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Behavioral Autonomy Age Expectations among Mexican-Origin Mother-Daughter Dyads: An Examination of Within-Group Variability

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Abstract

This study examined differences in behavioral autonomy age expectations between Mexican-origin mothers and their adolescent daughters (N = 319 dyads); variability in behavioral autonomy age expectations as a function of nativity and maternal educational attainment also was examined. Findings indicated significant differences between mothers and daughters such that mothers reported later expectations for the timing of behavioral autonomy than did daughters. Follow-up analyses indicated that findings appeared to be driven by maternal nativity, with dyads comprised of Mexico-born mothers reporting the latest age expectations for behavioral autonomy when compared with dyads comprised of U.S.-born mothers. Findings underscore the need to examine normative development among Latino adolescents and their families with a specific focus on how sociocultural characteristics can contribute to within-family differences.

Keywords

Autonomy development; Latino Adolescents and Families; Sociocultural Factors

Cognitive and social changes during adolescence predispose adolescents to seek autonomy in different areas of their lives. This search for autonomy can be facilitated and/or inhibited by the family, specifically by parents (Allen, Hauser, Bell, & O'Connor, 1994; Peterson & Leigh, 1990; Zimmer-Gembeck & Collins, 2003). For instance, when parents and adolescents differ with respect to the timing (i.e., age) when adolescents can make their own decisions, with parents having later age expectations, adolescents' autonomy development is inhibited.

Although autonomy is thought to be a basic human need (Kagitcibasi, 2005), some argue that autonomy is an individualistic-driven value that is not relevant for Latinos given their collectivistic nature (Montemayor, 2000). As a result, there is a limited understanding of autonomy issues among Latino youth (e.g., Fuligni, 1998). Yet, scholars highlight the importance of having a better understanding of normative developmental issues among

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ethnic minority youth (García Coll et al., 1996; Harrison, Wilson, Pine, Chan & Buriel, 1990). A focus on Latino adolescents, in particular, is warranted given projections indicating that 1 in every 5 children in the U.S. will be of Latino/Hispanic origin by the year 2020 (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2002) and findings indicating that Latino youth in the U.S. are at disproportionate risk for negative behavioral and mental health outcomes (e.g., Joiner, Perez, Wagner, Berenson, & Marquina, 2001; Romero, Martinez, & Carvajal, 2007). Understanding normative developmental processes among this rapidly growing and at-risk segment of the youth population is imperative.

Further, it is important to examine developmental issues within the family context as this has been identified as critical for understanding development (Grotevant, 1998). An important relational unit of analysis within the family is the parent-adolescent dyad. The dyadic processes among daughters and mothers may be of particular importance given that mother-adolescent relationships are characterized by greater connectedness and involvement than those of fathers and adolescents (Shearer, Crouter, & McHale, 2005), a description that also permeates the Latino family literature (e.g., Caldera, Fitzpatrick, & Wampler, 2000). To address these gaps in the literature, the overall goal of this study was to examine age expectations regarding behavioral autonomy among Mexican-origin daughter-mother dyads to determine whether the discrepancies that have emerged among White middle class samples would be replicated with the current sample. Further, given the diversity that exists within Mexican-origin families (Umaña-Taylor & Fine, 2004), we sought to examine whether sociocultural characteristics (i.e., nativity, maternal education) introduced variability into mother-adolescent differences in behavioral autonomy age expectations among mother-daughter dyads.

Autonomy development during adolescence: A contextual understanding

The physical, cognitive, and social changes characteristic of adolescence (Zimmer-Gembeck & Collins, 2003) often prompt increased autonomy negotiation between parents and adolescents, as adolescents attempt to gain more freedom from their parents in different areas of their lives (Holmbeck & O'Donnell, 1991). Autonomy has been conceptualized as a multifaceted construct, with considerable recent work focusing on behavioral autonomy or the ability to make independent decisions (Daddis & Smetana, 2005) and self-regulate one's behaviors (Feldman & Wood, 1994).

Current theoretical perspectives emphasize the central role of context in understanding development and behavior (Lerner, 2002; Magnusson & Stattin, 1998). Specifically, Bronfenbrenner's (1989) ecological theory describes the interactive nature of development by stating that development (e.g., physical and psychological) is a joint function of individual characteristics and the immediate (i.e., families) and more distal (e.g., culture) environments in which the developing individual is embedded. One environmental context that has been identified as critical for understanding human development is the familial context (Grotevant, 1998; Rumbaut, 1994).

Within the family context, an important relational unit of analysis is the parent-adolescent dyad. Relationships with parents are a significant and critical force for adolescents' development (Steinberg, 2001). With respect to autonomy development, scholars have indicated that parents and adolescents go through a gradual transactional process in which autonomy is negotiated (Daddis & Smetana, 2005). Specifically, previous research with non-Latino samples (e.g., White, African American and Asian American) has found that parents' and adolescents' expectations regarding the timing (i.e., age) of behavioral autonomy differ significantly from one another with adolescents reporting significantly earlier age expectations than their parents (Daddis & Smetana, 2005; Feldman & Quatman,

1988; Feldman & Wood, 1994). Overtime, as adolescents grow older and push for more autonomy, parents realign their views and become more willing to relinquish their control by allowing adolescents increased autonomy (Smetana, Crean, & Campione-Barr, 2005). Nevertheless, the existing discrepancies between parent-adolescent dyads regarding autonomy issues can affect family life and adolescent adjustment in different ways (Holmbeck & O' Donnell, 1991). First, discrepancies can be a source of tension within the parent-adolescent dyad, creating conflict, and making adolescents potentially more susceptible to deviant peer associations (Holmbeck & O'Donnel, 1991). Further, discrepancies in autonomy granting (not expectations) between parent-adolescent dyads of Mexican descent have been associated with more depressive symptoms for male and female adolescents and lower self-worth among female adolescents (Sher-Censor, Parke, & Coltrane, in press), highlighting the need to further examine the presence of discrepancies in Mexican-origin mother-daughter dyads and determine the sociocultural factors associated with these discrepancies.

To date, few studies (e.g., Sher-Censor, et al., in press) have examined autonomy issues within Latino parent-adolescent dyads. Examining Latino adolescents' normative development within the family context is important given that existing work suggests that families, and especially parents, play a central role in Latino adolescents' lives (e.g., Marsiglia, Miles, Dustman, & Sills, 2002). For instance, the emotional relationship between Latino children and parents is of special significance (Falicov, 1996). Latino parents are very close to their children and expect the strength of this relationship to continue when their children enter adolescence and adulthood (Keefe, 1984). Yet, the differing age expectations that Latino parents and adolescents may have on behavioral autonomy may impact the quality of the relationship in the parent-adolescent dyad.

Due to the tremendous between- (Harrison et al., 1990) and within-group (Cauce & Domenech-Rodriguez, 2002) heterogeneity that exists among various ethnic minority groups, developmental factors must be examined using ethnic-homogeneous designs that allow an examination of developmental processes within specific ethnic populations (e.g., Mexican-origin; García Coll et al., 1996; McLoyd, 1998). For instance, Latino national groups differ markedly from each other on a number of dimensions such as immigration history, household composition, and high school graduation rates (Cauce & Domenech-Rodriguez, 2002; Umaña-Taylor & Fine, 2001). Therefore, we focused on Mexican origin families and examined whether differing views between mothers and adolescents on behavioral autonomy age expectations varied as a function of sociocultural variables (i.e., nativity, parental educational level) that have been found to introduce within-group variability among Latino families.

Sociocultural Characteristics Associated with Family Processes and Development

The social and cultural diversity of families residing in the U.S. has given rise to examining whether sociocultural factors introduce variability into developmental outcomes. Findings indicate that families' social (e.g., economic circumstances and family structure) and cultural characteristics (e.g., nativity) play a role in family processes and child development (Harwood, Leyendecker, Carlson, Asencio, & Miller, 2002; Peterson & Rollins, 1987; Roosa, Morgan-Lopez, Cree, & Specter, 2002; White & Rogers, 2001). Among Latino families, two sociocultural characteristics that have been linked to childrearing beliefs, goals, and practices, as well as developmental outcomes are nativity status (U.S. born vs. immigrant born; Roosa et al., 2002) and parents' level of education (Okagaki & Sternberg, 1993). Thus, in examining whether discrepancies in behavioral autonomy age expectations exist between Latino parents and adolescents, it is important to explore possible variation by sociocultural variables (e.g., nativity and parental education).

Nativity—Although not specific to behavioral autonomy age expectations, recent studies have explored differences in parent-adolescent expectations regarding family obligations, parental authority, and rights among parents, children, and adolescents (Dixon, Graber, & Brooks-Gunn, 2008; Phinney, Ong, & Madden, 2000; Phinney & Vedder, 2006; Sam & Virta, 2003). Among these studies, there has been some support for the notion that nativity is significantly associated with parent-adolescent differences in expectations. For instance, Phinney et al. found that families with a U.S. born adolescent reported greater parent-adolescent differences in family obligations than families with a foreign-born adolescent. Furthermore, a study examining potential differences among immigrant and U.S. born adolescents, (parents were not included in this study), found that U.S. born adolescents had significantly earlier behavioral autonomy age expectations than their foreign-born counterparts, pointing to differences by nativity (Fuligni, 1998). Thus, consistent with existing work that found parent-adolescent differences in family values (e.g., family obligations) by nativity status (i.e., Phinney et al.), we expected that similar variability may be found when examining parent-adolescent differences in behavioral autonomy age expectations among U.S. born and immigrant dyads. Specifically, we hypothesized that parent-adolescent differences in behavioral autonomy age expectations would be significantly larger among adolescents and parents who differ in country of birth than among those who report being born in the same country.

Parental education—Contrary to the work examining the role of nativity status on parents' and adolescents' expectations regarding family obligations, rights, and authority, no attention has been given to the variability that may exist with respect to socioeconomic factors (e.g., parental education). Rather, families' socioeconomic status has been controlled for when exploring the expectations of ethnically diverse parents and youth (e.g., Dixon et al., 2008; Phinney et al., 2000). Nevertheless, socioeconomic status (e.g., educational level) has been linked to parenting beliefs, parenting practices, and developmental outcomes among ethnic minorities (Harwood et al., 2002; Roosa et al., 2002). For instance, Hardwood, Schoelmerich, Ventura-Cook, and Schulze (1996) found that middle-class Puerto Rican mothers (who likely were more educated than their lower-class counterparts) were more likely to mention the desire for child behaviors of self-confidence and independence than lower-class Puerto Rican mothers. In addition, Buriel (1993) found that higher levels of maternal schooling were associated with reports of more concern for their children (i.e., conceptualized as support, equality, and expectations). As a result, we tested whether parent-adolescent differences in behavioral autonomy age expectations varied as a function of mothers' educational level. Specifically, we hypothesized that parent-adolescent differences in behavioral autonomy age expectations would be more pronounced for dyads whose mothers had lower levels of educational attainment than for dyads whose mothers had higher levels of educational attainment.

In sum, we examined whether parent-adolescent differences with respect to behavioral autonomy age expectations that have been previously found among White families would emerge with a sample of Mexican-origin adolescent-mother dyads residing in the U.S. Furthermore, we examined whether mother-adolescent differences in behavioral autonomy age expectations varied as a function of nativity and maternal educational attainment, with the expectation that mother-adolescent differences in behavioral autonomy age expectations would be larger in dyads in which mothers and adolescents were born in different countries and those in which mothers reported lower levels of educational attainment.

Method

Participants

Adolescent girls in 7th or 10th grade and their mother or mother figure were recruited from a large Southwestern, metropolitan area in the U.S. The Latino student body at the participating schools ranged from 67% to 88%. A total of 338 girls (170 7th graders; 168 10th graders) and 319 mothers completed the study. Analyses for the current study were based on 319 dyads from which data from both members of the dyad were available. Of these 319 dyads, 97.8% were biological mother-daughter dyads; mother figures included grandmothers and sisters, for example. For ease of discussion, mothers and mother figures will be referred to as "mothers" from this point forward.

For the current study, the 7th grade sample was comprised of 159 adolescents (M = 12.25, SD = .46), with the majority reporting being born in the U.S. (n = 108, 67.9%). The 10th grade sample consisted of 160 adolescents (M = 15.21, SD = .46). More than half of the 10th grade participants reported being born in the U.S. (n = 100, 62.5%). Slightly over 60% of all adolescents lived in households with both their biological mother and father, but other family constellations were reported (e.g., 23% of 7th graders and 18% of 10th graders lived only with their biological mother). This figure is consistent with the percentage of Latino children in the U.S. who live with both biological parents (i.e., 61%; Kreider, 2008).

Mothers ranged in age from 20 to 56 years (M = 36.89, SD = 5.99) and from 30 to 57 years (M = 39.65, SD = 5.20) for the 7th and 10th grade sample, respectively. Most mothers were born in Mexico (85.6%). Mothers born in Mexico reported living in the U.S. from less than 1 year to 44 years (M = 18.14, SD = 10.98). Mothers' educational attainment ranged from no formal schooling to obtaining a bachelor's degree. The majority of mothers (i.e., 66.9%) had some formal schooling but had not completed high school; 18.5% had a high school degree or equivalent; 11.7% had some college; and 2.2% had a Bachelor's degree.

A majority of adolescents completed the survey in English (n = 255, 80%), whereas a majority of mothers completed the phone interview in Spanish (n = 263, 82%).

Design and Procedures

School district and principal approval was obtained for all participating schools. To be eligible to participate, adolescents had to be enrolled in either 7th or 10th grade, both of the adolescents' parents had to be of Mexican descent, and their mothers had to agree to participate. All documents not originally available in Spanish were translated by the first author and back-translated by a researcher of Mexican-origin to ensure that the translation was consistent with the Spanish dialect of Mexican-origin families (Umaña-Taylor & Bámaca, 2004). Please see Author Citation for a detailed description of the design and procedure.

Measures

Adolescents and their mothers completed a number of measures and questions on background characteristics (e.g., age, country of birth for adolescents, mothers, and fathers). In addition, mothers were asked to report their age, the country of birth for themselves and their parents, their length of stay in the U.S. (if born elsewhere) and their highest level of education.

Nativity—Dyad nativity was assessed utilizing information provided by mothers on their country of birth and the country of birth of the adolescent. Dyads were assigned either a 0

(both adolescent and mother born outside of the U.S., 35.1%), a 1 (adolescent born in the U.S. and mother born outside the U.S., 50.8%), or a 2 (both born in the U.S.; 14.1%).

Length of time in the U.S.—We calculated length of time in the U.S. for immigrant and U.S. born mothers. For mothers who were born outside of the U.S., mothers' reports of the years they had been living in the U.S. were used. For mothers who were born in the U.S., we used mothers' age, except for one mother who reported that she was born in the U.S., but lived in Mexico from birth until the age of 28. For this participant, we subtracted the years she lived in Mexico (i.e., 28) from her age to determine length of time in the U.S.

Parents' educational attainment—Mothers reported their highest level of education. The following categories were created: 1 = 6^{th} grade or less, 2 = less than H.S. degree, 3 = H.S. equivalent, and 4 = some college to Bachelor degree.

Behavioral autonomy age expectations—Adolescents and their mothers completed a 20-item adapted version of the Teen Timetable Questionnaire (Feldman & Quatman, 1988), which assessed age expectations for adolescents' behavioral autonomy across a variety of everyday management domains. Adolescents were asked to decide the age at which they thought they should engage in different behaviors, for example “at what age do you think you should…go out on dates.” Mothers completed the same measure with slightly different instructions “At what age do you think your daughter should…go out on dates.” Participants responded to questions using a 5-point scale: (1) *before age 12*, (2) *between 12 and 14*, (3) *between 15 and 17*, (4) *18 years or older*, and (5) *never*, with greater scores indicating later behavioral autonomy age expectations. An adapted version of the original Timetable Questionnaire obtained an alpha coefficient of .81 with adolescents and .80 with mothers in a sample of middle-class African American families (Smetana & Daddis, 2005). The measure obtained alpha coefficients of .90 and .82 with the current sample of adolescents and mothers, respectively.

Results

Analytic Strategy

To test within-dyad effects of autonomy behavioral age expectations and between-dyad effects of nativity and mothers' educational attainment, we performed a 3 (nativity constellation of dyad: both Mexico born, daughter Mexico born and mother U.S. born, both U.S. born) × 4 (mothers' education: 6^{th} grade or less, less than high school, high school, some college or Bachelor's degree) × 2 (reporter: mother, daughter) mixed model ANOVA. The dependent variables were the indices of mothers' and daughters' behavioral autonomy age expectations. We conducted pairwise comparisons to follow up significant main effects and interactions between reporter and nativity, and between reporter and mothers' education.

Analyses of Variance

As hypothesized, we found a significant main effect for reporter (see Table 1), with mothers reporting significantly later behavioral autonomy age expectations than their daughters. We also found a significant main effect for nativity and a significant interaction between reporter and nativity in predicting the level of behavioral autonomy age expectations for mothers and daughters. Follow-up analyses for the main effect of nativity using simple planned orthogonal contrasts revealed that dyads with both mothers and daughters born in the U.S. reported significantly earlier ages for behavioral autonomy expectations than other dyads (mothers and daughters who were Mexico-born, daughters who were born in the U.S. and mothers who were born in Mexico; *ps* < .05). Follow-up analyses using pairwise comparisons to interpret the interaction indicated that the main effect for reporter (mother-

daughter differences in behavioral autonomy age expectations) was significant (*ps* < .001) for all three nativity groups (i.e., mothers and daughters who were Mexico-born, daughters who were born in the U.S. and mothers who were born in Mexico, and both mothers and daughters who were born in the U.S.). Interaction findings indicated that across the three nativity groups, mothers reported significantly later ages for behavioral autonomy expectations than their daughters. Examination of mean differences across dyads, however, suggested that differences in behavioral autonomy age expectations in the dyad where both mothers and daughters were born in the U.S. were smaller than in the other two types of dyads (see Table 1). Thus, we conducted follow-up analyses to examine whether the nativity effect was driven by mothers' or daughters' nativity. We conducted two one-way ANOVAs to test the main effect of individual nativity (i.e., separate for daughters and mothers) on mothers' and daughters' behavioral autonomy age expectations, separately. That is, the dependent variable for these two ANOVAs was no longer both indices of mothers' and daughters' behavioral autonomy age expectations, but rather mothers' behavioral autonomy age expectations in the first ANOVA and daughters' behavioral autonomy age expectations in the second ANOVA. These analyses indicated that the main effect of nativity was significant for mothers' ($F[1, N = 319] = 51.8$, $p < .001$), but not for daughters' expectations ($F[1, N = 319] = .01$). Mothers who were born in the U.S. ($M = 3.73$, $SD = 0.32$) reported earlier behavioral autonomy age expectations than mothers born in Mexico ($M = 4.14$, $SD = 0.27$). Daughters reported similar behavioral autonomy age expectations, regardless of nativity (see Figure 1).

Contrary to expectations, we did not find a significant main effect for mothers' educational attainment or significant interaction between reporter and mothers' educational attainment (see Table 1). Although not originally planned, because mothers who were born in Mexico reported significantly lower levels of educational attainment than mothers born in the U.S. (χ^2 (3, $N = 319$) = 36.2, $p < .001$), we conducted an additional mixed model ANOVA to test the interaction between reporter and parents' educational attainment, without nativity in the model to make sure educational attainment effects were not confounded with nativity effects. This interaction was not significant ($F[3, N = 319] = 2.3$, $p = .08$).

Finally, because length of time in the U.S. is a key demographic factor that contributes to the experience of immigrants (Phinney, Berry, Vedder, & Liebkind, 2006), we examined whether the nativity effect on behavioral autonomy age expectations (which appeared to be driven by mothers' nativity) remained after we controlled for mothers' length of time in the U.S. To test within-dyad effects of behavioral autonomy age expectations and between-dyad effects of nativity and parents' educational attainment controlling for mothers' length of time in the U.S., we performed a 3 (nativity constellation: both Mexico born, daughter Mexico born and mother U.S. born, both U.S. born) × 4 (mothers' education: 6th grade or less, less than high school, high school, some college or Bachelor's degree) × 2 (reporter: mother, daughter) mixed model ANCOVA. The dependent variables were mothers' and daughters' behavioral autonomy age expectations, and mothers' length of time in the U.S. was the covariate. The interaction between reporter and nativity was still significant ($F[2, N = 318] = 3.8$, $p < .05$), indicating that nativity continued to have a significant effect on the mean difference within mothers' and daughters' behavioral autonomy age expectations after accounting for mothers' length of time in the U.S.

Discussion

Findings from the current study contribute to the effort of understanding and documenting normative development among ethnic minority populations (García Coll et al., 1996; McLoyd, 1998) and, specifically, Latinos (Umaña-Taylor, 2009). Our findings suggest that differences between Mexican-origin mothers' and daughters' expectations regarding

behavioral autonomy are similar to differences found in predominately White middle-class samples (e.g., Feldman & Wood, 1994), such that mothers have significantly later expectations for the timing of behavioral autonomy than do their daughters. Importantly, for the current sample of Mexican-origin, a group for whom immigrant status is particularly salient, significant variability existed between families with respect to maternal nativity. Findings are discussed below with special attention to how sociocultural characteristics play a significant role in Latino family members' beliefs and experiences.

Mother-Daughter Differences in Behavioral Autonomy Age Expectations

We found support for the presence of intergenerational differences in behavioral autonomy age expectations between Mexican-origin mothers and daughters, which is consistent with previous work conducted with White, African American, and Asian American parents and adolescents (Daddis & Smetana, 2005; Feldman & Quatnam, 1988; Feldman & Wood, 1994). The existing literature (e.g., Falicov, 1996; Hardwood et al., 2002; Montemayor, 2000) presents some uncertainty with respect to whether or not Latino adolescents strive for autonomy in a similar manner to White middle-class youth due to the interdependent nature of the Latino culture and the emphasis on obedience and parental authority. Yet, our findings provide preliminary evidence to support the notion that Latino adolescents do, indeed, strive for greater autonomy than their parents are likely to feel comfortable providing. Furthermore, our findings corroborate those from qualitative studies that have alluded to the relevance of this process for Latino youth (e.g., Ayala, 2006; Qin-Hilliard, 2003). Although members of Latino cultures may place a greater emphasis on parental authority and minimize independence and autonomy (Falicov, 1996; Hardwood et al.), our findings suggest that, regardless of their nativity status, Mexican-origin adolescent females living in the U.S. have age expectations for behavioral autonomy that are significantly different from the age expectations of their mothers, with daughters seeking behavioral autonomy at a significantly younger age than their mothers would prefer. These findings are important because they provide evidence for the notion that dynamics within Mexican-origin families with respect to a normative developmental process that is typically negotiated in families during adolescence (i.e., gaining behavioral autonomy from parents) appear to mirror the dynamics found in other ethnic populations in the U.S.

It is important to consider that the differences found between Mexican-origin mothers and daughters may be specific to dyads residing in the U.S., where independence and autonomy are highly valued. That is, these discrepancies may not be found in Mexican mother-adolescent dyads residing in Mexico. Studies that implement cross-cultural research designs to examine autonomy age expectations in families are needed before conclusions can be drawn about whether the mother-daughter differences in behavioral autonomy age expectations that emerge in dyads residing in the U.S. are generalizable to families living in other countries.

Nativity as a Significant Moderator

The current study provided a unique opportunity to examine whether participant nativity and, in particular, the dyadic constellation of mother and daughter nativity, would introduce variability into mother-daughter differences in behavioral autonomy age expectations. We expected that mother-daughter differences in behavioral autonomy age expectations would be larger among dyads whose members reported a different country of birth (e.g., mother born in Mexico and daughter born in U.S.) than among dyads who reported being born in the same country; however, our findings indicated that the differences between mothers and daughters was not determined so much by the incongruence in mothers' and daughters' country of birth, but rather by mothers' nativity. Specifically, we found that daughters across the three nativity groups did not differ significantly from each other on behavioral autonomy

age expectations. However, results indicated that Mexico-born mothers (both those with Mexico-born daughters and U.S.-born daughters) reported significantly later behavioral autonomy age expectations than mothers born in the U.S.

The findings regarding adolescent expectations differ from those by Fuligni (1998), who found that ethnic minority foreign-born adolescents had significantly later behavioral autonomy age expectations than their U.S.-born counterparts. However, an important difference between the two studies is that Fuligni's study included both boys and girls whereas the current study only examined autonomy age expectations among girls. Further, Fuligni did not examine whether a generation by gender interaction was present. That is, it is possible that the differences between nativity groups found in Fuligni's study were driven by boys' reports on autonomy age expectations rather than girls' reports. Interestingly, in a study examining intergenerational differences in family obligations across immigrant Armenian, Vietnamese, and Mexican families (Phinney et al., 2000), Armenian and Vietnamese families with a U.S.-born adolescent had significantly higher discrepancy scores than families with a foreign-born adolescent; however, this difference was not found in Mexican families. The current findings mirror Phinney and colleagues' findings with Mexican-origin families, given that we found no nativity group differences in behavioral autonomy age expectations when adolescent nativity was examined.

It is possible that for Mexican-origin families, the proximity between Mexico and the U.S. and the availability of information as a result of technological advances and various mediums of communication (e.g., cable television) may increase the likelihood that youth in Mexico will be exposed to common U.S. values such as autonomy even before their families migrate to the U.S. Exposure to these values and mediums was less readily available for older generations (i.e., mothers). In recent decades, U.S. media exposure in the form of films and television, media to which youth are widely exposed, has increased dramatically in many countries (Morgan, Shanahan, & Signorielli, 2008). In Latin America, there has been an increased North American influence with adolescents copying the clothing and hairstyles that are prominent among U.S. popular singers (Welti, 2002). Although the exposure and preference for U.S. clothing and hairstyle trends may not translate to adherence of views that reflect more individualistic values (e.g., autonomous behaviors), research has found that exposure to U.S. media is associated with more liberal perspectives regarding gender roles and family values among Korean females (Kang & Morgan, 1988). Thus, it is possible that greater exposure to U.S. media in Latin America may contribute to the similar views that Mexico-born girls in the current sample had to their U.S.-born counterparts. Given the limited knowledge on normative development in countries such as Mexico, more cross-cultural research is needed that will help us understand the developmental trends of youth living in Mexico and how they correspond to the trends we witness among immigrant and U.S.-born adolescents of Mexican descent.

One final possibility to consider is that ethnic minority families living in the U.S. may encourage values of independence as a response to their family's financial struggle. For instance, Marsiglia and Holleran (1999) found that Mexican-origin adolescent females indicated that their mothers instilled values of self-sufficiency and independence for their survival. Thus, it is possible that Mexican-origin females, whether immigrant or U.S. born, are interpreting these socialization messages from their mothers as messages encouraging the importance of achieving independence and autonomy. Despite the socialization regarding strategies for survival, *mothers* may still have ambivalence regarding their daughters' autonomy. For instance, qualitative work (Ayala, 2006; Gallegos-Castillo, 2006) reveals that Latina girls are exposed by their mothers to both messages of autonomy and obedience. Mothers teach “their daughters about the possibility of independence from men through education tempered with the reality that men are needed for protection…in return

daughters have to cook and clean for men." (Ayala, 2006, p. 35). Thus, on the one hand, mothers may desire theirs daughters to be more autonomous in order to secure their survival, but on the other hand, when asked about when daughters should engage in autonomous behaviors, they may be more traditional in their views and, as a result, mothers report later ages for autonomy for their daughters.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The current study was unique in its ability to examine behavioral autonomy age expectations from the perspective of both mothers and daughters. Furthermore, the ethnic homogenous design allowed for an in-depth examination of within-group variability among the largest segment of the Latino population in the U.S. (i.e., families of Mexican-origin). Despite these strengths, there are several limitations worth noting. First, adolescents' experiences with respect to autonomy are likely informed by both mothers and fathers. The current study only examined the perspectives of daughters and mothers and, thus, an important reporter was omitted. Few studies examine fathers' perspectives and their unique influences on adolescent development (Marsiglio, Amato, Day, & Lamb, 2001), but fathers' views on developmental issues are likely to differ from mothers' perspectives, especially among Latino families who are considered to hold more traditional values and expectations for their children (Bulcroft, Carmody, & Bulcroft, 1996; Hardwood et al., 2002). As such, it will be important for future studies to examine fathers' expectations regarding their daughters' behavioral autonomy and how they differ from the expectations of daughters and mothers.

A somewhat related limitation pertains to potential variability in parents' (and adolescents') expectations regarding behavioral autonomy as a result of sibling gender constellation and parents' gender-role attitudes. Crouter, McHale, and their colleagues (e.g., Crouter, Manke, & McHale, 1995; McHale, Updegraff, Jackson-Newsom, Tucker, & Crouter, 2000) have examined whether adolescents' experiences within the family (e.g., differential treatment from parents and involvement in household chores) differ as a function of the sex composition of siblings dyads (e.g., girl-girl boy-girl, girl-boy) and parents' gender-role attitudes (i.e., traditional vs. egalitarian parental division of labor). Findings from this work suggest that parents demonstrate differential treatment and adolescents have different experiences with household chores when comparing mixed and same-sex sibling dyads. For instance, McHale et al. (2000) found that regardless of age or birth order, girls with brothers performed relatively more chores around the house, suggesting that girls in same-sex dyads experienced more equal treatment.

Furthermore, parents' traditional values in terms of gender roles appear to contribute further to the different experiences that adolescents have. For instance, Crouter et al. (1995) reported that girls with a brother experience higher levels of involvement in feminine household tasks, but only in traditional families. Thus, it is possible that Latino parents' expectations regarding autonomy behaviors may also differ as a function of their own gender-role attitudes and behaviors. Specifically, Latina girls in same-sex sibling dyads and in more egalitarian families may be given more freedom to engage in autonomous behaviors compared to girls who have an opposite-sex sibling and are from traditional families. Furthermore, given different expectations Latino parents have for boys and girls, with girls socialized toward more traditional gender roles in Latino families than are boys (Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004), it is possible that Latino males and their parents experience fewer discrepancies on autonomy issues because parents allow them more freedom. In fact, qualitative accounts with Latina female adolescents indicate that they perceive their brothers as benefitting from extra freedom such as coming and going as they please (Gallegos-Castillo, 2006). Therefore, a limitation of this study is the limited generalizability of the findings to Latino male adolescents. Future research should examine how these two

contextual aspects of family life (i.e., sibling gender constellation and parents' gender-role attitudes) may be particularly important for Latino families with adolescent children.

It is also important to note the cross-sectional nature of these analyses and its implication for the conclusions to be drawn about how this process of autonomy expectation discrepancies may change overtime. As noted earlier, longitudinal studies have shown that parents are willing to grant more autonomy to adolescents overtime (Smetana et al., 2005). However, it is possible that mothers' willingness to grant autonomy overtime may be different for US born vs. Mexico-born mothers, who may follow a more traditional parenting style. Thus, US born mothers may meet their adolescents' autonomy expectation levels at a faster rate than Mexico-born mothers. It is also possible that nativity of mother only has an impact on the starting point of autonomy expectation discrepancies, but not on the rate of change. That is, U.S.-born mothers and Mexico-born mothers may change in their willingness to grant autonomy to their daughters at a similar rate over time. Given our limited knowledge, more research is needed to determine similarities and differences in immigrant and US-born mothers' willingness to grant autonomy. Additionally, future research should examine normative developmental changes overtime in Latino parents' and adolescents' autonomy expectations and examine how these changes are linked to adolescent well-being overtime. For instance, early adolescents may struggle with the limitations that their parents impose on them, but as they grow older, the use of tactics such as strategically disclosing information to parents, withholding information, and lying (Bakken & Brown, 2010) can diminish the negative contribution of their parents' autonomy views. These strategies may prevent conflict with parents and allow adolescents autonomy and freedom, and therefore, have a lesser impact on adolescents' psychological well-being.

Finally, the current findings should be generalized with caution to non-Mexican Latino subgroups living in the U.S. As previously discussed, immigrant adolescents from Mexico, due to the proximity of Mexico to the U.S., may be exposed to the views and values of the U.S. and, thus, may not differ significantly from their U.S.-born counterparts with respect to behavioral autonomy age expectations. Immigrant adolescents from other Latin American countries, however, may differ with respect to their exposure to U.S. values and, thus, may differ significantly from their U.S. born counterparts on autonomy age expectations. As such, future studies should attempt to replicate these findings with ethnic homogenous designs involving non-Mexican Latino groups (e.g., Salvadoran) to determine their generalizability to other groups. Despite the noted limitations, the current study makes a significant contribution to the literature with respect to mother-daughter differences among Mexican-origin families in expectations regarding an important developmental process that is commonly negotiated within families. Given the limited knowledge of normative developmental processes among Latino youth and families (Umaña-Taylor, 2009), and the contribution that these discrepant views can have on family life and adolescent adjustment (Holmbeck & O'Donnell, 1991), the current findings provide a critical initial step toward furthering an important and necessary research agenda.

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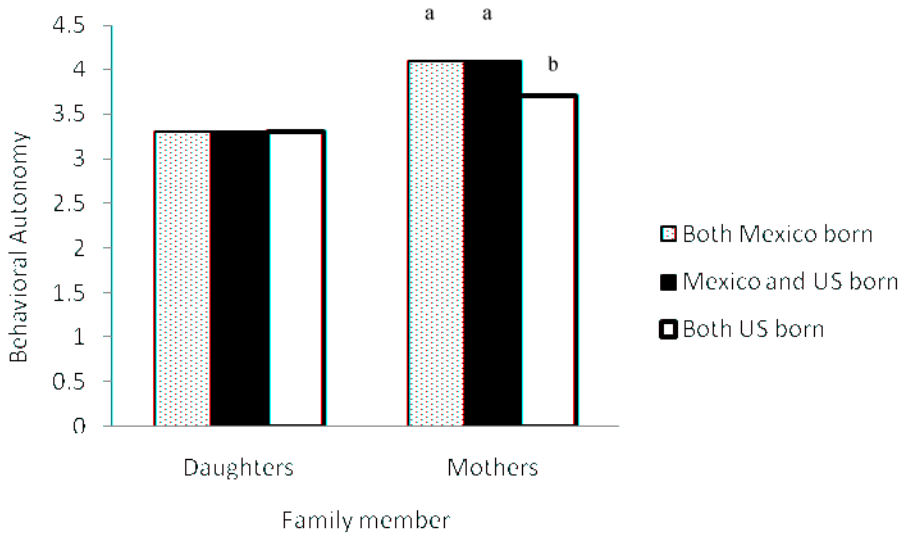

Figure 1.

Mothers' and Daughters' behavioral autonomy age expectations by reporter and nativity group.

Note: Means with different superscripts denote significant differences at $p < .001$. Response options for Behavior autonomy were (1) *before age 12*, (2) *between 12 and 14*, (3) *between 15 and 17*, (4) *18 years or older*, and (5) *never*.

Table 1

Repeated Measures ANOVAs of Behavioral Autonomy Age Expectations by Nativity Group and Mothers' Education (*N* = 319 Dyads), with Reporter (mother, daughter) as the Within Group Factor.

Behavioral Autonomy age expectations	**Dyads** ***M (SD)***	**Mother** ***M (SD)***	**Daughter** ***M (SD)***	***F* (main effects)**	η^2	***F* (interactions with Reporter)**	η^2
Reporter		3.98 (0.34)	3.30 (0.61)	231.0***	0.43		
Nativity constellation				4.1*	0.03	5.4**	0.03
Both Mexico-born	3.72 (0.43)	4.14 (0.27)	3.33 (0.59)				
Daughter Mexico-born and mother U.S.-born	3.66 (0.48)	4.03 (0.34)	3.29 (0.61)				
Both U.S.-born	3.50 (0.50)	3.73 (0.32)	3.27 (0.67)				
Mother's education				1.8	0.02	2.2	0.02
6th grade or less	3.77 (0.45)	4.09 (0.32)	3.46 (0.58)				
Less than High School	3.66 (0.46)	4.04 (0.31)	3.27 (0.61)				
High School	3.61 (0.50)	3.96 (0.32)	3.26 (0.67)				
Some college or Bachelor's degree	3.56 (0.51)	3.89 (0.42)	3.25 (0.59)				

* $p < .05$;

** $p < .01$;

*** $p < .001$

Note: The current analyses were conducted with adolescent grade as a covariate. Because grade did not emerge as a significant covariate, it was excluded to increase power for group comparisons. Response options for behavioral autonomy were (1) *before age 12*, (2) *between 12 and 14*, (3) *between 15 and 17*, (4) *18 years or older*, and (5) *never*.