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Latin American, Asian, and
European Backgrounds

Lisa Kiang
Andrew J. Fuligni

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Lisa Kiang

Andrew J. Fuligni

University of California, Los Angeles

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Abstract

The role of ethnic identity in adolescents' family processes was examined among ninth graders from Latin American, Asian, and European backgrounds. Stronger ethnic affirmation and exploration were associated with family processes across a variety of indicators, but links with culturally-relevant processes such as family respect and obligation were stronger than links with dyadic cohesion with parents. Similarly, links between ethnic identity and time spent assisting the family on a daily basis were stronger than links between identity and time spent engaging in family leisure activities. Mediation analyses indicated that the greater sense of respect, obligation, and time spent assisting the family among adolescents with Latino and Asian backgrounds were due in part to their stronger ethnic identification. Longitudinal analyses suggest that identity and family processes continue to be linked throughout development.

Ethnic Identity and Family Processes in Adolescents with Latin American, Asian, and European Backgrounds

A sense of identity and belonging is a critical component of adolescent development (Erikson, 1968). From a social identity perspective (e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1986), the degree to which adolescents identify with their cultural or ethnic group also constitutes an important aspect of development and is particularly salient for those who are in the ethnic minority (McGoldrick & Giordano, 1996; Phinney, 1990). Ethnic identity has been consistently linked with a variety of outcomes including psychological well-being, self-esteem, and academic motivation and achievement (Roberts, Phinney, Mase, Chen, Roberts, & Romero, 1999; Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997; Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003; Yasui, Dorham, & Dishion, 2004). Despite these important findings, our knowledge remains limited to consequences that are individualized and proximal in nature and to those within the academic arena.

In particular, the family context constitutes one of the most important influences in development (Dmitrieva, Chen, Greenberger, & Gil-Rivas, 2004; Parke, 2004; Zayas & Solari, 1994), yet very little research has explicitly and comprehensively addressed how ethnic identity and family processes are related. The lack of research in this area is even more surprising given that, presumably, the actual construct of ethnic identity is derived from social relationships and socialization influences in which the family plays a primary role (Demo & Hughes, 1990; Farver, Narang, & Bhada, 2002; Fuligni & Flook, in press; Hamm, 2001; Sanders Thompson, 1994; Stevenson, 1995; Umaña-Taylor & Fine, 2004). Theoretically, the family often represents the first and foremost setting for ethnic socialization; thus, an intricate association between positive family relationships and a strong sense of ethnic identity might be expected. For instance, parental efforts to instill a sense of cultural pride or ethnic identity in their children via exposure

to or sharing of cultural traditions might be more effective if the parent-child relationship is one that is strong, cohesive, and conducive to such socialization experiences.

Consistent with these ideas, what little work has been done in the intersection of ethnic identity and family processes has largely focused on dyadic relationships within the family, particularly parent-child cohesion. Empirical work has supported the idea that individuals who have a stronger sense of their ethnic identity typically report more positive and cohesive relationships with their parents (e.g., Wilson & Constantine, 1999). Venturing beyond dyadic relationships, perhaps ethnic identity and family processes are linked in more culturally meaningful and relevant ways. Given differences in families' cultural orientations and values, ethnic identity may be even more strongly associated with culturally and ethnically-related aspects of family life as compared to more generic levels of dyadic closeness.

Because families are embedded within other social systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Garcia Coll, 1990; Parke, 2004), there appears to be interdependence between family processes and the cultural orientations in which families exist. Prevalent in the cultural traditions of many groups, and especially those with Latino or Asian origins, is an interdependent values system that emphasizes collective goals and a sense of familism or family connectedness (Bernal & Shapiro, 1996; Kim, Atkinson, & Yang, 1999; Leung & Boehnlein, 1996; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). According to principles of familism, considered a core value of the Latino culture (Zinn, 1982), individuals are expected to place family or group needs before one's personal needs and to show loyalty and respect for their parents and other family members (Parke, 2004; Triandis, 1995; Zayas & Rojas-Flores, 2002). A similar emphasis on the family exists in many Asian-based cultures, stemming in part from principles of Confucianism which encourage filial piety and family respect (Lee, 1996; Lieber, Nihira, & Mink, 2004; Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

Given these unique cultural orientations, family respect and loyalty appear to be distinctly salient and meaningful in families that value collectivism or interdependence. Hence, one might expect attitudes toward family respect to be strongly associated with a strong identification with one's culture or ethnic group. One's concern for the fate and well-being of one's kin or family members is another culturally-relevant dimension of family life that might also be closely tied to ethnic identity. Family obligation refers to attitudes toward the provision of support and assistance to one's family and carries the expectation that children should support and assist their family members in the interest of family maintenance (Fuligni & Zhang, 2004; Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam, 1999; Kagitcibasi 1990; Phinney, Ong, & Madden, 2000; Triandis, 1990; Tseng, 2004). Such family duty or support is expected not only currently but also in the future, such as when parents become unable to care for themselves or when young adults are able to contribute a portion of their income to the family (Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002).

In addition to family respect and obligation, which reflect general attitudes toward the family, ethnic identity might also be associated with actual behaviors or interactions related to daily family life. As discussed by Parke (2004), individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds are often expected to place a high emphasis on "behavioral familism." For example, parents of families endorsing an interdependent values system might encourage family members to live in close proximity with each other, and expect their children to engage in chores and activities that serve to assist the family, such as picking up groceries, cooking meals, and caring for other family members (Caplan, Choy, & Whitemore, 1991; Parke, 2004). Above and beyond specific chores and family demands, adolescents from families emphasizing collectivism or interdependence might also be expected to be present in the household for more normative events such as daily meals, holiday celebrations, and simply spending leisure time with one's

family (Mordkowitz & Ginsburg, 1987). It is possible, however, that these more leisurely activities are not as strongly related to ethnic identity compared to family interactions that are more reflective of family assistance or support.

Taken together, there appear to be a variety of culturally and ethnically relevant processes that occur within the family context and that may be salient to adolescents from ethnic minority families who are more likely to have been socialized with interdependent or familistic worldviews. Given their cultural relevance, attitudes toward family respect, obligation, and engagement in daily interactions with one's family, particularly in terms of family assistance, represent family processes that may be strongly related to ethnic identity, perhaps even more so than the typically studied parent-child cohesion variables.

To the extent that individual differences in ethnic identity are associated with family respect, obligations, and behaviors, then perhaps ethnic identity could be implicated as a mediator of broader ethnic group differences that have been previously documented in the literature (see Fuligni & Flook, in press). For instance, high levels of family respect have often been found in adolescents from Latino and Asian backgrounds, as their cultural and familial orientations typically encourage them to respect the authority and wishes of their family (Fuligni et al., 1999; Ho, 1995; Phinney et al., 2000). A recent study by Phinney and colleagues demonstrated that, compared to adolescents from European backgrounds, adolescents from ethnic minority backgrounds (e.g., Mexican, Armenian, Korean) exhibited stronger levels of family interdependence, greater compliance with their family's wishes, and were more likely to attribute their compliance to family relatedness, that is, having respect and concern for their family (Phinney, Kim-Jo, Osorio, & Vilhjalmsdottir, 2005). Individuals from Latino and Asian

backgrounds have also demonstrated stronger attitudes toward family duty and obligation compared to adolescents from European backgrounds (Fuligni et al., 1999).

Although such ethnic group differences have been consistently supported, it is yet unclear why these differences have been found and whether additional variables, such as ethnic identity, serve to mediate and help explain these effects. Indeed, it is important to uncover underlying values or worldviews that might predict group differences (Phinney et al., 2005), as much existing literature has been limited in focusing on inter-individual ethnic group differences at the expense of intra-individual variation. As one exception, Gaines et al. (1997) found that individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds had higher levels of collectivism and familism compared to those from European backgrounds, but differences no longer existed after controlling for ethnic identity. Although Gaines and colleagues provided initial evidence for the role of ethnic identity as a mediator of ethnicity, virtually no investigation has been made into its mediational effect on specific family processes, particularly in terms of daily family interactions, or the developmental period of adolescence, during which identity and family issues are salient.

What is also unclear in the field is how ethnic identity and family processes are longitudinally associated. Given theoretically strong ties between ethnic identity and the family, it is important to understand whether these variables develop simultaneously or more independently. It is also important to investigate how ethnic identity and family processes interact and influence each other over time. For instance, from a social identity perspective that argues that ethnic group identification should result in feelings toward and a tendency to act in support of one's ethnic group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), an adolescent's ethnic identity should thus carry over into attitudes and behaviors directed toward his or her family, which represents a natural extension of his or her ethnic group. On the other hand, respect for one's family and

engagement in family activities could predict later ethnic identity, perhaps by providing increased opportunities for ethnic socialization. Such developmental changes, though important to consider throughout the entire lifespan, are particularly central during adolescence, when the construction of social identities and negotiations with the family in relation to school and peer demands are often in the forefront of adolescents' lives.

The Current Study

In addressing an understudied area in the field, this paper provides a comprehensive examination of the role that ethnic identity plays in the family lives of ethnically diverse adolescents. Unique to this study was our use of not only traditional self-report scales to assess adolescents' attitudes toward family respect and family obligation, but also our use of adolescents' daily reports of family interactions and behaviors. These daily reports allowed us to do something very novel, namely, to determine how ethnic identity translates into family processes that occur on a daily basis in everyday life, for instance, how much time adolescents spend assisting their family members. Also unique was our use of an ethnically diverse sample including adolescents from European backgrounds as well as those from Latino and Asian backgrounds who remain frequently underrepresented in research. Our diverse sample allowed us to contribute to a field that has been traditionally dominated by studies of individuals from European and African American backgrounds. Utilizing data from adolescents who are ethnically diverse also afforded us the ability to examine whether ethnicity moderated associations between ethnic identity and family processes, and whether ethnicity had a direct effect on family attitudes and behaviors.

Four important questions regarding the interplay between ethnic identity and processes within the family context were addressed. We first examined whether ethnic identity was more

closely tied to culturally-relevant family processes, such as attitudes toward family respect and family obligation, as opposed to dyadic levels of emotional closeness or cohesion with specific family members, namely, the parents. Similarly, we examined whether associations between ethnic identity and family assistance activities were stronger than associations with family leisure activities. We also investigated all of these associations between ethnic identity and family respect, obligation, and behaviors after controlling for parent-child cohesion. A second question addressed was whether associations between ethnic identity and family processes were moderated by ethnicity. Because of the salience of ethnic identity in the lives of adolescents who are in the ethnic minority, it is possible that the construct of ethnic identity takes on a different meaning across groups, and that associations between ethnic identity and other variables would vary as a function of ethnicity. The moderating role of gender, which has been highlighted in previous research (Gaines et al., 1997), was also considered. Third, ethnic group differences in family variables were examined and, where differences were found, we determined whether ethnic identity served as a mediator. Lastly, to shed light on how these variables are longitudinally related, we examined whether change in ethnic identity between 9th and 10th grade was associated with 9th to 10th grade changes in family respect, obligation, and family interactions. We also conducted a series of cross-lag regressions with ethnic identity in 9th grade predicting family variables assessed one year later in 10th grade, and vice versa.

In sum, in examining direct, mediational, and longitudinal associations between ethnic identity and a variety of family processes across ethnically diverse adolescents, we hoped to gain a deeper understanding of how ethnic identity relates to values and behaviors within the specific context of the family and during a developmental period in which identity formation and individuals' engagement in family processes are critical for future adjustment and well-being.

Method

Participants

Ninth graders from the Los Angeles metropolitan area were recruited from three high schools varying in ethnic diversity, socioeconomic status, and overall academic achievement. The first school consisted of predominantly Latino and Asian American students from families with lower-middle to middle class educational, occupational, and financial backgrounds. The second school consisted of mostly Latino and European American students from families with lower-middle to middle class backgrounds. The third school included mostly Asian and European American students from middle to upper-middle class families. No single ethnicity dominated any of these schools; rather, the two largest ethnic groups each comprised 30-50% of each school's total population. All ninth graders in two of the three schools and approximately half of the ninth graders in the third school were invited to participate. Of those invited, 65% participated resulting in a total sample of 783 students with a wide range of ethnic, socioeconomic, and immigrant backgrounds.

Adolescents from ethnic minority groups comprising too small a number for meaningful comparisons (e.g., Middle Eastern, Guatemalan, African American, Multiethnic) were omitted (approximately 13% of the full sample), resulting in a final *N* of 682. Of this final sample, approximately 41% had Latino backgrounds, 38% had Asian backgrounds, and 21% had European backgrounds. Within broader Latino and Asian ethnic categories, 86% of Latinos had Mexican ancestry and 67% of Asians had Chinese ancestry. Of the 78% of adolescents born in the U.S., 64% were from immigrant families (at least one parent born in a foreign country). Average age was 16 years ($SD = 1.24$) with an even split across males (50%) and females (50%).

Approximately 78% of the 9th grade sample also participated in 10th grade. Adolescents from Latino and European backgrounds exhibited similar rates of attrition, 27% and 30%, respectively, whereas adolescents from Asian backgrounds exhibited 11% attrition. A series of independent samples t-tests revealed that, with two exceptions, there were no significant differences in terms of study variables between adolescents who did not participate in 10th grade and those who participated in both 9th and 10th grades. Those who did not participate in 10th grade reported lower levels of family obligation ($t(678) = 2.19, p < .05$) and spent more time assisting the family ($t(619) = -2.51, p < .05$); however, the effect sizes of these mean differences were only small to moderate in magnitude (Cohen's $d = .13$ and $.37$, respectively).

Procedure

Students who provided their own assent to participate and who returned parent consent forms completed a self-report questionnaire in small group settings during class time. Consent forms and study materials were available in English, Spanish, and Chinese and eight participants chose to complete measures in Spanish ($n = 4$) and Chinese ($n = 4$). Questionnaires took about 30 minutes to complete and assessed demographic information as well as information on adolescents' ethnic identity and family respect and obligation. Upon completion, students were given a 14-day supply of daily dairy checklists and told to complete them each night before going to bed. Assessments of daily family interactions were collected via these checklists, each of which took about 5-10 minutes to complete. Participants sealed each day's responses in a manila envelope and stamped the seal with a hand-held electronic time stamper provided by the researchers. The stamper imprinted the current date and time and was programmed such that the date and time could not be altered. Research assistants entered schools at the end of the 14-day period to collect completed checklists. Adolescents received \$30 for their participation and were

told that they would also receive two movie passes if inspection of the data indicated that they had completed the diaries correctly and on-time (e.g., diaries completed on consecutive days with correct date stamped on seal). The time stamper method of monitoring diary completion and cash and movie pass incentives resulted in a very high rate of compliance. Approximately 95% of the diaries were completed and, of these, 86% could be identified as being completed on time, on either the same night or before noon the following day.

Measures

Parent-child cohesion. The cohesion subscale of the Family Adaptation and Cohesion Evaluation Scales II (Olson, Sprenkle, & Russell, 1979) was used to assess parent-child cohesion separately for mother and father. The subscale consists of 10 items scored on a 5-point scale ranging from “Almost Never” to “Almost Always.” Sample items read, “My mother [father] and I are supportive of each other during difficult times,” “My mother [father] and I feel very close to each other,” and, “My mother [father] and I avoid each other at home.” Higher scores reflect greater parent-child cohesion. Internal consistencies obtained across ethnic groups were good (*range as* = .85 - .87, Mother; *a* = .86 - .88, Father).

Ethnic identity. Two subscales of the widely-used Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1992) assessed ethnic identity. The Affirmation and Belonging subscale, consisting of 5 items, assesses ethnic pride, feeling good and happy about one’s ethnicity, and feelings of belonging and attachment to one’s ethnic group. Sample items read, “I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to,” “I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group,” and, “I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background.” The Ethnic Identity Achievement subscale consists of 5 items and measures individuals’ exploration of and commitment to their ethnic group. Sample items read, “I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group,

such as its history, traditions, and customs,” “I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me,” and, “In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my ethnic group.”

All items from the MEIM are scored on a 5-point scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree” with higher scores reflecting higher Affirmation and higher Achievement. Internal consistencies were similarly high across ethnic groups (*range as* = .68 - .78, Affirmation; (*range as* = .85 - .88, Achievement).

Family respect. Participants were given a 7-item scale used successfully in previous research (Fuligni et al., 1999) to assess beliefs about the importance of respecting and following the wishes of the family. Using a 5-point scale ranging from “not at all important” to “very important” with higher scores indicating greater respect, adolescents responded to items such as, “treat your parents with great respect,” “follow your parents’ advice about choosing friends,” “respect your older brothers and sisters.” The internal consistency of this measure was good across ethnic groups (*range as* = .74 - .80).

Family obligation. Also used successfully in previous research (e.g., Fuligni et al., 1999; Fuligni, Yip, & Tseng, 2002), a 12-item scale was used to assess adolescents’ attitudes toward family obligation and providing assistance to their family. Participants were asked to determine how important each item is on a 5-point scale ranging from “not at all important” to “very important” with higher scores reflecting higher endorsement of family obligation. Sample items include, “help take care of brothers and sisters,” “run errands that the family needs done,” and, “help out around the house.” Items concerning attitudes toward future support and obligations were also presented using a 6-item scale. Samples include, “help your parents financially in the future,” “spend time with your parents even after you no longer live with them,” and, “help take

care of your brothers and sisters in the future.” The internal consistencies of current (*range as* = .73 - .84) and future support (*range as* = .79 - .84) across all ethnic groups were good. Both scales were significantly correlated ($r = .61, p < .001$) and thus combined to reflect an overall index of family obligation.

Daily-level interactions. For each day of the 14-day diary assessments, adolescents indicated whether they engaged in any of the following 8 activities reflecting acts of family assistance or support: helped to clean your apartment or house, took care of your brothers or sisters, ran an errand for your parents or family, helped your brothers or sisters with their schoolwork, helped your parents with official business (for example translating letters, completing government forms), helped to cook a meal for your family, helped your parents at their work, anything else to help or assist your family. On any given day, the possible number of acts of assistance ranged from 0 to 8. Daily acts of assistance were averaged across the 14-day period to reflect an average indicator of daily assistance; that is, on any given day, how many acts of assistance do adolescents engage in? To assess the amount of daily time spent assisting the family, adolescents were asked to estimate the total time spent engaging in these activities, if they answered “yes” to any of the activities above. These estimates were also aggregated across the 14-day period to reflect an average index of time spent assisting the family.

To assess daily leisure activities, adolescents indicated whether they engaged in any of the following: ate a meal with your family, spent leisure time with your family, spent time with aunts, uncles, cousins, or grandparents. Thus, on any given day, the possible number of leisure activities ranged from 0 to 3. Daily responses were also averaged across the 14-day period to reflect an average indicator of daily leisurely interactions. To assess daily leisure time, each day adolescents were asked to estimate the total amount of time spent engaging in these activities, if

they answered “yes” to any of the above. Time estimates were also aggregated across the 14-day period to reflect an average index of time spent interacting with the family in a leisurely manner.

Results

Bivariate Associations between Ethnic Identity, Family Respect, Obligation, and Behaviors

As shown in Table 1, both subscales of ethnic identity were significantly and positively correlated with all family processes, with the exception of leisure time spent with the family. To determine whether ethnic identity was more strongly associated with culturally-relevant indices of family respect and family obligation compared to dyadic levels of cohesion with parents, a series of planned statistical comparisons were made using *r*-to-*z* transformations. Results revealed that both indicators of ethnic identity were significantly more strongly correlated with family respect and obligation (*z*-scores ranged from 3.27 – 5.49, $p < .001$) than with parent-child cohesion. Statistical comparisons were also made between family interactions reflective of assistance or support versus more leisurely interactions. *Z*-scores (range 1.85 – 2.63, $p < .05$) suggested that, in general, correlations between ethnic identity and family assistance (acts of assistance, time spent assisting the family) were significantly stronger than correlations between ethnic identity and leisurely interactions (leisurely acts, time spent engaging in leisurely acts). The only exception to the pattern was in the comparison between Affirmation/Belonging and assistance versus leisure time ($z = 1.06$, $p = .14$).

Since both subscales of ethnic identity appeared to be similarly related to family variables and were correlated with one another at $r = .60$ ($p < .001$), Affirmation/Belonging and Achievement/Search were combined in further analyses to provide a more parsimonious indicator of ethnic identity.

Multivariate Associations Before and After Controlling for Cohesion

A series of regressions estimating the effect of ethnic identity on family processes revealed that ethnic identity was strongly and positively associated with parent-child cohesion, family respect, family obligation, and three of the four daily behaviors (see Table 2). All effects were as expected such that individuals with higher levels of ethnic identity exhibited more cohesive relationships with both mother and father and higher feelings of family respect and family obligation. Notably, ethnic identity explained a relatively large amount of variance in family respect and obligation ($R^2 = .18$) compared to parent-child cohesion ($R^2 = .02 - .05$). Adolescents with higher levels of ethnic identity also engaged in more activities with their families, both in terms of acts of assistance as well as leisurely acts, and spent more time assisting their families. Ethnic identity was not significantly associated with the average amount of leisure time spent with the family.

Regression analyses were repeated after controlling for mother and father cohesion in order to account for the argument that individuals' cohesiveness with their parents might pervade into and predict other family processes. Also shown in Table 2, the positive effect of ethnic identity on family respect, family obligation, and daily behaviors remained significant and strong, above and beyond the effect of parent-child relationships. Since cohesion was less strongly related to ethnic identity compared to more culturally-relevant family processes, and had little effect on the association between ethnic identity and other family variables, measures of parent-child cohesion were not included in further analyses.

Ethnicity and Gender as Moderators of Associations

Potential moderating effects of ethnicity and gender were examined in a series of ANCOVAs predicting family respect, family obligation, and the four indicators of daily family

interactions. Ethnic group membership and gender were entered as independent variables and ethnic identity entered as a covariate, and interactions between each independent variable and the covariate as well as three-way interactions were examined. No moderating effects were found (two- or three-way interactions), suggesting that the association of ethnic identity with family processes did not vary across ethnicity or across males and females.

Ethnic Identity Mediating Ethnic Differences in Family Processes

To examine the potential role of ethnic identity as a mediator of ethnic group differences in family processes, we first conducted an ANOVA with ethnicity predicting ethnic identity. Results indicated that although adolescents from Latino and Asian backgrounds did not significantly differ from each other, adolescents from both of these groups exhibited significantly higher levels of ethnic identity compared to adolescents from European backgrounds ($F(2, 673) = 20.12, p < .001$). Based on these initial results, two dummy-coded variables were created. For one variable, adolescents with Latino backgrounds were assigned a score of one and all other adolescents were assigned a score of zero. For a second variable, adolescents with Asian backgrounds were assigned a score of one and all others were assigned a score of zero. These two variables were then entered into a series of regressions to estimate ethnic differences in family processes, treating adolescents from European backgrounds as the baseline group. As shown in Table 3 in the column labeled “Total Effect,” adolescents from Latino and Asian backgrounds reported significantly higher levels of family respect, family obligations, daily acts of assistance, and amount of time spent assisting their family compared to adolescents from European backgrounds. Latino adolescents also reported spending a significantly greater amount of leisure time with their family compared to Europeans.

Following guidelines by Baron and Kenny (1986), we next conducted analyses to determine whether adolescents' ethnic identity mediated ethnic differences in these family variables, thereby indicating that a significant portion of the variance in family respect, obligations, and behaviors could be attributed to ethnic identity, and not just ethnic group membership. We thus estimated the magnitude and significance of indirect effects of ethnic group membership, through ethnic identification (see Table 3). Proportions of ethnic group differences that could be accounted for by ethnic identity were also calculated by dividing the indirect effects of ethnicity by the total effects.

Results revealed that the mediating effect of ethnic identity was significant in terms of family respect, family obligation, and acts of family assistance, accounting for 16-69% of the ethnic group differences found. The mediating effect of ethnic identity on the amount of time spent assisting the family was marginally significant for both Latinos and Asians compared to Europeans, and ethnic identity did not emerge as a significant mediator of ethnic differences between Latinos and Europeans in terms of leisure time.

Longitudinal Associations between Ethnic Identity and Family Processes

To determine whether change in ethnic identity correlated with change in family processes, we calculated a series of change variables subtracting 9th grade scores from 10th grade scores. Higher change scores thus reflected increases in ethnic identity and family processes from Time 1 (9th grade) to Time 2 (10th grade), whereas lower or negative scores reflected decreases over time. Results suggested that differences in ethnic identity over time were significantly and positively associated with differences in family respect ($r = .13, p < .01$) and family obligation ($r = .19, p < .001$). However, change in ethnic identity did not relate to change in adolescents' engagement in daily family interactions ($r_s = -.02 - .08, ns$).

A series of cross-lag regressions were conducted in order to determine how ethnic identity and family processes were longitudinally related. Each family process assessed in 10th grade was regressed on ethnic identity measured in 9th grade, after controlling for 9th grade family process scores. Similarly, ethnic identity measured in 10th grade was regressed on each of the family processes measured in 9th grade, after controlling for 9th grade ethnic identity scores. As shown in Table 4, there was remarkable stability over time with respect to both ethnic identity and family variables (standardized regression coefficients reflected along the diagonal). Adolescents' ethnic identification in 9th grade predicted both family respect and obligation one year later after controlling for prior family respect and obligation, but only marginally predicted later family behaviors after controlling for prior scores on these variables (see Figure 1). In contrast, attitudes toward family respect and family obligation in 9th grade did not significantly predict ethnic identity in 10th grade after controlling for prior ethnic identity, but acts of assistance and family leisure activity in 9th grade significantly predicted later ethnic identity.

Discussion

Given that ethnic identity and family relationships represent two critical factors in development, research has been surprisingly limited in addressing the association between them. Corroborating previous research establishing links between ethnic identity and how close children feel to their parents, we found adolescents' ethnic identity to relate to their sense of cohesion or emotional closeness with their parents. However, as evidenced by significantly stronger correlations between ethnic identity and attitudes toward family respect and family obligation, and the strength of these associations even after controlling for parent-child cohesion, it appears that ethnic identity is actually more important for culturally-relevant aspects of family relationships. Ethnic identity was also related to daily family behaviors, particularly in terms of

providing assistance to the family, which speaks to ethnic identity's influence on how adolescents actually spend time and interact with their families on an everyday basis. Taken together, results from this paper indicate that how strongly adolescents identify with and feel connected to their ethnic group pervades multiple aspects of their family life, and has a particularly strong relation with processes that are rooted in ethnic or cultural values, such as family obligation and behaviors geared toward family assistance.

The use of an ethnically diverse sample was one advantage to this study as it allowed us the ability to examine ethnic group membership as a moderator of the links between ethnic identity and family respect, obligation, and daily family behaviors. Interestingly, results did not support a moderating role of ethnicity, suggesting that ethnic identity and family variables are similarly related regardless of ethnic background. Further, unlike previous work by Gaines et al. (1997), no moderating effect of gender was found. One explanation for the lack of moderation rests in potential developmental differences. Moderating effects of gender in the work of Gaines and colleagues were found in a primarily adult sample, and very little research has addressed or documented moderating effects of ethnicity or gender in adolescents. It is thus possible that ethnicity and gender do have an impact on how ethnic identity relates to other variables but not until later in development, such as after adolescence when individuals' social identities are more fully established. Further research incorporating such developmental considerations would be needed in order to better unravel these effects.

An ethnically diverse sample also allowed us to investigate whether family respect, obligation, and engagement in daily family interactions varied as a function of ethnicity. Consistent with previous research highlighting the importance of ethnic group membership in individuals' family orientations and interpersonal relationships (e.g., Fuligni & Flook, in press;

Gaines et al., 1997; Phinney et al., 2005), individuals with Latino and Asian backgrounds exhibited a greater respect for their family, stronger attitudes toward family obligation, and were more likely to engage in acts of family assistance compared to adolescents from European backgrounds. More notably, this study built upon existing literature by investigating intra-individual variation and implicating ethnic identity as a mediator of these broader ethnic group differences. The significant mediating effect of ethnic identity further speaks to the importance of ethnic identity in relation to more culturally-relevant variables, since it was in these variables of family respect, obligation, and familial assistance, as opposed to more general leisure time, where the most striking mediating effects were found. The effect of ethnicity through ethnic identity suggests that ethnic group membership lays the foundation for having a stronger sense of ethnic identification, which, in turn, predicts a collection of culturally-related values and behaviors, and can provide a variety of strengths. For instance, having a strong ethnic identity appears to result in a greater connection with the family (e.g., by predicting family respect and frequency of interactions), which can then impart a unique sense of support and resources from which to draw from if needed.

Longitudinally, ethnic identity and family variables do appear to be continually related. Between 9th and 10th grade, increases in ethnic identity were significantly correlated with increases in family respect and family obligation, suggesting that these variables evolve simultaneously. In contrast, change in ethnic identity was not associated with change in family interactions, perhaps due to additional factors that might not play a direct role in adolescents' ethnic identity, but do predict variation in adolescents' daily family interactions (e.g., schoolwork). To shed further light on how ethnic identity and family variables are longitudinally related, a series of cross-lag associations revealed that ethnic identity in 9th grade significantly

predicted family respect and family obligation at 10th grade, after controlling for respect and obligation at 9th grade. However, neither family respect nor obligation at 9th grade was significant in predicting ethnic identity one year later. In terms of family behaviors, there were moderate associations between ethnic identity in 9th grade and family interactions at 10th grade, but acts of assistance and leisure acts in 9th grade were significant in predicting ethnic identity in 10th grade. Overall, these results provided preliminary evidence regarding the directionality of associations between identity and family processes. Interestingly, many of these longitudinal associations, albeit modest in size, were still significant despite the large amount of stability found in ethnic identity and family relationships between the ninth and tenth grades.

Results reported in this paper should be considered in light of the limitations of the study. First, our longitudinal data spanned only a one-year difference in development. Although the time frame in which this study occurred (the early years of high school) represents a period in which many changes may take place during a short amount of time, a great deal of stability in ethnic identity and family processes was observed between 9th and 10th grade. Hence, it would be interesting in future research to examine a longer lag in development or a similarly short lag during a transitional period, such as the transition to high school or college, in order to truly disentangle directionality of effects. Further, additional variables should be examined in light of the association between ethnic identity and the family. For instance, explicit information regarding adolescents' history of ethnic socialization is an important variable to consider (Demo & Hughes, 1990; Hughes, 2003). Developmentally, it is possible that additional variables, such as the socializing influence of peers, have dual effects on ethnic identity and family processes, and that variation exists in terms of when the impact of these influences occur. It is also possible that the basis for both ethnic identity and family processes is made early in development via

extraneous variables such as economic or community contexts, and that, over time, there is variability in the rate in which identity and family variables evolve and influence each other.

In conclusion, this paper provided evidence that a stronger sense of ethnic identity, (i.e., greater levels of ethnic affirmation and belonging and more exploration into one's ethnic or cultural background) was intricately related to a variety of processes, and was particularly strongly associated with more culturally-relevant indicators of family life (e.g., family respect, obligation, family assistance behaviors). The stronger ethnic identification exhibited by adolescents from ethnic minority backgrounds also served to mediate much of the ethnic group differences found in these family processes. Longitudinal associations suggest that ethnic identification and family respect, obligation, and daily family interactions develop in tandem and continue to impact each other throughout development. In implicating the role of ethnic identity in adolescents' family processes, future research could be fruitful in further examining the ways in which ethnic identity pervades through the family context.

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Table 1

Bivariate Correlations between Ethnic Identity and Family Variables

Family Variables	Ethnic Identity	
	Aff./Belong	Ach./Search
<i>Dyadic Cohesion</i>		
Mother	.24***	.17***
Father	.13***	.09*
<i>Respect/Obligation</i>		
Respect	.41***	.36***
Obligation	.40***	.37***
<i>Family Behaviors</i>		
Assistance Acts	.21***	.21***
Assistance Time	.11**	.10*
Leisure Acts	.14***	.11**
Leisure Time	.05	-.01

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

Table 2

Ethnic Identity Predicting Family Processes

	F	R ²	B	SE	β	β^1
<i>Dyadic Cohesion</i>						
Mother	35.29***	.05	.21	.04	.22***	--
Father	9.39**	.02	.13	.04	.12**	--
<i>Respect/Obligation</i>						
Respect	151.76***	.18	.35	.03	.43***	.36***
Obligation	150.23***	.18	.36	.03	.43***	.36***
<i>Family Behaviors</i>						
Assistance Acts	38.61***	.06	.29	.05	.24***	.23***
Assistance Time	8.76**	.01	.14	.05	.12**	.16***
Leisure Acts	13.49***	.02	.11	.03	.14***	.09*
Leisure Time	.35	.00	.04	.07	.02	.00

Note. ¹Standardized coefficients after controlling for parent-child cohesion.

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

Table 3

Mediating Ethnic Differences in Family Processes

	Total Effect	SE	Indirect Effect	SE	Z Value	Percent of Total Effect
<i>Latino</i>						
Respect	.26***	.07	.18	.03	5.59***	69.23
Obligation	.37***	.07	.16	.03	5.60***	43.24
Assistance Acts	.75***	.10	.12	.03	3.51***	16.00
Assistance Time	.55***	.11	.06	.03	1.71†	10.91
Leisure Acts	.08	.07	--	--	--	--
Leisure Time	.42**	.15	.00	.03	.29	00.00
<i>Asian</i>						
Respect	.27***	.07	.16	.03	4.60***	59.26
Obligation	.39***	.07	.15	.03	4.55***	38.46
Assistance Acts	.33**	.10	.10	.03	3.28***	30.30
Assistance Time	.31**	.11	.05	.02	1.68†	16.13
Leisure Acts	.01	.07	--	--	--	--
Leisure Time	-.19	.15	--	--	--	--

Note. “Total Effect” reflects the size of the difference in family variables between ethnic minority adolescents and European adolescents. “Indirect Effect” refers to the effect of ethnicity on family variables operating through ethnic identity. “Z-value” refers to statistical tests of significance of the indirect effects, and “Percent of Total Effect” refers to proportions of the total effects (i.e., initial ethnic differences) that were accounted for by ethnic identity.

† $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 4

Cross-Lag Regressions with Time 1 Predicting Time 2 Variables

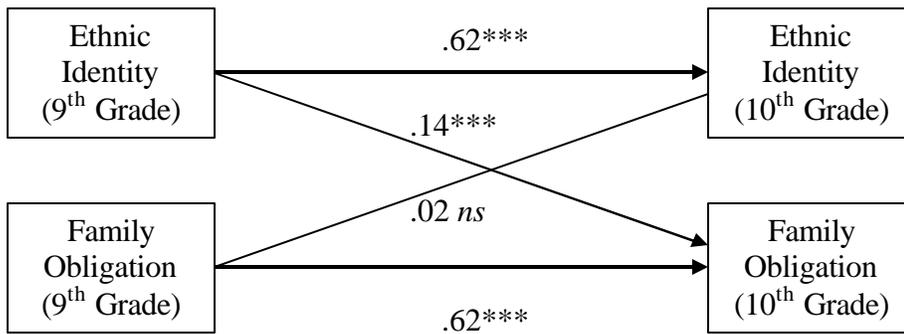
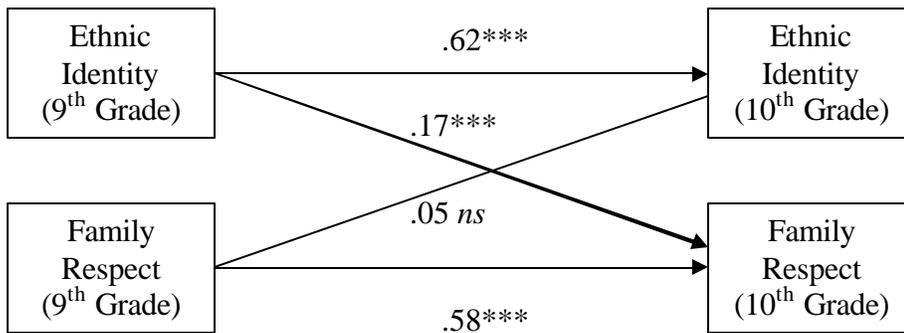
	<i>Time2 (10th Grade)</i>						
	Ethnic Identity	Respect	Obligation	Assistance Acts	Assistance Time	Leisure Acts	Leisure Time
<i>Time 1 (9th Grade)</i>							
Ethnic Identity	.62***	.17***	.14***	.01	.08†	.06†	.08†
Respect	.05	.58***	--	--	--	--	--
Obligation	.02	--	.62***	--	--	--	--
Assistance Acts	.09*	--	--	.66***	--	--	--
Assistance Time	-.01	--	--	--	.46***	--	--
Leisure Acts	.11***	--	--	--	--	.61***	--
Leisure Time	.03	--	--	--	--	--	.48***

Note. All values reflect standardized regression coefficients. Values on the diagonal reflect stability in variables across Time 1 and Time 2. Coefficients in the first row reflect Time 2 family variables, controlling for Time 1, regressed on ethnic identity at Time 1. Coefficients in the first column reflect Time 2 ethnic identity, controlling for Time 1, regressed on family variables at Time 1.

† $p < .10$, *** $p < .001$.

Figure Caption

Figure 1. Cross-lag Associations between Ethnic Identity, Family Respect, and Family Obligation



Note. Values reflect standardized regression coefficients. Bold lines indicate significant associations.

*** $p < .001$.