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Youths' Imitation and De-identification from Parents: A Process Associated with Parent–Youth Cultural Incongruence in Mexican-American Families

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Abstract

Cultural adaptation and parent–youth cultural incongruence have strong implications for individuals' social adaptation and family dynamics. This study highlighted adolescents' active role in parent–youth cultural incongruence through their decision to imitate or de-identify from parents, parent–youth warmth, and demographic similarities. Longitudinal data, spanning 8 years, from 246 Mexican-American families (mothers, fathers, and an early adolescent child), were used to address two study goals. The first goal was to link parent–youth relationship qualities and demographic similarities (i.e., gender, immigration status) at Wave 1 to adolescents' imitation and de-identification from parents at Wave 2. Findings revealed that adolescents who reported more parent–youth warmth reported more imitation and less de-identification. Also, adolescents who belonged to U.S.-raised dyads reported less de-identification. The second goal tested adolescents' reports of imitation and de-identification as predictors of parent–youth cultural incongruence in Mexican and Anglo cultural orientations at Wave 3. Results indicated that more imitation was associated with less mother–youth Anglo incongruence and that more de-identification was associated with more father–youth Anglo and Mexican incongruence. The unique relationship dynamics of mother– youth and father–youth dyads and the implications for intervention programming focused on reducing cultural incongruence and increasing family cohesion are discussed.

Keywords

Acculturation gap; Adolescence; Mexican-American; Parent–adolescent relationships

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Author contributions

NPB conceived the study, participated in its design and coordination and drafted the manuscript; KU and AUT participated in the study design, interpretation of the data, and drafted the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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Introduction

The process of cultural integration and internalization informs important developmental tasks in adolescence and young adulthood, such as negotiating family relationships (Bacallao and Smokowski 2007) and forming one's identity (Phinney 1990). Mexican-American youth are one such group where the integration of American and Mexican culture is a central task that impacts development and psychosocial adjustment (Gonzales et al. 2002). Researchers focused on bicultural integration have noted that *parent– youth cultural incongruence*, the difference in parents' and youth's cultural involvement (i.e., acculturation gap), is salient for immigrant and ethnic minority youth (Szapocznik and Kurtines 1993; Telzer 2010). In particular, more cultural incongruence has been associated with more family conflict (Pasch et al. 2006) and higher levels of adolescents' internalizing and externalizing behaviors (Elder et al. 2005; Schofield et al. 2008). Although research has focused on the role of parents and societal structures (e.g., schools) as primary socializing agents of cultural norms (Harris 2002; Umaña-Taylor et al. 2009), less research has considered *adolescents' active role* in choosing to integrate or reject cultural socialization messages. To address the lacuna in the literature, this study aimed to explore youths' role in parent–youth cultural incongruence.

Parent–Youth Cultural Incongruence

Ethnic minority individuals often face the challenge of maintaining their ethnic culture while also integrating the mainstream culture. This dual process of cultural adaptation is important because it may influence family members' ability to adjust to their social environment, and it has implications for family dynamics (Bacallao and Smokowski 2007; Padilla 2006). For example, it may be necessary for youth to adapt rapidly to the mainstream environment in order to succeed academically and increase their social mobility (Telzer 2010); however, if parents and youth integrate, adapt, or shed the mainstream and ethnic culture at different rates, then they operate under different cultural values and norms (Birman 2006) and this may disrupt family dynamics and be associated with psychological distress (Elder et al. 2005; Pasch et al. 2006).

Parent–youth cultural incongruence reflects the difference in parents' and youth's participation within a culture (Birman 2006). Researchers who study parent–youth cultural incongruence have primarily focused on the incongruence that occurs when youth integrate into the mainstream culture at faster rates than their parents; however, cultural incongruence can occur in relation to the ethnic culture as well, as parents are expected to maintain ethnic cultural ties at higher rates than youth (Szapocznik and Kurtines 1980). The pattern of youth's higher orientation towards the mainstream culture, as compared to parents, is considered a normative process and can be a positive source of youth adjustment, as it may lead to better integration to mainstream social contexts, such as school and work settings. Similarly, parents' higher involvement in the ethnic culture is considered normative and may not disrupt the parent–child relationship when the parent– youth discrepancies are small to moderate. When discrepancies are substantial, however, cultural incongruence can be problematic (Costigan and Dokis 2006). Such research highlights the need to understand factors that predict higher levels of cultural incongruence among family members.

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Cultural incongruence is a process that is relevant to youth from a range of minority and immigrant backgrounds (Costigan and Dokis 2006; Phinney and Vedder 2006; Schofield et al. 2008). In this study, we empirically test Mexican-American adolescents' role in the cultural incongruence process by examining differences in parents' and adolescents' Anglo and Mexican cultural orientations/ behaviors (i.e., preferred social contexts, language and entertainment preferences).

Imitation and De-identification from Parents

One way in which youth can impact their cultural development is through the decision to imitate or de-identify from their parents. The concept of imitation stems from social learning theory (Bandura 1977; Mischel 1966) and refers to the extent to which youth aspire to be like their parents (Grusec and Davidov 2007). De-identification comes from a developmental perspective on parent–youth separation-individuation (Koepke and Denissen 2012) and refers to the extent to which youth seek to differentiate themselves from parents by, for example, distinguishing themselves in behaviors or values. In childhood, parents are considered the primary socializers of their offsprings' cultural development, but the role of parents is believed to become more differentiated during the transition into adolescence and young adulthood (Smetana 1997). Parents' influence and parent–youth interdependence remain important within the family domain, but appear less important within social domains that are perceived to be within adolescents' personal jurisdiction (e.g., musical taste, choice of peers; Arnett 2007; Smetana 1997). Thus, when developing their own identity, adolescents may not be eager to imitate their parents and may even de-identify from parents when developing cultural orientations with respect to adolescents' personal social domains (e.g., liking Mexican music, watching American TV). Although research on parent–adolescent dynamics has explored the role of parent imitation and de-identification on adolescents' social development (Bylund et al. 2010), research on bicultural integration has yet to study the association between adolescents' imitation and de-identification from parents and parent–adolescent cultural incongruence. The current study extended previous research by exploring the association between adolescents' reports of imitating and de-identifying from parents and parent–adolescent cultural incongruence. It was expected that adolescents who reported more imitation or less de-identification of parents would also show less parent–adolescent cultural incongruence in their Anglo and Mexican orientations.

Correlates of Imitation of and De-identification from Parents

In addition to understanding how imitation and de-identification are associated with parent–youth cultural incongruence, it is important to understand what predicts youth's imitation and de-identification from parents. Relational perspectives on socialization (Kuczynski and Hildebrandt 1997) propose that youth who are more invested in the parent–youth relationship are more willing to internalize parents' values; similarly, social learning theory suggests that youth learn by watching an actor's (e.g., parent's) behavior and deciding to imitate the actor based upon youth's sense of connection to the actor (Bandura 1977; Mischel 1966). Both perspectives suggest youth may feel a stronger connection to the parent–youth relationship when there is (a) a positive valence in the parent–youth relationship, and (b) a strong perception of similarity between a parent and youth.

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Parent–Youth Relationship Quality—First, having a positive parent–youth relationship, characterized by a high degree of warmth, helps foster youth's willingness to comply with parents' socialization goals (Laible and Thompson 2007; Bao et al. 1999). Showcasing parent–youth warmth as a potential precursor to cultural incongruence, high degrees of parent–youth warmth were associated with more parental identification and stronger orientations towards youth's ethnic culture (Knafo et al. 2009). Taken together, theory and research led to our expectation that youth who report more parent–youth warmth will report more imitation of, and possibly, less de-identification from parents.

Parent–Youth Demographic Similarities—Second, youth are expected to feel more connected to their parents if they perceive a strong degree of similarity. Two demographic characteristics may be particularly salient to the process of parent–youth imitation/de-identification and cultural incongruence: parent–youth gender composition and immigrant status. Research on youth's gender orientations suggests that youth tend to identify with same-sex models (Blakemore et al. 2008) and the salience of same-sex modeling is heightened during the transition through early to middle adolescence (Hill and Lynch 1983). Related to this work, Knafo et al. (2009) found that parent– youth cultural incongruence occurred less often in same-sex dyads as compared to opposite-sex dyads. Such research suggests that boys will be more likely to imitate fathers and de-identify from mothers, and girls will be more likely to imitate mothers and de-identify from fathers.

Similarities in immigrant status are also important for Mexican-American families, as different immigrant statuses serve as proxies for different socialization experiences (Glass et al. 1986; Harris 2002). The status-inheritance literature (Glass et al. 1986) suggests the socio-cultural environment helps to promote intergenerational similarity when parents and children are raised in similar environments, as is the case when parents and youth are both immigrant- or native-born. In one study on cultural incongruence, parents and youth reported more value similarities if parents and youth were native-born, but less value similarities if parents were immigrants and youth were native-born (Vedder et al. 2009). Research on role-modeling and immigrant status is limited; therefore, this aspect of the present study is exploratory, but previous work on cultural incongruence (Vedder et al. 2009) and cultural adaptation (Bacallao and Smokowski 2007) suggests youth who do not share the same immigrant experience as their parents (e.g., immigrant parents with U.S.-born youth) may be less likely to imitate and more likely to de-identify from parents than youth who share the same immigrant experience (e.g., both were raised in the U.S., both are immigrants). In this study, parent–youth immigrant status will take into account family members' ages of migration and their nativity status to provide a more contextualized understanding of immigrant status.

Current Study

This study extends previous research by exploring the processes through which parent–youth cultural incongruence emerges in a sample of 246 Mexican-American families by addressing two goals. The first goal was to explore the associations among parent–youth warmth and parent–youth demographic similarities and youths' reports of imitation or de-identification from parents. It was expected that youth who reported more parent–youth

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warmth, belonged to a same-sex parent–youth dyad, or shared a similar parent–youth immigrant status would report more imitation and less de-identification from parents. The second goal was to link youths' imitation and de-identification from parents to parent–youth cultural incongruence in Anglo and Mexican cultural orientations. It was expected that youth who reported more imitation or less de-identification would demonstrate less parent–youth incongruence in Anglo and Mexican cultural orientations. Finally, we considered the complimentary role of both mothers and fathers as fathers have been theorized to be more instrumental in promoting individuation and self-reliance (Almeida and Galambos 1993), whereas mothers have been identified as primary carriers and socializers of culture (Padilla 2006).

Method

Participants

The current study included 246 Mexican-origin families with data from mothers, fathers, and an early adolescent child who participated in a longitudinal project on family socialization and adolescent development (Updegraff et al. 2005). At Wave 1 (W1), mothers' average age was 39 years (*SD* = 4.63) and fathers' average age was 41 years (*SD* = 5.77). Most parents were born in Mexico (71 % of mothers and 69 % of fathers) and primarily spoke Spanish (66 % of mothers, 67 % of fathers) and reported an average of 10 years of education (*M* = 10.33; *SD* = 3.73 for mothers, and *M* = 9.87, *SD* = 4.37 for fathers). Parents came from a range of socioeconomic levels, with the percentage of families meeting federal poverty guidelines (18.3 %) being similar to the percentage of two-parent Mexican-American families in poverty in the county where the sample was drawn (i.e., 18.6 %; U.S. Census 2000). Median household income was $40,000 (range from $3,000 to over $250,000). Parents were married an average of 17.57 years (*SD* = 5.42). Younger siblings were 12.51 years of age (*SD* = 0.58). Over 51 % of youth (*n* = 125) were female, were primarily born in the U.S. (62 %) and completed the interview in English (83 %).

Brief phone interviews were conducted with target adolescents 2 years later. This phone interview is referred to as Wave 1A and no data from this time point were included in the present analyses (90 % of target adolescents participated). Home interviews with all family members were conducted again at Wave 2 (W2), which took place 3 years after W1A and 5 years after W1. Over 75 % of the families participated (*n* = 184). Wave 3 (W3) occurred 2 years after W2. Over 70 % of the families participated (*n* = 173). When comparing non-participant families at Wave 3 (*n* = 73) with participant families (*n* = 173), non-participant families reported significantly lower income at Wave 1 (*M* = $41,635; *SD* = $39,095 for non-participant families and *M* = $59,136; *SD* = $46,674 for participant families), lower maternal education (*M* = 9.35; *SD* = 3.53 for non-participant families and *M* = 10.75; *SD* = 3.75 for participant families), and lower paternal education (*M* = 8.49; *SD* = 4.08 for non-participant families and *M* = 10.46; *SD* = 4.37 for participant families). Thus, all analyses account for parent education and family income (through a composite SES score) at W1.

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Procedure

Families participated in structured in-home interviews lasting 2–3 hours. Parents and adolescents gave informed consent/assent and reported on parent–youth relationship qualities, cultural backgrounds and orientations, and adjustment. Interviews were conducted separately with each family member. Bilingual interviewers read questions aloud to maximize uniformity and prevent potential error due to variability in participants' reading levels. Families received $100 and $125 for participating in W1 and W2, respectively. At W3, each family member received a $75 honorarium for participation.

Measures

Measures were forward- and back-translated into Spanish for local Mexican dialect (Foster and Martinez 1995) and reviewed by a third Mexican-American translator. Discrepancies were resolved by the research team. Cronbach's alphas for all measures were acceptable for English- and Spanish-speaking participants; thus for efficiency, alphas are reported for the overall sample. Descriptive information for all study variables are in Table 1.

Socioeconomic Status (SES; W1)—Parents reported on their annual household income, mothers' education level, and fathers' education level. After income was transformed to correct for skewness, the variables were standardized and averaged to create an SES composite score, with higher numbers indicating higher SES.

Parent–Youth Warmth (W1)—Adolescents completed the 8-item Children's Report of Parental Behavior Inventory (Schwarz et al. 1985) to describe their perceptions of warmth with mothers and fathers. Items were rated on a 5-point scale (1 = *almost never* to 5 = *almost always*), such that higher scores represented greater warmth. This scale has shown good reliability and validity with Latinos in English and Spanish (Knight et al. 1994). Cronbach's alphas were 0.84 for mother warmth and 0.89 for father warmth.

Parent–Youth Demographic Similarities (W1)—Two dyad characteristics were used to measure demographic similarity: parent–youth gender composition and immigrant status. For the *parent–youth gender composition*, gender was inherent in the mother (female) and father (male) designation, and adolescents' gender was coded as (0 = female; 1 = male).

For *parent–youth immigrant status*, mothers reported if they and their child were born in the U.S. or Mexico, and fathers reported on their own immigrant status. Further, immigrant parents reported their length of U.S. residence at W1 and immigrant youth reported on their length of U.S. residence at W2. The length of U.S. residence was subtracted from each family member's corresponding age to calculate each family member's age at immigration to the U.S. Based on previous research, age six was considered the critical age of immigration for youth as they would have entered the school system at the same time as their U.S.-born peers (e.g., Glick and White 2003; Stevens 1999), and age 12 was considered the critical age for parents as they would have experienced some schooling within the U.S. system (e.g., Rumbaut 1997; Oropesa and Landale 1997). The parent–youth immigrant status measure was created such that dyads who reported both were born in the U.S. or immigrated at or before their corresponding critical ages (i.e., age 6 for youth and

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age 12 for parents) were given a score of 1 = U.S.-raised; dyads who reported they both immigrated to the U.S. after their critical ages were given a score of 2 = immigrant; and dyads where youth reported being born in the U.S. (or immigrated by the critical period) and parents reported immigrating after their critical period were given a score of 3 = mixed-status. Table 2 provides frequencies and demographic information for all parent–youth immigrant status groups.

Imitation and De-identification from Parents (W2)—An adapted version of Whiteman et al. (2007) measure of sibling imitation and de-identification was used to examine the degree to which youth *imitate* or *de-identify* from their mothers and fathers (1 = *never* to 5 = *very often*). The imitation measure was comprised of six items where youth reported imitating parents' behaviors in multiple domains (romantic relationships, work, and education; e.g., "My mother/father sets an example for how I should behave in romantic relationships"). The de-identification measure was comprised of 11 items where youth reported de-identifying from parents in the same domains (e.g., "I try to have educational experiences that are different from my mother/father"). Each scale showed good reliability for youths' reports of mothers (imitation α = .84, and de-identification α = .85) and fathers (imitation α = .90, and de-identification α = .89). A small negative correlation (r = −.14 for mother–youth, r = −.20 for father–youth) emerged between these two variables, consistent with sibling imitation and de-identification literature (Whiteman et al. 2007), which suggests imitation and de-identification processes are related but distinct processes.

Parent–Youth Cultural Incongruence (W3)—All family members completed the Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican-Americans-II (ARSMA-II; Cuéllar et al. 1995) to measure their *Mexican* (17 items: e.g., "I enjoy listening to music in Spanish") and *Anglo cultural orientations* (13 items: e.g., "I associate with Anglos") with a 5-point scale (1 = *not at all* to 5 = *extremely often or always*). Measurement invariance (Vandenberg and Lance 2000) between youth and parents was estimated to ensure Anglo and Mexican orientation measures behaved comparably across groups. Whereas the measure did not achieve strong or strict invariance, partial factorial invariance was established (Cheung and Rensvold 2002; Vandenberg and Lance 2000), indicating it was appropriate to compare mothers' and fathers' scores of Anglo and Mexican orientation to youths' scores. Cronbach's alphas indicated acceptable reliability for mothers (Anglo α = .93; Mexican α = .89), fathers (Anglo α = .92; Mexican α = .87), and youth (Anglo α = .74; Mexican α = .90).

To create an estimate of cultural incongruence for each construct, a difference score was calculated, such that youths' reports were subtracted from parents' reports, to capture what family processes were associated with cultural distancing among parents and youth (or parent–youth acculturation gaps). A positive value indicated that parents were more oriented towards a culture than youth (see Table 1, Mexican Incongruence) and a negative value indicated youth were more oriented towards a culture than parents (see Table 1, Anglo Incongruence). A difference score at or close to zero indicated that parents and youth were equally oriented towards a culture. To address our study goals, the absolute value of each incongruence score was calculated to measure the level, and not the direction, of cultural incongruence (Hetherington et al. 1994); however, given the negative mean for mother– and

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father– youth Anglo incongruence, a larger absolute value reflects that youth, on average, indicated more Anglo orientation than parents. On the other hand, given the positive mean for Mexican incongruence, a larger absolute value indicates that parents reported more Mexican orientation than youth, on average.

Results

Analytic Approach

To examine predictors of youths' imitation and de-identification from parents and associations to later parent–youth cultural incongruence, a path analysis technique was used in Mplus 6.1 (Muthén and Muthén 2011) with mother– youth and father–youth data included in one model. Missing data were accounted for using the Full Information Maximum Likelihood (FIML) estimator with family SES included as an auxiliary variable to account for differential attrition rates.

Addressing Goal 1, youths' reports of imitation and de-identification from parents at W2 were predicted by adolescents' reports of parent–youth warmth at W1 and by adolescents' gender (0 = female, 1 = male) and parent– youth immigrant status (immigrant, 1 = immigrant and 0 = mixed-status; and U.S.-raised, 1 = U.S.-raised and 0 = mixed-status) as indicators of parent–youth demographic similarities. Addressing Goal 2, parent–youth Anglo and Mexican incongruence at W3 were predicted by youths' reports of imitation and de-identification from parents at W2. Direct paths for W1 variables predicting W3 variables were also included in the model to formally test for indirect (mediated) relations for parent–youth warmth and demographic similarities on cultural incongruence through youth's reports of parent imitation/de-identification. Bias corrected bootstrap confidence intervals were used to assess the significance of the standardized indirect effects (MacKinnon et al. 2002; Taylor et al. 2008). Mediation was considered significant when the 95 % confidence intervals did not include zero.

All predictor variables were allowed to correlate with one another, and error terms for the dependent variables were allowed to correlate. Model fit statistics indicated adequate to good fit (CFI > .95, RMSEA < .06; Wu et al. 2009). Although only one model was estimated, results will be reported for each goal separately for ease of interpretation.

Goal 1: Correlates of Imitation and De-identification of Parents

With respect to predictors of *imitation* of parents at W2 (Mother R^2 = .18; Father R^2 = .13), significant associations emerged for adolescents' reports of parent–youth warmth at W1, parent–youth immigrant status, and adolescents' gender. For mother–youth dyads (Fig. 1), adolescents' reports of parent–youth warmth positively predicted imitation of mothers' behaviors, and boys were less likely to imitate mothers, as compared to girls. No differences were associated with belonging to a U.S.-raised, immigrant, or mixed-status dyad. For father–youth dyads, father warmth at W1 positively predicted youths' imitation of fathers' behaviors at W2. No other significant associations emerged.

For predictors of *de-identification* from parents at W2 (Mother R^2 = .04; Father R^2 = .09), significant associations emerged for adolescents' reports of parent–youth warmth at W1 and

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parent–youth immigrant status, but not for adolescents' gender. For mother–youth dyads, adolescents' reports of maternal warmth negatively predicted de-identifying from mothers and youth who belonged to mixed-status dyads reported more de-identification than youth from U.S.-raised dyads. No differences were associated with belonging to immigrant versus mixed-status dyads. For father–youth dyads, father warmth also negatively predicted de-identifying from fathers, and youth from mixed-status dyads reported more de-identification than youth from U.S.-raised dyads. Once again, no differences were associated with belonging to immigrant versus mixed-status dyads, and no differences emerged between boys and girls.

Goal 2: Predictors of Parent–Youth Cultural Incongruence

When looking at predictors of *Anglo cultural incongruence* (Mother R^2 = .48; Father R^2 = .29), associations differed for mother–youth and father–youth dyads. Among mother– youth dyads, youth who belonged to U.S.-raised dyads, in contrast to mixed-status dyads, reported less Anglo cultural incongruence at W3. Similarly, more mother–youth warmth at W1 was associated with less Anglo cultural incongruence at W3. Model estimates indicated that youths' higher reports of imitating mother at W2 (Fig. 1) were significantly associated with less mother–youth Anglo cultural incongruence at W3, and a significant indirect effect emerged for mother–youth warmth and Anglo incongruence through imitation (95 % CI −0.18, −.03). For father–youth dyads, youth who reported more de-identification from fathers at W2 reported more Anglo cultural incongruence at W3. Also, a significant indirect effect emerged for father–youth warmth at W1 to Anglo cultural incongruence through father de-identification (95 % CI −.08, −.003). Next, youth who belonged to U.S.-raised dyads, in contrast to mixed-status dyads, reported less Anglo cultural incongruence at W3 through a direct effect and an indirect effect through father-de-identification (95 % CI −0.16, −.007).

There were no significant predictors of mother–youth *Mexican cultural incongruence* but there were for father– youth Mexican cultural incongruence (Mother R^2 = .07; Father R^2 = .09). More de-identification from fathers was associated with more Mexican cultural incongruence, and de-identification from fathers mediated the indirect relation of father warmth (95 % CI −.06, −.004) and U.S.-raised dyads status (95 % CI −0.10, −.007) to Mexican cultural incongruence.

Discussion

Cultural adaptation and parent–youth cultural incongruence have significant implications for adolescents' psychosocial adjustment (Telzer 2010), but few have sought to understand how youth play an *active* role in their own and their family's cultural development (see Phinney 1990; Umaña-Taylor and Fine 2004, for exceptions focused on ethnic identity). The current study explored parent–youth characteristics that were associated with more or less imitation and de-identification as a process through which cultural incongruence emerges in Mexican-American families. This study represents an important step in documenting predictors of adolescents' imitation and de-identification of mothers and fathers, and, in turn, how these processes are linked to cultural incongruence with both mothers and fathers.

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Social learning theory (Mischel 1966) and socialization literature (Kuczynski and Hildebrandt 1997) highlighted the importance of accounting for parent–youth warmth and demographic similarities (i.e., parent–youth gender and immigrant status) in early adolescence to predict youths' reports of imitation and de-identification from parents in late adolescence. Indeed, higher levels of parent–youth warmth were consistently associated with more imitation of and less de-identification from mothers and fathers 5 years later. Such findings are consistent with previous research on imitation and modeling (Knafo et al. 2009; Laible and Thompson 2007), but are novel in documenting that more parent–youth warmth is associated with less de-identification, as well. Importantly, these findings suggest that youth who feel closer to and more accepted by their mothers and fathers in early/middle adolescence are more likely to imitate and less likely to actively differentiate themselves from their parents in late adolescence. Potentially, by believing that they can use their parents as models of appropriate behavior, youth may be able to maintain an important source of guidance when navigating the transitions into late adolescence and emerging adulthood as they further integrate into the U.S. culture.

Turning to the role of demographic similarities in youths' reports of imitation and de-identification from parents, research on gender socialization (Blakemore et al. 2008) and status inheritance (Glass et al. 1986; Harris 2002) directed our attention to gender and immigrant status similarities. When considering parent–youth gender composition, imitation of mothers was higher for girls than for boys. This is consistent with our expectations that youth would look to their same-gender parent as models for behavior. A direct association also emerged showing mother–son dyads reported more Anglo cultural incongruence than mother–daughter dyads, a finding consistent with Knafo's (2009) research. A similar pattern was not present for father–youth dyads. Perhaps the salience of same-sex modeling that is heightened during early to middle adolescence (Hill and Lynch 1983), and the increased penalization of boys who transgress gender norms as compared to girls (Leaper 1994), created a context where boys were less likely to imitate mothers and even diverge from mothers in their cultural orientation. Our results were consistent with the expectation that youth who were raised within similar social environments to their parents uphold similar cultural orientations, as youth from U.S.-raised dyads were less likely to de-identify from mothers and fathers and reported less Anglo cultural incongruence than youth from mixed-status dyads (i.e., U.S.-born youth with immigrant parents). Results were consistent with cross-cultural research (Vedder et al. 2009) suggesting that dyads where parents and youth were native-born were less likely to show cultural incongruence. More de-identification and incongruence in immigrant and mixed-status dyads may have emerged because parents in these dyads were less likely than parents in U.S.-raised dyads to share the same native language as their youth. This may lead to more difficulty interacting with their youth and within the U.S. culture. As such, youth may have interpreted parents as less relevant and useful models for successfully integrating into the new social environment, leading to more de-identification and cultural incongruence. This interpretation is consistent with research showing that parent–youth dyads who report different native languages also report less cohesion and communication with parents than their peers who share a native language with their parents (Tseng and Fuligni 2000).

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Taken together, findings for gender and immigrant status similarities suggest that personal characteristics are important, but must be explored within the context in which youth reside. That is, researchers must account for person–environment fit in exploring how personal and dyad characteristics interact to inform family dynamics. Future research should continue to investigate how personal characteristics are associated with youth's agency in framing parent–youth relationship dynamics, and move beyond solely examining demographic characteristics and more towards examining dynamic characteristics. Research focused on young children's niche-picking has suggested that temperament/personality, cognition, and other hereditary-informed personal characteristics (Scarr 1992; Scarr and McCartney 1983) are linked to children's propensity towards choosing and creating certain environments. As researchers have acknowledged the importance of personality traits and cognitive abilities in bicultural development (Haritatos and Benet-Martínez 2002), a logical next step would be to explore how these personal characteristics are associated with youth's decision to imitate/de-identify from parents and parent–youth cultural incongruence. Such work would move this research forward towards understanding more malleable characteristics that could be targeted in intervention research.

Next, our study drew from social learning theory (Mischel 1966) and a developmental perspective on adolescent separation–individuation (Koepke and Denissen 2012; Youniss and Smollar 1989) to inform the second goal linking the youth-driven processes of imitation and de-identification from parents in late adolescence to parent– youth cultural incongruence in Anglo and Mexican cultural orientations in early adulthood. As expected, youths' reports of imitating parents was associated with less cultural incongruence and youths' decision to de-identify from parents was associated with more cultural incongruence. However, the results highlighted differences with mothers as compared to fathers. When examining these cultural processes among mother–youth dyads, a significant indirect relationship emerged where maternal warmth was associated with more imitation of mothers 5 years later, and more imitation was linked to less Anglo incongruence in emerging adulthood, 2 years later. When examining father–youth dynamics, de-identification emerged as significantly associated with Anglo and Mexican cultural incongruence, and as a mediating process between father warmth, immigrant status and cultural incongruence. By showing how imitation and de-identification were associated with cultural incongruence, we provided one more example (Bylund et al. 2010) of how youths' agency informs adolescents' cultural socialization experiences.

Another important contribution of this study is the inclusion of mothers and fathers in one analytic model, allowing us to identify family socialization processes within one parent–youth dyad while accounting for family socialization processes for the other parent–youth dyad. As a result, the importance of imitation for mother–youth dyads and the importance of de-identification for father– youth dyads were noted. The stronger influence of de-identification for fathers, relative to mothers, may be associated with fathers' instrumental role in promoting youths' individuation and self-reliance (Almeida and Galambos 1993; Parke and Buriel 2006). For this reason, youth may feel that it is more normative and less frowned upon to report de-identifying from fathers as compared to mothers. Our simultaneous inclusion of mother and father dynamics provides insights into unique parenting roles within Mexican-origin families and accounts for the fact that mother–youth

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and father–youth relationships do not exist in isolation from one another. As a future direction, it will be helpful to include additional family members within the model to further understand how family cultural incongruence processes emerge. Given that 79 % of Mexican-American youth grow up with at least one sibling (Updegraff et al. 2011), parent–youth cultural incongruence may be heightened or dampened by siblings' cultural orientations. The inclusion of additional family members, such as siblings, will help further elucidate the family processes associated with cultural incongruence.

Despite this study's strengths, some limitations must be acknowledged. Most notably, data collection on youths' reports of imitation/de-identification occurred at a single time point; thus, we were unable to examine potential bidirectional associations between imitation/de-identification and cultural incongruence. Nor could we disentangle whether imitation/de-identification from parents leads to parent–youth cultural incongruence or whether cultural incongruence informs youths' decision to imitate/de-identify from parents. For this reason, we recommend that future studies measure youth's imitation/de-identification and parent–youth cultural incongruence at multiple time-points to illuminate the sequential and reciprocal processes through which cultural incongruence emerges. Next, the timing of data collection between W1, W2 (5 years after W1), and W3 (8 years after W1) may have biased the parameter estimates (Maxwell and Cole 2007), a common concern in cross-sectional mediation models where each variable of interest is not measured at multiple time-points. Utilizing a longitudinal mediation modeling technique would offset the potential bias in parameter results and provide a better estimate of the relation between imitation/ de-identification and cultural incongruence. A final recommendation is to utilize a person-oriented approach to help identify patterns of incongruence across multiple cultural domains. Pattern-analytic approaches have been strongly supported methods for measuring parent–youth cultural incongruence (Birman 2006) because they allow researchers to show mean levels of cultural orientation as well as differences between reporters. Further, such an approach will allow researchers to identify patterns of cultural incongruence across multiple reporters and multiple dimensions of culture. This enables researchers to identify normative and non-normative typologies of cultural incongruence.

Conclusion

The current study took a first step in understanding the processes associated with parent–youth cultural incongruence that may impact many ethnic minority (e.g., Latino, Asian) and immigrant families. In this study, we focused on Mexican-American adolescents, one group impacted by cultural incongruence. We extended prior work (Elder et al. 2005; Schofield et al. 2008; Szapocznik and Kurtines 1993) by highlighting youths' active role in parent–youth cultural incongruence through youths' decision to imitate or de-identify from parents. Further, this study demonstrated the importance of parent–youth relationship quality and demographic similarities in such processes. As shifting U.S. demographics show population increases for immigrant and Mexican families (U.S. Census 2011), more adolescents are negotiating the processes associated with parent–youth cultural incongruence and, thus, these processes are increasingly salient. By better understanding the nuances and potential precursors to parent–youth cultural incongruence, researchers may be able to inform

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prevention and intervention programming for adolescents and families negotiating the process of bicultural integration.

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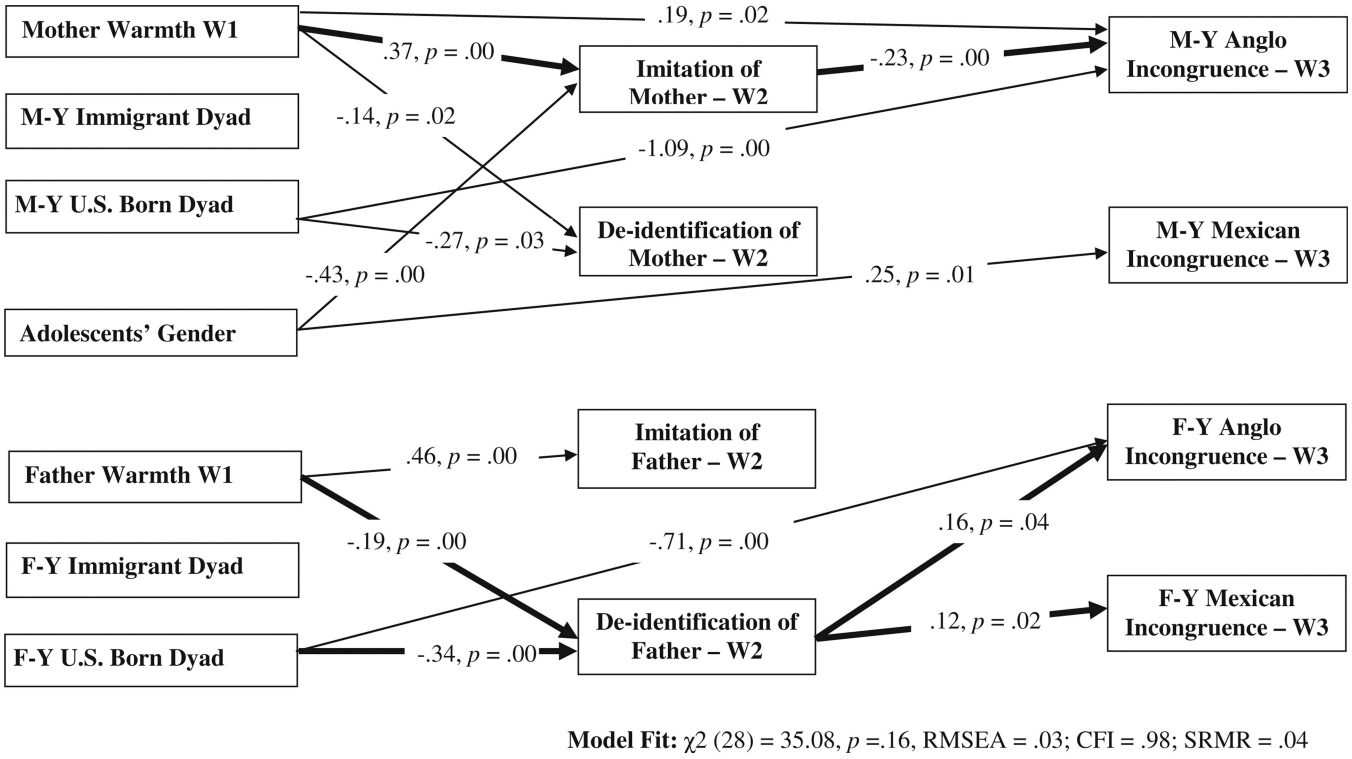

Model Fit: $\chi 2$ (28) = 35.08, p =.16, RMSEA = .03; CFI = .98; SRMR = .04

Fig. 1.

Model predicting youth's imitation and de-identification from parents and parent–adolescent cultural incongruence. *Note W1* Wave 1, *W2* Wave 2, *W3* Wave 3. *M–Y* mother–youth and *F–Y* father– youth. Adolescents' gender is 0 = female and 1 = male. For categorical measures of immigrant status, 1 = reference group and 0 = mixed-status (e.g., for U.S.-raised dyads, 1 = U.S.-raised and 0 = mixed-status). *Bolded* paths indicate significant mediation. *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

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Table 1

Correlations, means, and standard deviations for study variables for mother–youth and father–youth dyads

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.	17.
1. M imitation W2	–																
2. M de-identification W2	−.14	–															
3. F imitation W2	**.57**	−.12	–														
4. F de-identification W2	−.12	**.67**	**−.20**	–													
5. M Anglo incongruence W3	.07	**−.20**	.11	**−.19**	–												
6. M Mexican incongruence W3	−.11	.05	−.07	−.01	.08	–											
7. F Anglo incongruence W3	−.02	**−.23**	.17	**−.24**	**.55**	.01	–										
8. F Mexican incongruence W3	−.04	−.05	.06	−.03	−.05	**.46**	.00	–									
9. Adolescents' gender W1[a]	**−.20**	−.01	−.02	−.03	.02	**−.17**	−.02	−.13	–								
10. Mother-youth warmth W1	**.46**	−.13	**.28**	**−.16**	−.01	−.09	−.03	.08	.05	–							
11. Father-youth warmth W1	**.28**	**−.20**	**.39**	**−.24**	.00	−.11	.06	.07	−.04	**.46**	–						
12. M. U.S.-raised W1[b]	.00	**−.20**	.10	**−.20**	**.67**	.02	**.47**	−.04	.03	.05	−.01	–					
13. M immigrant W1	−.12	.03	**−.16**	.08	**−.21**	−.10	−.15	**−.16**	.03	−.05	−.03	**−.39**	–				
14. M mixed-status W1[b]	.10	**.17**	.04	.12	**−.47**	.07	**−.32**	**.17**	−.05	.00	.03	**−.63**	**−.47**	–			
15. F U.S.-raised W1	.10	−.15	**.16**	**−.20**	**.62**	.04	**.52**	−.08	.00	.07	.01	**.84**	**−.37**	**−.49**	–		
16. F immigrant W1	−.12	.03	**−.16**	.08	**−.21**	−.10	−.15	**−.16**	.03	−.05	−.03	**−.39**	**1.00**	**−.47**	**−.37**	–	
17. F mixed-status W1	.00	.12	−.02	.12	**−.41**	.04	**−.36**	**.21**	−.02	−.03	.01	**−.46**	**−.49**	**.85**	**−.63**	**−.49**	–
Mean	3.49	2.80	3.25	2.88	−1.03	0.49	−0.87	0.31	0.50	3.95	3.71	0.35	0.22	0.43	0.32	0.22	0.46
(*SD*)	(0.87)	(0.75)	(1.02)	(0.77)	(0.84)	(0.63)	(0.81)	(0.62)	(0.50)	(0.75)	(0.89)	(0.48)	(0.42)	(0.50)	(0.47)	(0.42)	(0.50)

M mother, *F* father, *W1* Wave 1, *W2* Wave 2, *W3* Wave 3

[a] Adolescents' gender is 1 = male and 0 = female

[b] For categorical measures of immigrant status, 1 = reference group and 0 = everyone else (e.g., for U.S.-raised dyads, 1 = U.S.-raised and 0 = everyone else) Correlations with an absolute value at or above . 15 are significant at $p < .01$ and identified within the table in bold

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Table 2

Sample breakdown for parent–youth immigrant status

	U.S.-raised	Immigrant	Mixed-status
Mother–youth	***n***	***n***	***n***
	85	45	115
Demographic information	*M* (SD)	*M* (SD)	*M* (SD)
Household income W1	$78,267 (43,636)	$28,715 (13,504)	$47,399 (47,764)
M years living in U.S. W1	33.14 (7.37)	4.01 (2.96)	13.89 (4.69)
M education level W1	12.65 (2.61)	8.25_a (3.73)	9.51_a (3.55)
M language (% English)	94	0	2
Y language (% English)	100	33	92
Father–youth	*N*	*n*	*n*
	78	45	121
Demographic information	*M* (SD)	*M* (SD)	*M* (SD)
Household income W1	$79,098 (42,798)	$29,113 (13,941)	$48,484 (48,225)
F years living in U.S. W1	32.63 (6.28)	7.87 (7.26)	17.46 (6.22)
F education level W1	12.82 (2.72)	8.23 (4.62)	8.69 (4.15)
F language (% English)	94	0	5
Y language (% English)	100	36	93

Four fathers were born in a country other than the U.S. or Mexico. These fathers made up one immigrant dyad and three mixed-status dyads. Two mother–youth dyads and four father–youth dyads were excluded from all immigrant status analyses as the youth reported being immigrants but parents reported being U.S.-born. Demographic information that did not differ at the $p < .05$ level is marked by a shared subscript. For % English, the indicator reflects the percentage of participants who chose to be interviewed in English. W1 is Wave 1