (85.3%)	124 (72.9%)	36 (40.9%)	96 (70.1%)
Divorced/other	23 (11.8%)	15 (14.7%)	46 (27.1%)	52 (59.1%)	41 (29.9%)
Neighborhood ethnicity					
Nearly all from different groups	32 (16.5%)	15 (15.0%)	19 (11.3%)	15 (16.7%)	20 (14.8%)
Mostly from different groups	15 (7.7%)	30 (30.0%)	28 (16.7%)	14 (15.6%)	24 (17.8%)
About equal, own and other groups	73 (37.6%)	42 (42.0%)	70 (41.7%)	25 (27.8%)	34 (25.2%)
Mostly from own group	60 (30.9%)	9 (9.0%)	38 (22.6%)	26 (28.9%)	34 (25.2%)
Nearly all from own group	14 (7.2%)	4 (4.0%)	13 (7.7%)	10 (11.1%)	23 (17.0%)
Father's reason for immigrating					
Improve life	91 (51.7%)	35 (38.5%)	132 (92.3%)		
Refugee	57 (32.4%)	54 (59.3%)	1 (0.7%)		
Other	28 (16.0%)	2 (2.2%)	10 (7.0%)		

Note: Numbers for breakdowns may not add up to total for sample because of missing data.

were represented and no single group predominated. Of the 12 schools contacted, two declined to participate due to testing schedules. Research assistants visited randomly selected eighth and tenth grade classrooms and informed students about the study. About three quarters of the students in all classes expressed interest in the study; in virtually all classes, girls were more responsive than boys. The proportions of girls were virtually identical across ethnic groups, however. Interested students were given a demographic screening form on which they reported their age and gender, their own and their parents' ethnicity, their place of birth, their length of residence in the United States, and their ability to read English.

All students who submitted screening forms and who met the criteria were invited to participate. Participants were from one of the five groups of interest, with both parents from the same group. For the three immigrant groups, all parents were foreign-born, and adolescents had at least four years of schooling in the United States and rated themselves as able to read English quite well or very well. The latter criteria were based on our goal of focusing on the experience of adolescents with substantial exposure to U.S. culture and schools, rather than on the more immediate problems of recent immigration. All parents of adolescents from the two non-immigrant groups (African American and European American) were born in the United States. Students took home parent consent forms and parent questionnaires in English and in their ethnic language. A few days later, during a free period or lunch, the adolescent questionnaire was completed by all those who returned the parent consent form and parent questionnaire. About 75% of those given the forms completed the questionnaire. This proportion did not differ significantly across ethnic groups. Adolescents were paid \$5.00 for their participation.

Adolescent Measures

The measures used in this study are part of a larger study (Berry et al., 1995).¹ Adolescents completed the questionnaire in English.

Family obligations. The initial measure consisted of 14 items assessing family relationships. The items

Table 2 Measure of Children's Obligations to Parents (Family Obligations)

Respondents indicated agreement (from Strongly disagree to Strongly agree) to the following statements:

1. Children should obey their parents.
2. Children should not talk back to their parents.
3. It is a child's responsibility to look after the parents when they need help.
4. Girls should share in the work at home without payment.
5. Parents always know what is best.
6. Boys should share in the work at home without payment.
7. Girls should live at home until they get married.
8. Boys should live at home until they get married.

were based on scales that have been used in prior research with collectivist cultures (Georgas, 1989; Georgas, Berry, Shaw, Christakopoulou, & Mylonas, 1996; Nguyen & Williams, 1989). The items were modified with input based on the experience of a team of cross-cultural researchers from diverse cultures (Berry et al., 1995). A pilot study was conducted to determine the structure and reliability of the measure. The participants were 105 adolescents (M age = 16.1 years) and their foreign-born parents from immigrant families in the United States (50 Armenian and 55 Vietnamese). Adolescents and their parents completed the measure. Based on an exploratory factor analysis, eight items were selected that had a coherent factor structure and acceptable internal consistency for both adolescents and parents (Cronbach's α = .77 for adolescents, .70 for parents). The measure was termed "family obligations" (see Table 2).

The eight-item scale was used in the main study. The internal consistency, assessed by Cronbach's α , was .75 for the adolescents.

Demographic variables. The adolescents reported their gender, age, and place of birth (whether United States or foreign), and age of arrival in the United States if foreign-born. English and ethnic language proficiency were assessed with four items each (ability to understand, speak, read, and write), using a rating scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very well). The ethnic composition of their neighborhood and their in-group social interaction were also reported on 5-point scales.

Parent Measures

The immigrant parents were given questionnaires in both English and the language of their country of origin (Armenian, Vietnamese, or Spanish) and had the option of answering in either language. Ethnic language versions were translated into English, checked against the original, and revised as necessary. Because of ethnic differences in both family

¹ The larger study is part of the ICSEY project (International Comparative Studies of Ethnocultural Youth) being carried out in a number of immigrant-receiving countries. Current members of the project are J. Berry and K. Kwak (Canada), G. Horenzyk (Israel), K. Liebkind (Finland), F. Neto (Portugal), J. Phinney (United States), C. Sabatier (France), David L. Sam (Norway), D. Sang (Australia), P. Schmitz (Germany), F. van de Vijver (Netherlands), P. Vedder (Netherlands), E. Virta (Sweden), and C. Westin (Sweden).

structure and parental roles across ethnic groups, parents were given the option of having either parent (or both together) complete the questionnaire. Overall, questionnaires were completed by the mother (46%), by the father (14%), by both together (27%), or by another relative (e.g., grandparent, guardian; 3%); data were missing in 10% of the cases. As expected, the respondents differed significantly by ethnic group, $\chi^2(12, N = 671) = 62.23, p < .001$. The number of mothers completing the survey was higher than average in the African American and European American families; the number of fathers was higher in Vietnamese families, and joint completion was higher in the Armenian families. Separate analyses of variance carried out for each group showed no significant differences in parental endorsement of family obligations based on who completed the questionnaire (mother, father, or both).

Family obligations. Parents completed the same eight items as the adolescents (see Table 2). The internal consistency, assessed by Cronbach's α , was .74.

Parent demographic variables. Ethnicity, age, country of birth, education, occupation, and marital status were reported for both mother and father. Immigrant parents reported their length of residence in the United States, their reason for immigrating, and their English and ethnic language proficiency.

RESULTS

Differences in Value Discrepancies in Immigrant Families by Cohort and Ethnicity

Our first question concerned differences in value discrepancies in immigrant families by cohort and

ethnicity. Two cohorts were defined. Cohort 1 consisted of those with a U.S.-born adolescent and parents with longer residence in the United States ($n = 208$); cohort 2 included those with a foreign-born adolescent and parents with shorter residence in the United States ($n = 263$). The cohorts differed in a number of ways, as would be expected from their immigration history (see Table 3).

Preliminary analyses in the immigrant families revealed no gender differences in values or value discrepancies and no interaction of gender and ethnicity. Therefore, gender was not included in further analyses.

Our expectation of cohort differences in value discrepancies was based on the assumption that endorsement of family obligations would differ between cohorts for the adolescents but not for the parents. A 2×3 (Cohort \times Ethnicity) analysis of variance of family obligations, with SES as a covariate, showed no cohort effect for parents, as expected. There were significant differences by ethnicity, with Armenian and Vietnamese parents scoring higher than Mexican parents. There was no effect of SES (see Table 4).

A similar analysis of variance for adolescents' scores on family obligations showed, as expected, that adolescents in cohort 2 (foreign-born) endorsed family obligations more strongly than did adolescents in cohort 1 (U.S.-born), $F(1, 469) = 10.19, p < .01$. There was a significant difference by ethnicity, $F(2, 469) = 4.21, p < .02$; Armenian adolescents had higher scores than did Vietnamese and Mexicans. There was a significant interaction of ethnicity and birthplace, $F(2, 469) = 3.61, p < .05$, such that the Armenian and Vietnamese adolescents in cohort 2 endorsed family obligations more strongly than did those in cohort 1, but this find-

Table 3 Characteristics of Two Cohorts of Immigrant Families and Cohort Differences

	Armenian		Vietnamese		Mexican American	
	Cohort 2 ($n = 148$)	Cohort 1 ($n = 49$)	Cohort 2 ($n = 59$)	Cohort 1 ($n = 44$)	Cohort 2 ($n = 56$)	Cohort 1 ($n = 115$)
Adolescents						
Mean years in United States	7.42	—	10.26	—	8.64	—
Ethnic language proficiency	4.12	3.60***	3.10	2.60*	4.46	4.06**
English language proficiency	4.88	4.91	4.53	4.88***	4.49	4.77***
In-group social interaction	4.25	3.50***	3.31	3.04	4.06	4.05
Parents						
Father's age at immigration	36.11	32.95*	33.90	29.92*	29.41	21.26***
Father's years in the United States	10.13	12.79*	12.20	14.05	12.71	22.86***
Ethnic language proficiency	4.88	4.93	4.76	4.80	4.78	4.79
English language proficiency	3.54	3.70	3.58	3.59	2.15	2.98***

Note: Cohort 1 = Families with a U.S.-born adolescent; cohort 2 = Families with a foreign-born adolescent. Significant differences between cohorts (within each ethnic group): * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Table 4 Means and Standard Deviations for Family Obligations and Discrepancies in Immigrant Families, with Effects for Birth and Ethnicity

	Armenian		Vietnamese		Mexican American		<i>F</i> values	
	Cohort 2 (<i>n</i> = 148)	Cohort 1 (<i>n</i> = 49)	Cohort 2 (<i>n</i> = 59)	Cohort 1 (<i>n</i> = 46)	Cohort 2 (<i>n</i> = 56)	Cohort 1 (<i>n</i> = 116)	Cohort	Ethnicity
Parents	4.39 (.51)	4.26 (.63)	4.36 (.45)	4.21 (.59)	4.03 (.54)	4.03 (.64)	1.31	11.18***
Adolescents	4.09 (.67)	3.80 (.72)	3.86 (.66)	3.45 (.70)	3.84 (.78)	3.87 (.70)	10.19**	4.21*
Discrepancy	.29 (.72)	.44 (.66)	.49 (.64)	.73 (.95)	.17 (.90)	.17 (.81)	4.78*	6.73***

Note: Cohort 1 = U.S.-born adolescent, longer residence in the United States; cohort 2 = foreign-born adolescent, shorter residence in the United States. Discrepancy score equals parent score minus adolescent score. Because of missing values in some calculations, discrepancy values are not always the exact difference between the reported means. Standard deviations are in parentheses.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

ing did not hold for Mexican adolescents. There was no SES effect (see Table 4).

We expected that the discrepancy between adolescents and parents would be greater in cohort 1 than in cohort 2. A 2×3 (Cohort \times Ethnicity) analysis of variance of the discrepancy scores, with SES as a covariate, showed a significant effect of cohort, $F(1, 469) = 4.78$, $p < .05$. As expected, cohort 1 families (with a U.S.-born adolescent) had higher discrepancy scores than cohort 2 families (with a foreign-born adolescent).

The analysis also addressed our second question, concerning the generality of the cohort differences across ethnic groups. There were significant ethnic differences, $F(2, 469) = 6.73$, $p < .001$, and a significant interaction, $F(2, 469) = 3.44$, $p < .05$. The means in Table 4 show that for the Armenian and Vietnamese families, cohort 1 had higher discrepancy scores than did cohort 2; in the Mexican families, there was no cohort difference. SES was not significant.

Differences in Value Discrepancies between Immigrant and Non-immigrant Families

Before examining differences in value discrepancies, we analyzed parent and adolescent value scores across the 5 groups. A 5×2 (Ethnicity \times Sex) analysis of variance of parents' scores on family obligations, with SES as a covariate, showed the expected ethnic group differences, $F(10, 697) = 59.32$, $p < .001$. Post-hoc analyses showed that Armenian and Vietnamese parents scored highest, followed (with significant differences in each case) by Mexican, African American, and European American parents. There were no SES or gender effects. The means are shown in Table 5.

A similar analysis of the adolescents' scores on family obligations showed a significant effect for ethnicity, $F(10, 696) = 31.99$, $p < .001$; there were no SES or gender effects. Post-hoc comparisons showed that Armenian adolescents scored highest, followed by

Table 5 Means and Standard Deviations for Family Obligations and Discrepancies for All Groups, with Effects for Ethnicity

	Armenian (<i>n</i> = 197)	Vietnamese (<i>n</i> = 105)	Mexican American (<i>n</i> = 172)	African American (<i>n</i> = 92)	European American (<i>n</i> = 137)	<i>F</i>	Ethnic Effects
Parents	4.36 (.54)	4.29 (.53)	4.03 (.61)	3.63 (.61)	3.39 (.65)	54.99***	A, V > M > AA > E
Adolescents	4.02 (.69)	3.67 (.70)	3.86 (.72)	3.33 (.66)	3.11 (.69)	34.29***	A > M, V > AA, E
Discrepancy	.33 (.70)	.60 (.81)	.17 (.84)	.38 (.73)	.24 (.77)	3.48***	V > A, M, E

Note: Significant differences between means are shown by ">". A = Armenian; B = African American; M = Mexican American; V = Vietnamese; E = European American. Discrepancy score equals parent score minus adolescent score. Because of missing values in some calculations, discrepancy values are not always the exact difference between the reported means. Standard deviations are in parentheses.

*** $p < .001$.

Mexican and Vietnamese, and then by African American and European American adolescents. For both parents and adolescents, family obligation scores of African Americans were in between those of the immigrant families and the European American families (see Table 5).

To investigate our final question, the extent to which value discrepancies are associated with the immigration experience, we examined the discrepancy between parents and adolescents across the five ethnic groups. For all ethnic groups, parents endorsed family obligations more strongly than did their adolescent children. This intergenerational difference was significant within each ethnic group: Armenians, $t(192) = 6.23, p < .001$; Vietnamese, $t(91) = 6.80, p < .001$; Mexicans, $t(162) = 2.45, p < .02$; African Americans, $t(90) = 4.61, p < .001$; and European Americans, $t(135) = 3.48, p < .001$.

A 5×2 (Ethnicity \times Gender) analysis of variance of the discrepancy score was carried out with SES as a covariate, followed by post-hoc comparisons. The discrepancy score differed significantly by ethnicity, $F(10, 696) = 3.51, p < .001$. However, the discrepancies were not necessarily greater in the immigrant families. Discrepancy scores for the Vietnamese families were significantly higher than for the Armenian, Mexican, and European American families, but the

latter three groups did not differ among themselves. The African American discrepancy score was between the Vietnamese and the other three groups but did not differ significantly from any other group. SES and gender were not significant in any of the analyses (see Table 5).

To illustrate the differences in absolute value levels and in the discrepancy between parents and adolescents, Figure 1 shows parents' and adolescents' endorsement of family obligations by ethnic group and, for the immigrant families, by cohort. The figure provides graphic evidence that immigrants and non-immigrants differ in the absolute levels of the values. However, the discrepancy between parents and adolescents, although differing by ethnicity, is unrelated to whether the groups are immigrants or non-immigrants.

DISCUSSION

The study of immigration, like the study of culture generally, presents unique challenges to developmental researchers, as they attempt to understand developmental processes associated with distinct cultural groups and processes that are common across groups. The present study demonstrates the importance of considering processes associated with immigration at different levels of analysis. Immigrant families need

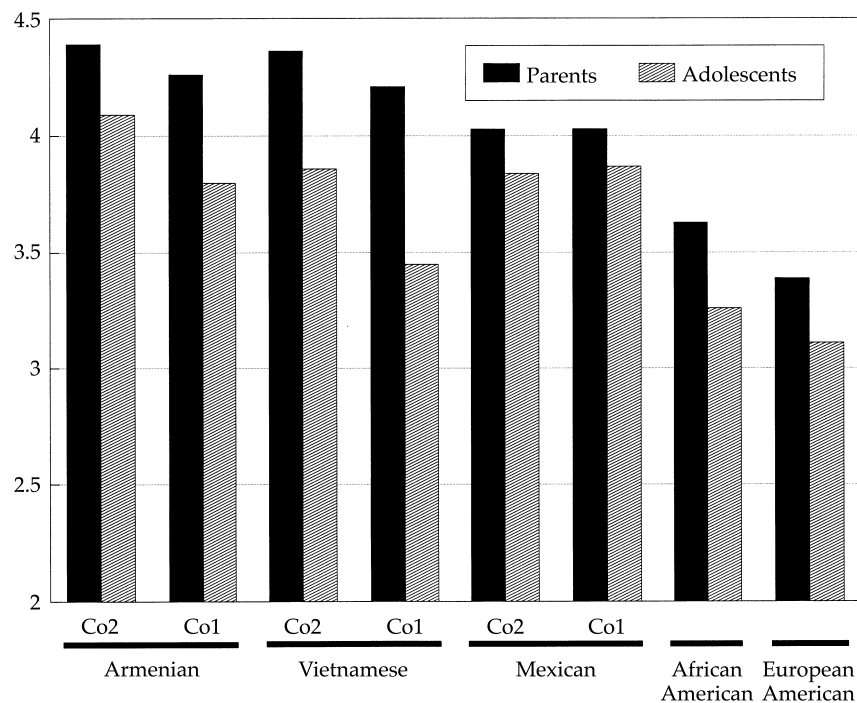


Figure 1 Endorsement of family obligations by parents and adolescents, by ethnicity and cohort (Co 1: Cohort 1, longer residence in the United States, U.S.-born adolescent; Co 2: Cohort 2, shorter residence in the United States, foreign-born adolescent).

to be understood in terms of their unique history and culture, the immigration experience, and adolescent development generally.

The focus of the study was on value discrepancies between adolescents and children over issues of family obligations. Acculturation theory (Berry & Sam, 1997) and prior research (Nguyen & Williams, 1989) led to the prediction of gradual change of immigrant values toward the values of the dominant group. However, because of dissonant acculturation (Portes, 1997), that is, more rapid change among adolescents than among their parents, value discrepancies in immigrant families are expected to increase over time. Our results with the Armenian and Vietnamese families showed this effect; the intergenerational discrepancy was greater in cohort 1 families, who had longer residence and a U.S.-born adolescent, than in cohort 2 families, with shorter residence and a foreign-born adolescent. This increase in value discrepancies is a potential source of difficulty in the acculturation process; an awareness of the likelihood of such differences can provide the basis for interventions to reduce stress and conflict in immigrant families (Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993).

The observed patterns do not necessarily apply to all the groups; in addition to the broad patterns they have in common, there are unique aspects that differentiate immigrant groups. The Vietnamese were similar to the other immigrant groups in the absolute level of endorsement of values. They were similar to the Armenians in showing a significant difference in value discrepancy between cohorts. However, they showed the largest intergenerational discrepancy compared to the other immigrant groups. It is important, therefore, to consider their particular situation. The Vietnamese families sampled in this study live in communities in which Vietnamese are a relatively smaller proportion of the population. Although there are Vietnamese institutions and businesses, such enterprises lack the density and coherence found in Armenian and Mexican communities. These factors may explain the lower levels of ethnic language proficiency and in-group social interaction among the Vietnamese, compared to other groups (Table 3). It is likely that less in-group and more out-group experience among these youth leads to greater questioning of their cultural values.

The Mexican families also show a unique pattern. In contrast to the Vietnamese and Armenians, the Mexican families did not show the expected cohort differences in intergenerational discrepancies in family obligations. The two cohorts of Mexican families were very similar in their values, even though there were greater demographic differences between the

two cohorts of Mexican parents than between the two cohorts of the other immigrant families (for example, a greater difference in father's age of immigration and years in the United States). The explanation may lie in the particular experience of Mexican immigrants in the United States (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995). Mexican Americans have a lengthy history in the region, extending back to periods of Spanish and Mexican control. Currently, people of Mexican descent represent close to half the population in many areas of Southern California, in contrast to the small proportion of Vietnamese and Armenians (under 2% of the population in the area; Portes & Rumbaut, 1990; Schoeni et al., 1996). Furthermore, the proximity of Mexico makes for a bidirectional influence between Mexico and the United States, with Mexicans likely to be exposed to American values before coming to the United States. Under these circumstances, differences between the Mexican and U.S. cultures are likely to be less apparent, and the generational discrepancy between cohorts may thus be reduced.

Furthermore, contrary to previous research and theory suggesting that such intergenerational discrepancies are greater in immigrant families than among non-immigrants (Rosenthal et al., 1996; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993), we found that European American and African American families did not differ from Armenian or Mexican families. These results suggest that discrepancies in values between parents and adolescents are not necessarily related to the immigrant experience. In all ethnic groups, parents expressed more support for family obligations than did their adolescent children. This finding may reflect a near universal situation in modern societies, in which the parental generation seeks to maintain the existing norms and expectations, whereas adolescents question the obligations expected of them (Steinberg, 1990; Yau & Smetana, 1996). As a result of this process, adolescents, regardless of their cultural background, value family obligations less than do their parents.

Nevertheless, the discrepancy may have different implications for immigrant and non-immigrant families. In U.S. society generally, differences between parents and adolescents may be seen as part of a normal developmental process. Within immigrant groups, however, with a norm of greater respect for elders and obedience to authority, intergenerational differences may be less accepted. When it occurs, intergenerational conflict may be more disruptive (Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993; Williams & Westermeyer, 1993). Value discrepancies have been shown to be related to lower life satisfaction among adolescents in immigrant families (Phinney & Ong, 2000). Consequently, people who work with immigrant families should be sensi-

tive to the possibility of intergenerational discrepancies but also attentive to the unique factors that shape the experience of each group.

There are a number of limitations that should be kept in mind in evaluating the results of this research. First, Southern California has the highest rate of immigration in the country and therefore cannot be taken as representative of the United States. (Schoeni et al., 1996; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1992). However, issues similar to those faced in southern California are likely to be faced increasingly in other regions of the country as they become increasingly diverse. Second, social class indicators differed across the groups. Yet socioeconomic status showed virtually no effect on the values studied. Kagitcibasi (1996) suggests that as collectivist cultures experience increasing prosperity, there may be a decline in material interdependence, while emotional interdependence remains strong. Our results indicate that the importance attached to family obligations is rooted in cultural values that transcend socioeconomic status.

Finally, the sample involved adolescents and parents who were willing to be involved in research. Participation required active consent and completion of questionnaires by both adolescents and parents. Across all five groups, about a quarter of the families who met the criteria did not complete the questionnaire. Schwarz, Groves, and Schumann (1998) point out that nonresponse does not indicate a bias unless there are systematic differences between respondents and nonrespondents. We have no data on possible differences, but subsequent interviews and focus group discussions with other families from the same immigrant backgrounds suggest that nonparticipation might result from privacy concerns and distrust of institutions supporting research. Such attitudes are likely to be linked to less contact with the larger society and lower levels of acculturation. Thus, participants may have been more acculturated than nonparticipants. If so, cohort differences and differences between non-immigrants and immigrants would have been even greater with a less acculturated sample, but the direction of effect would not be altered. In addition, more girls than boys participated, perhaps because girls are generally more adept at verbal tasks. There were, however, no gender differences in any of the analyses, and there is no reason to assume that gender introduced a systematic bias.

In summary, the results suggest that to understand the role immigration plays in adolescent development one must consider the different levels at which generalizations can be made. Immigrant families share with all families the need to deal with the adolescent transition to adulthood. Immigration may compli-

cate this process, when adolescents are exposed to values that differ substantially from those of their parents. However, the impact of this process on the family will depend in important ways on the particular ethnic group. With the ongoing changes in the demographic structure of American society, there is a continuing need for studies that will examine psychological processes that influence developmental outcomes among immigrant groups. Such studies will be most effective if they consider processes unique to each group, processes associated with the immigration process generally, and developmental processes common across families in the United States.

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ADDRESSES AND AFFILIATIONS

Corresponding author: Jean S. Phinney, Department of Psychology, California State University, Los Angeles, 5151 State University Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90032; e-mail: jphinne@calstatela.edu. Anthony Ong is at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles; Tanya Madden is at California State University, Los Angeles.

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