The Acculturation of Parent-Child Relations in Immigrant Families

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Abstract: This research examines processes of acculturation in parent-child relations across immigrant generation among adolescents in the United States using data from Add Health. We assess acculturation by contrasting parent-child relations among first generation youth with second generation youth and according to the age of arrival and the length of time immigrant families have lived in the U.S. We capture the concept of generational dissonance, when parents' values and expected norms of behavior differ substantially from youth's, with measures of parental control and parent-child conflict. In contrast, generational consonance is measured by family cohesion and the sharing of weekly dinner meals. We test the hypotheses that generational dissonance is greater and consonance lower in the second generation compared to the first, with a earlier age at arrival to the U.S., and with longer time in the U.S., arguing that when adolescents acculturate more rapidly than parents, a "generation gap" in values and expectations for youth occurs.

The Acculturation of Parent-Child Relations in Immigrant Families

The U.S. has once again become a country of immigration and is being profoundly transformed in the process (Farley 1996; Portes and Rumbaut 1996). Since 1990 roughly one million immigrants have been added to the population per year, projecting that more immigrants will have arrived in this decade than at any time in U.S. history (Rumbaut 1998). Immigrant children (first generation) and U.S.-born children of immigrants (second generation) are the fastest growing segment of the U.S. child population, already accounting for 15% of all American children in 1990, including about 60% of all Hispanic children and 90% of all Asian-American children (Zhou 1997). Today, one of five American children are children of immigrants (first and second generation). Because most children in immigrant families belong to Hispanic or non-white racial and ethnic minorities, reflecting the post-1965 immigration waves from Latin America and the Caribbean and from Asia and the Middle East, future projections indicate that the proportion of children under age 18 who are white and non-Hispanic will decline from about 69 percent in 1990 to nearly 50 percent in 2030 (Smith and Edmonston 1997).

The tremendous influx of immigrant families into the United States in the last few decades has transformed the social and economic landscape for family interactions and the development of children. Despite considerable research on the experiences and adaptation of immigrant adults, there has been very little attention to the immigrant experiences of children in studies of immigration (e.g., Hernandez 1993; Jasso and Rosenzweig 1990; Lieberson 1980; Portes and Zhou 1993). This is largely due to a lack of data on immigrant children or missing information on nativity (Hogan and Eggebeen 1997; Jensen and Chitose 1996; Portes 1996). Only within the past several years have studies addressed the adaptation processes and outcomes

of children in the new immigration, but this research is mainly based on regional surveys that exploit the geographic concentration of immigrant families or on specific immigrant ethnic groups (e.g., Fuligni 1997; Rumbaut 1994; Perez 1994; Potes and Rumbaut 2001; Waters 1996; Zhou and Bankston 1996; review in Zhou 1997). Research using national data focus primarily on educational outcomes and rarely have sufficient sample sizes to identify separate ethnic groups (e.g., Bradby 1992; Hao and Bonstead-Bruns 1998; Kao and Tienda 1995). We therefore lack a national and representative view of the well-being of immigrant families and we have little understanding of their acculturation processes.

New data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) has made possible exciting new research on the well-being of immigrant children and families (e.g., (Bankston and Zhou 2002; Harker 2001; Harker et al. 2004; Harris 1999; Harris and Harker 2002, 2003; Gordon-Larsen et al. 2003; King and Harris 2002). This study over-sampled certain Hispanic and Asian ethnic groups (described below in the Data section) which increased the number of children in immigrant families who were selected. The study also occurred in the mid-1990s, capturing the increasing representation of children from immigrant families in America, and has unprecedented diversity in race and ethnicity on a national level. We use Add Health data in this paper to examine processes of acculturation in parent-child relations across immigrant generation among adolescents in the United States. We assess acculturation by contrasting parent-child relations among first generation youth (foreign-born adolescents with foreign-born parents) with second generation youth (U.S.-born adolescents with foreign-born parents). Following Portes and Rumbaut (2001a, 2001b) and Zhou (2001) we attempt to capture dissonant and consonant acculturation. Generational dissonance captures the negative

connotations of a generational gap, when parents' values and expected norms of behavior differ substantially from youth's. In immigrant families, however, generational dissonance takes on unique meaning and can indicate differential rates of acculturation, where children assimilate more rapidly into the mainstream American culture than parents.

Parent-Child Relations in Immigrant Families

Immigrant parents tend to focus on survival as well as economic mobility in the host society and often hold tightly to values, norms and behaviors acquired in their home country to assess their accomplishments and educate their children. Children, on the other hand, especially those in the second generation who are U.S. born, are more likely to be attracted by the culture of the host society and influenced by their American peers, other forms of mass media, and have a strong desire to fit in (Zhou 2001). Thus, children in immigrant families may hold different values and expectations for their lives in America than their parents, and this is often interpreted as generational dissonance. An alternative interpretation is that generational dissonance simply represents differential acculturation by children and parents to the host society.

Because second generation youth are U.S. born, speak English fluently, and are socialized in American schools and neighborhoods, we expect generational dissonance to be more evident in parent-child relations among second generation youth than among first generation youth. In other words, we expect U.S.-born children in immigrant families to have experienced greater acculturation of American society than their foreign-born parents. Generational dissonance is expected to be less among foreign-born adolescents who have spent time in their country of birth and may not have mastered English depending on their age at arrival to the U.S., and are

therefore likely to acculturate to U.S. society at a similar pace as their immigrant parents.

Generational consonance describes the other end of the continuum whereby parents and adolescents do not experience a generation gap but rather share common values, expectations for their future, and similar world views. Consonance may represent similar rates of acculturation among adolescents and parents and is therefore expected to be more evident among first generation youth in which both children and parents are foreign-born.

Most research to date that has examined notions of generational dissonance and consonance or intergenerational conflict in immigrant families have focused on language dissonance as the measure of differential acculturation (e.g., Portes and Rumbaut 2001a; 2001b; Zhou 2001). ADD SENTENCE ON WHAT IS FOUND....Another strand of research has examined parent-child consonance and dissonance (though these terms are often not explicitly used) in educational expectations (Fuligni 1997; Hao and Bonstead-Bruns 1998). In general, research finds that high parental expectations for educational achievement enhances children's actual achievement and that greater parent-child interactions promote consonance in the educational expectations of parents and children.

We expand measures of intergenerational relations in this research and focus on parent-child conflict, power, closeness, interactions, and shared time in the relationship. As indicators of generational dissonance we measure parent-child conflict and parental control with respect to the child's behavior. Generational consonance is indicated by measures of family cohesion, and the sharing of weekly dinner meals together. Our consonance measures are meant to capture closeness and shared values and traditions among children and parents, but note that where such measures are low, this can be interpreted as dissonance and evidence of a generational gap in

these indicators. For example, when family cohesion is low, this suggests parents and adolescents experience less closeness and warmth in their relations with parents and are not able to communicate effectively or satisfactorily. These theoretical expectations will be tested empirically; for example, we will explore whether measures of consonance are negatively correlated with parent-child conflict as expected.

To the extent that generational dissonance is higher and consonance lower among youth in the second generation compared to first generation youth, we argue that acculturation processes may underlie these differences whereby U.S.-born youth are likely to adopt the values and norms of behavior in the host society more rapidly than foreign-born youth. Parents of both second and first generation youth are foreign-born, so differential acculturation operating at the youth level alters parent-child relations in immigrant families. We therefore consider generation as one proxy for acculturation.

We further test this acculturation hypothesis by examining differences in parent-child relations by the length of time youth have lived in the U.S., which can also proxy for the length of time immigrant parents have been in the U.S. (least amount of time for parents of second generation youth). We also examine differentials in parent-child relations by the age of arrival of the child. Again, this allows us to examine further evidence that differences represent an acculturation process whereby we expect greater consonance and lower dissonance in parent-child relations among children who arrive in America at an older age, than those who arrive at a younger age. The younger the age of arrival, the earlier the developmental stage of exposure to American attitudes and norms of behavior by attending American schools, growing up in American neighborhoods, and developing friendships and exposure to peers in those schools and

neighborhoods.

In an effort to explore explanations for differential acculturation by children and parents, we attempt to identify potential mechanisms of acculturation processes in immigrant families. We introduce into our models of intergenerational parent-child relations a set of cultural and structural mechanisms that define differences among first- and second-generation immigrant youth and their families (or differences according to length of stay or age at arrival). Cultural mechanisms include religiosity and language (Harris 1999; Portes and Rumbaut 2001) and structural mechanisms include parental education, family structure, and number of siblings (Harris 1999).

We also control for cultural differences in parent-child relations as well as differential acculturation according to ethnicity, by examining parent-child relations by immigrant generation for nine race and ethnic groups, including families from Mexico, Cuba, Central-South America, Puerto Rico, China, Philippines, Other Asia, Africa and the Afro-Caribbean, and England and Canada.

Data

Data come from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health), a nationally representative study of over 20,000 adolescents in grades 7 through 12 in the U.S. in 1995. Add Health was designed to help explain the causes of adolescent health and health behavior with special emphasis on the effects of multiple contexts of adolescent life. The study used a multistage, stratified, school-based, cluster sampling design. A stratified sample of 80 high schools was selected with probability proportional to size. For each high school, a feeder

school was also selected with probability proportional to its student contribution to the high school. The school-based sample therefore has a pair of schools in each of 80 communities. An in-school questionnaire was administered to every student who attended each selected school on a particular day during the period of September 1994 to April 1995 and was completed by more than 90,000 adolescents.

In a second level of sampling adolescents and parents were selected for in-home interviews. From the school rosters, a random sample of some 200 students from each school pair was selected, irrespective of school size, to produce the core in-home sample of about 12,000 adolescents. A number of special over-samples were also selected for in-home interviews, including ethnic samples (Cuban, Puerto Rican, and Chinese adolescents), physically disabled adolescents, and a genetic sample. The in-home interviews were conducted between April and December 1995, yielding Wave I data. The core plus the special samples produced a total sample size of 20,745 adolescents in Wave I. A parent, generally the mother, was also interviewed in Wave I. See Harris, Florey, Tabor and Udry, 2003 for a more detailed description of the Add Health study. All adolescents in grades 7 through 11 in Wave I were targeted roughly one year later for the Wave II in-home interview.

This study is restricted to first and second-generation adolescents who participated in the Wave I interview and who had valid data on generation, ethnic group background, and sampling weights. These restrictions result in a sample size of about 4,500 (almost one in four adolescents in Add Health is a first or second generation youth, higher than the national representation because of over-sampling of various ethnic groups). Missing values on parent-child relationship measures reduce the sample further to 4,101.[1] In all analyses we use sampling weights that adjust

for the differential sampling probabilities of adolescents responding to the Wave I in-home interview, as well as correct for design effects associated with the clustered sampling at the school level.

Measures

Parent-child relations that represent measures of generational consonance include family cohesion and dinner meals. Family cohesion is measured by an additive index of responses (ranging from 1= low to 5 = high) of adolescent reports on feelings about how much people in their family understand them, how much they and their family have fun together, and how much their family pays attention to them (alpha = .79). On average, immigrant youth report moderately high levels of family cohesion (weighted average index is 11.26, where the range is from 2 to 15). Whether the adolescent eats the evening meal with a parent most days of the week (5-7 days/week) represents a measure of shared time and communication in which parents and children engage on a regular basis. On average, 60 percent (weighted) of immigrant youth eat most of their weekly dinner meals in the presence of one of their parents.

Our data contain two direct measures of generational dissonance as defined in the literature. Parental control is measured by the total count (ranging from 0 = low to 7 = high) of decisions about daily activities that parents do not allow youth to make on their own, including the time one must be home on weekend nights, the people they hang around with, what to wear, how much television to watch, kind of television programs to watch, the time to go to bed on week nights, and what to eat. On average, immigrant youth had relatively low levels of parental control (weighted mean = 2.07). Parent-child conflict is measured by the mean response (ranging

from 0 to 1) of adolescent reports on whether they had a serious argument about their behavior with the mother and the father in the last four weeks (separate question for each parent). For adolescents who live with only a mother or only a father, we use the one report; for adolescents who live with both parents, we average the report for mothers and fathers. On average, immigrant youth reports relatively low levels of parent-child conflict (weighted mean =.28).

Our consonance measures are reasonably correlated with a correlation of .22 between dinner meals and family cohesion. These measures are also negatively correlated with intergenerational conflict at about the same level (-.22 correlation between family cohesion and parent-child conflict). Parental control is less correlated with the other measures.

Acculturation variables are represented by immigrant generation, length of stay in the U.S. and age at arrival to the U.S. Immigrant generation is coded as a two-category variable: foreign-born adolescents to foreign-born parents (1st generation) and native-born adolescents to foreign-born parents (2nd generation). Generation is determined by questions about place and country of birth and citizen status (Harris 1999). Length of stay is measured in years by subtracting the age of arrival from the age at the Wave I interview. We then categorize years in the U.S. into four dummy variables: <6 years; 6-10 years; 11-14 years; and 15+ years. We include second generation youth in this variable by equating years in the U.S. with their age at Wave I, so all second-generation youth fall into either the third or fourth category (i.e., 11-14 and 15+ years). Age of arrival is also categorized into four development periods: <6 years; 6-10 years; 11-14 years; and 15+ years. Because second generation youth are born in the U.S., they fall into the first category of arriving in the U.S. < 6 years old.

Control variables include adolescent's age, gender and ethnic group background. Age is

measured in single years. Ethnic group background is defined as a nine-category variable: Mexican, Cuban, Central and South American, Puerto Rican, Chinese, Filipino, Other Asian, African and Afro-Caribbean, and Canadian and European. Race and ethnic background is self-identified by the respondent.

Variables entered in as intervening mechanisms that affect the acculturation process fall into two groups: cultural and structural mechanisms. Language spoken at home is measured by three dummy variables for English, Spanish, and other language. Religiosity is measured by summing responses on how often the child attends church (responses range from 0=no religion, 1=never, to 4=once a week or more) and on adolescent reports of the importance of religion (range from 0=not at all to 4=very important). Structural factors include parental education, family structure, and the number of siblings. Add Health allows for rich detail on family living arrangements, classifying adolescents who live with two biological or adoptive parents, a biological parent (mainly the mother) and a step parent, single mother, single father, and surrogate or foster parents (including grandparents, aunts and uncles, other adult relatives, or nonrelative adults). Parental education (the higher of the two parents if both are present) is measured as a set of dummy variables: less than high school; high school graduate; some college; college graduate; and missing parental education data.[2] Number of siblings is a count variable.

Analytic Design

We begin with bivariate analysis of our measures of parent-child relations according to our three acculturation measures, immigrant generation, length of stay, and age at arrival. In addition, we contrast first and second generation youth on our parent-child relations measures within nine race

and ethnic groups. These analyses allow us to establish whether patterns of intergenerational consonance and dissonance are consistent with our hypotheses about the effects of acculturation. We then move to multivariate analysis to control for the effects of age, gender, and race/ethnicity in assessing the effects of acculturation in a baseline model. To summarize our acculturation hypotheses:

1. We expect second generation youth to have greater dissonance and less consonance in their parent-child relations than first generation youth.
2. We expect that a longer length of stay in the U.S. will also be associated with greater dissonance and less consonance in parent-child relations.
3. We expect an earlier age at arrival (controlling for age) will be associated with greater dissonance and less consonance in parent-child relations.

Note that consonance is indicated by high levels of family cohesion and more weekly dinner meals, and dissonance is indicated by greater parent-child conflict and greater parental control. Note further that low levels on each of these measures represents the reverse relationship (i.e. low levels of family cohesion represent greater dissonance and less consonance).

We conduct four separate multivariate analyses for each of the 4 dependent variables of parent-child relations, using three different estimation procedures. After we estimate a baseline model, we then examine potential mediating mechanisms that may explain the intergenerational differences we observe according to acculturation status. This involves entering in the set of cultural variables in a second model, and a set of structural variables in a third model and observing change in the acculturation effects from the baseline model.

Methods

Depending on the form of our dependent variable, we employ different estimation procedures. All multivariate analyses use sample survey methods, which take into account the special features of the Add Health sampling design, including stratification, clustering, and sampling weights, to correct for biases in standard errors and significance tests if unweighted analyses are used. We use weighted ordinary least square regressions for the two dependent variables, family cohesion and intergenerational conflict because they approximate continuous underlying distributions. We use weighted binary logistic regression for the estimation of the dependent variable of sharing dinner meals with parents during most of the days each week because it is a dichotomous variable. The mathematical formulation for the logistic model is:

Because the results of the estimated coefficients, or betas, are not easily interpretable, we exponentiate the coefficients, e^{β}, to present odds ratios for more straightforward interpretation of results.

When the dependent variable is limited (unlike the common continuous variable) and measured by a number of events (usually equal or greater than zero), its underlying distribution is a poisson distribution (Long 1997). Because the dependent variable, parental control, is measured by the number of activities of the child over which the parents control, with a range between 0 and 7, we use weighted poisson regression for the multivariate analysis. The function for the poisson regression can be written as:

*log (number of actions for parental control) = X'*β

Like logistic regression, we do not directly interpret the beta coefficients derived directly from the model. Instead, we use the exponentiated coefficients, e^{β}, for interpretation.

Results

Table 1 presents our first set of descriptive analysis. The four dependent variables of intergenerational relations are arrayed across the top in the columns and the acculturation variable, immigrant generation, is shown in the rows within each of the nine race and ethnic groups. The first two measures that largely tap consonance in intergenerational relations show a pattern of decreasing consonance (and increasing dissonance) across immigrant generation for all ethnic groups. The bivariate results are stronger and more consistent for family cohesion than for dinner meals. Thus, second generation youth have lower levels of family cohesion and sharing weekly dinner meals with parents than first generation. Exceptions are noted for immigrant families from Central or South America and Africa and the Afro-Caribbean, where there are no differences by generation in the proportion who share weekly dinner meals.

Results for the measures that largely tap dissonance in intergenerational relations in columns three and four are generally consistent with expectations. We conceptualize parental control as measuring dissonance in relations when *less* parental control is exercised by parents, allowing adolescents greater freedom to make their own decisions, outside the watchful eye of parental supervision. We expect less control by parents in the second generation, indicating greater acculturation towards American norms where adolescents are granted greater autonomy than in most of the sending countries of immigrants. In six out of the nine ethnic groups,

parental control is lower for second generation youth compared to first generation youth. Less parental control is exercised by parents of second generation youth for all race and ethnic groups except youth from Mexico, Cuba, and Africa and the Afro-Caribbean. The overall mean difference by generation indicates there is less parental control of youth in the second generation compared to the first generation (parental control scores of 2.03 and 2.14, respectively). Similarly, for six out of the nine ethnic groups, intergenerational conflict is higher for second generation youth. The only ethnic group for which both dissonance measures do not operate in the expected direction is Cuba.

Table 2 shows the bivariate relationships between intergenerational relations (now shown in the rows) and age at arrival and length of stay. Again, results are generally consistent with expectations. The earlier ages at arrival and the longer stays in the U.S. are associated with less family cohesion, less sharing of weekly dinner meals, less parental control of adolescents' activities, and greater parent-child conflict. The relationship is most consistent across each category on the acculturation measures for family cohesion. The relationship is also most clear by contrasting the extremes on the acculturation measures.

Multivariate Analysis

While the descriptive analysis is suggestive, it is important to control for other confounding factors surely affecting these bivariate results, such as age, gender, and ethnicity. In multivariate analysis our baseline model includes these controls along with each acculturation variable. For each dependent variable of intergenerational relations, we conducted three separate multivariate analyses testing for the effects of our three acculturation variables, generation, age of arrival, and

length of stay. For each analysis, we estimate three models: the baseline model; model adding cultural mechanisms associated with acculturation; and a model adding structural mechanisms. Potentially, this would involve 12 tables (4 dependent variables X 3 acculturation independent variables of interest) with three models shown in each table. For ease of presentation, however, we show the results on generation status for each outcome, and the results from either age at arrival or length of stay for each outcome, because results on these two acculturation variables were often similar (all results are available from authors).

Family Cohesion

Table 3 shows the multivariate results of generational differences in family cohesion. The baseline model shown in the first column (Model 1) indicates that there is a significant effect of second generation such that there are lower levels of family cohesion in immigrant families when children are U.S. born. Although we have little substantive interest in the effects of the other controls, our results are consistent with other literature indicating that older children and females report less family cohesion (Harris et al. 1996, 1999). In addition, we see that Filipino and other Asian youth in immigrant families report significantly lower levels of family cohesion than immigrant youth from Europe and Canada.

In Model 2, we enter in the cultural variables of language spoken at home and religiosity. Only religiosity is significant showing a positive association with family cohesion. We rarely find a significant effect of language spoken at home across most parent-child outcomes, probably because our acculturation variables (e.g., generation, age at arrival, and length of stay) serve as proxies for language spoken at home (Perreira et al. 2004). Our main interest, however, is the

extent to which entering this set of variables attenuates the size and significance of the coefficient for generation, suggesting a mediating role of these variables. We note some attenuation as the size of the coefficient reduces by about 20% but remains significant.

We enter the set of structural variables in Model 3 of Table 3, again for purposes of possibly explaining the generational differences in family cohesion. Here structural variables play no role in mediating the effects of generation, as its effect remains strong and even increases slightly. Family structure is the only structural factor that influences differences in family cohesion, such that family cohesion is lower in step and single-mother families relative to two-biological/adoptive parent families. These analyses are weighted, with standard errors adjusted for the clustered sampling design. Because our purpose here is to establish acculturation effects in parent-child relations and explore possible mechanisms of the effects, and not to model all the variance in parent-child relations, we are not concerned with the low R-square.

In Table 4 we show results of the same three models of family cohesion for the effects of age at arrival to the U.S. The baseline model shows a significant effect of age at arrival. Immigrant youth who arrived to the U.S. when they were less than 6 years old report lower levels of family cohesion by more than one point on the additive index compared to immigrant youth who arrived more recently when they were 15 years old or older. The effect for arrival in middle childhood, between the ages of 6 and 10, also indicates lower levels of family cohesion by almost one point on the index. Although the < 6 years category includes second generation youth and its effect is consistent with the generation models in Table 3, we still find an important "linear" effect of acculturation as measured by age at arrival aged 6-10 relative to more recent arrivals in the first generation. Thus, age at arrival allows us to capture acculturation effects even among

foreign-born youth. Similar to Table 3, the addition of cultural variables reduces the acculturation effects of age at arrival slightly in Model 2, but not at all in Model 3 when structural factors are added.

Sharing of Weekly Dinner Meals

Table 5 shows the results for the logistic regression of generational differences in sharing weekly dinner meals. Focusing on the effect of generation, we again find that second generation youth are less likely to share most of the weekly dinner meals with their parents. Interpreting the odds ratio indicates that the probability of sharing most of the weekly dinner meals is 28% lower for second generation youth compared to first generation. Interestingly, there are more significant ethnic group effects for dinner meals, all indicating that youth in the various ethnic groups are less likely to share dinner meals with their parents than European and Canadian youth in immigrant families.

When we enter cultural factors in Model 2, there is little attenuation of the significant generation effect, and the effect increases somewhat when structural factors are entered in Model 3. Results for these factors are similar to the other consonance measure of family cohesion. That is, religiosity increases and non-intact family structures reduces the sharing of weekly dinner meals. We only present this one analysis for dinner meals because neither age at arrival or length of stay were strongly associated with this outcome.

Parental Control

Table 6 presents generational differences in parental control. It is important to note first, that

almost all of the immigrant parents in ethnic groups other than Europe and Canada exercise more parental control, indicative of traditional parental behavior in the sending countries. Hispanic parents tend to use more parental control than Asian parents. Controlling for ethnic background, we find the expected effect that immigrant parents exercise less parental control over second generation youth than first generation. This suggests that U.S.-born children in immigrant families have greater autonomy and freedom to make their own decisions about aspects and activities in their lives, a benefit that can likely be ascribed to greater acculturation of children relative to parents in the second generation. The effect is not big, reducing the count on parental control by only 10%. When we enter in cultural factors in Model 2, this small effect is slightly attenuated and no longer significant. Although none of the cultural effects are significant, speaking Spanish at home is marginally significant at the.07 level. There is no change to the results in Model 3. Results for age at arrival and length of stay were not compelling evidence for our hypotheses (nor were they compelling in rejecting our hypothesis).

Table 7 presents the results for parental control using length of stay as the acculturation variable. Here we find strong support for our acculturation hypothesis. With increasing length of stay in the U.S., immigrant parents tend to exercise less parental control over their children's activities. The addition of cultural mechanisms in Model 2 reduces this effect somewhat, but still indicates that parents exercise greater control over immigrant children in families that have recently migrated to the U.S.

Intergenerational Conflict

Table 8 shows generational differences in our final parent-child outcome on intergenerational

conflict. We again find a significant effect for second generation youth who experience greater conflict and arguments with parents regarding their behavior. Second generation youth experience a 6% increase in the measure on parent-child conflict (which ranges from 0 to 1). Consistent with prior results, cultural mechanisms reduce this effect somewhat, but it still remains significant in Model 2. Here language spoken at home is important, and an added dimension of acculturation appears to be operating. When language spoken at home is not English (either Spanish or an other language), intergenerational conflict is less than when English is spoken at home. The fact that this finding is in the same direction as our other acculturation variables lends additional support to our argument that generation status and time in the U.S. are capturing acculturation. The addition of structural mechanisms in Model 3 do not change the results.

In Table 9 we examine the effects of age at arrival in relation to intergenerational conflict. The findings reveal almost a linear effect whereby the earlier children arrive in the U.S., the greater parent-child conflict is by adolescence. The earlier the arrival, the longer the time the child is exposed to American norms and attitudes with peers and in schools and neighborhoods. Again, this effect is mediated somewhat by speaking a non-English language at home by those with the latest age of arrival. We find a curious positive influence of religiosity for intergenerational conflict that is hard to explain. Furthermore, this is the only outcome for which entering in structural mechanisms in Model 3 attenuate some of the acculturation effects in age at arrival (though all remain significant). Family structure defines a context for more or less conflict whereby more intergenerational conflict occurs in step and single-mother families and less in single-father families compared to two biological parent families.

Conclusions

This paper examined acculturation processes in parent-child relations among youth in immigrant families. We argued that when children experience greater acculturation into U.S. society, parent-child relations would be characterized more by dissonance than by consonance. When children's acculturation is similar to the acculturation of their parents, consonance in parent-child relations would be more evident. We used as measures of acculturation immigrant generation, age of arrival to the U.S., and the length of stay in the U.S., arguing that second generation youth, youth who arrived to the U.S. at a younger age, and youth who have a longer length of stay would experience greater acculturation.

Our findings are robust for the hypothesis about immigrant generation. Across all measures of dissonance and consonance in parent-child relations, we find empirical support that second generation youth experience less consonance and more dissonance. That is, second generation youth report lower levels of family cohesion, less often share weekly dinner meals with parents, less parental control of youth activities, and greater intergenerational conflict than youth in the first generation. With the exception of parental control, these effects remain significant in the context of other potential mediating effects of differences in parent-child relations.

Our findings for age at arrival and length of stay are less robust, but do support our hypotheses. We find important acculturation effects of age at arrival for differences in family cohesion and intergenerational conflict; and important acculturation effects of length of stay in the U.S. for differences in parental control. Note that length of stay effects were also evident for family cohesion and intergenerational conflict and age at arrival effects for parental control, but

they were not as important as the ones we show.

Our findings on age at arrival and length of stay provide additional strong support for our arguments that dissonance and consonance in parent-child relations are due to differential acculturation by children and parents because these effects represent increasing degrees of exposure to American society by youth in both the second generation *and in the first generation*. For first generation youth, each additional year of exposure to American society changes their relationships with parents. Because we assume that foreign-born children's exposure to American society represents a more rapid acculturation than foreign-born parents' exposure, we attribute the acculturation effect to children's experiences. This seems like a safe assumption because children must attend school every day where they can only speak English and socialize with other children, the majority of whom are native-born, while parents are not forced into such interactions with other natives in their surroundings and can live a rather isolated life, especially foreign-born mothers who do not work outside the home.

While we find strong support for our acculturation hypotheses, our models do a poor job of explaining acculturation processes in parent-child relations. Some of the cultural mechanisms seemed to play a small role in mediating the acculturation effects in explaining differences in parent-child outcomes, but none were important across all models. The ways in which acculturation processes operate in the lives of immigrant children to influence parent-child relations needs to be explored in further research. In future work we plan to include additional mechanisms that operate in the social contexts of the school and neighborhood. For example, we plan to examine the role of race and ethnic composition of the neighborhood and the school, as well as the percent foreign-born. From these variables and the adolescents' ethnic origin, for

example, we will construct variables of co-ethnic presence in a neighborhood and in a school which may better capture acculturation processes operating in the neighborhood and school context, which may help to explain the acculturation effects on parent-child relations that we document in the work so far.

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Endnotes

1. Missing values on parent-child relations occur because some adolescents do not live with a biological parent or a parent who acts as a parent figure (based on adolescents' reports of who they live with and what their relationship is to each household member).

2. We also examined family income in our models, but income was never strongly associated with the parent-child measures, and because there are a large number of missing values, we dropped income from our models.

Table 1. Weighted mean differences in parent-child relations by immigrant generation and ethnic origin

		Family cohesion	Dinner with parents most of the days each week	Parental control	Intergenerational conflict	N
Mexico	Gen1	11.81	.63	2.40	.21	238
	Gen2	11.16	.61	2.42	.33	730
Cuba	Gen 1	11.66	.77	1.41	.24	213
	Gen 2	11.32	.51	2.24	.22	240
Central-South America	Gen 1	11.65	.58	2.30	.25	210
	Gen 2	11.35	.60	2.08	.30	194
Puerto Rico	Gen 1	11.83	.67	2.78	.49	34
	Gen 2	11.30	.51	2.17	.39	222
China	Gen 1	11.10	.64	2.16	.35	99
	Gen 2	11.06	.62	1.43	.35	170
Philippine	Gen 1	11.28	.47	1.95	.29	296
	Gen 2	10.53	.45	1.87	.33	256
Other Asia	Gen 1	10.99	.64	1.96	.24	165
	Gen 2	10.56	.49	1.90	..31	220
Africa/Afro-Caribbean	Gen 1	11.43	..41	2.09	.14	74
	Gen 2	11.34	.50	2.15	.25	199
Euro/Canada	Gen 1	11.75	.70	1.85	.24	55
	Gen 2	11.28	.68	1.76	.28	486
Total	Gen 1	11.50	.60	2.14	.25	1,384
	Gen 2	11.16	.60	2.03	.30	2,717
	Gen 1 + 2	11.26	.60	2.07	.28	4,101

Table 2. Weighted differences in parent-child relations by age at arrival and length of stay in the United States

	Age at arrival				Length of stay			
	< 6 years old	6- 10 years old	11 – 14 years old	15+ years old	< 6 years	6 – 10 years	11 – 14 years	15+ years
Family Cohesion	11.16	11.44	11.69	11.90	11.86	11.18	11.22	11.16
Dinner with parents most of the days each week	.40	.37	.40	.48	.60	.60	.36	.41
Parental control	2.02	2.43	2.22	1.67	2.41	2.03	2.01	2.01
Intergenerational conflict	.30	.28	.25	.09	.23	.25	.26	.20
N (total = 4,101)	3,136	305	505	155	585	341	354	2,821

Table 3. Weighted OLS regression for generational differences in family cohesion

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Age	-0.184	-0.165	-0.166
	(0.042)**	(0.042)**	(0.040)**
Female	-0.392	-0.445	-0.423
	(0.139)**	(0.141)**	(0.138)**
Ethnicity (Europe/Canada)			
Mexico	-0.020	-0.276	-0.194
	(0.187)	(0.226)	(0.233)
Cuba	0.015	-0.132	-0.076
	(0.453)	(0.408)	(0.369)
Central-South America	0.046	-0.180	-0.091
	(0.268)	(0.269)	(0.274)
Puerto Rico	-0.042	-0.177	-0.008
	(0.254)	(0.248)	(0.256)
Chinese	-0.422	-0.393	-0.497
	(0.322)	(0.327)	(0.329)
Philippine	-0.536	-0.718	-0.757
	(0.223)*	(0.230)**	(0.230)**
Other Asia	-0.693	-0.808	-0.864
	(0.313)*	(0.315)*	(0.313)**
Africa/Afro-Caribbean	0.097	0.095	0.188
	(0.309)	(0.328)	(0.327)
Second generation	-0.580	-0.461	-0.484
	(0.154)**	(0.182)*	(0.181)**
Language spoken at home (English)			
Spanish		0.305	0.313
		(0.235)	(0.247)
Other language		0.309	0.271
		(0.224)	(0.217)
Religiosity		0.128	0.120
		(0.031)**	(0.029)**
Parents' education (less than high school)			
High school graduate			0.054
			(0.186)
Some college			0.087
			(0.240)
College graduate			0.167
			(0.218)
Missing			0.078
			(0.454)
Family structure (two biological or two adopted parents)			
One step-parent + one biological parent			-0.658
			(0.152)**
Single mom			-0.402
			(0.151)**
Single dad			0.058
			(0.328)
Two step-parents or other types			0.035
			(0.241)
Number of siblings			-0.042
			(0.042)
Constant	15.439	14.251	14.461
	(0.755)**	(0.792)**	(0.756)**
R-squared	0.04	0.05	0.06
N	4101	4101	4101

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. * $p <= .05$; ** $p < = .01$

Table 4. Weighted OLS regression for age at arrival differences in family cohesion

	Model	Model 2	Model 3
Age	-0.203	-0.182	-0.182
	(0.044)**	(0.043)**	(0.042)**
Female	-0.383	-0.434	-0.410
	(0.139)**	(0.140)**	(0.138)**
Ethnicity (Europe/Canada)			
Mexico	0.024	-0.244	-0.162
	(0.191)	(0.228)	(0.237)
Cuba	0.049	-0.116	-0.055
	(0.423)	(0.383)	(0.339)
Central-South America	0.104	-0.136	-0.041
	(0.268)	(0.274)	(0.281)
Puerto Rico	-0.015	-0.159	0.015
	(0.248)	(0.245)	(0.252)
Chinese	-0.366	-0.339	-0.441
	(0.303)	(0.317)	(0.319)
Philippines	-0.511	-0.691	-0.724
	(0.209)*	(0.218)**	(0.215)**
Other Asia	-0.606	-0.725	-0.773
	(0.300)*	(0.309)*	(0.309)*
Africa/Afro-Caribbean	0.084	0.083	0.183
	(0.331)	(0.347)	(0.344)
Age at arrival (15+ years old)			
< 6 years old	-1.312	-1.085	-1.077
	(0.350)**	(0.349)**	(0.393)**
6-10 years old	-0.930	-0.835	-0.833
	(0.363)*	(0.362)*	(0.414)*
11-14 years old	-0.557	-0.437	-0.369
	(0.339)	(0.328)	(0.360)
Language spoken at home(English)			
Spanish		0.308	0.308
		(0.222)	(0.235)
Other language		0.275	0.229
		(0.202)	(0.192)
Religiosity		0.125	0.117
		(0.030)**	(0.029)**
Parents' education (less than high school)			
High school graduate			0.057
			(0.182)
Some college			0.087
			(0.234)
College graduate			0.157
			(0.213)
Missing			0.083
			(0.462)
Family structure (two biological or two adopted parents)			
One step-parent + one biological parent			-0.683
			(0.151)**
Single mom			-0.408
			(0.151)**
Single dad			0.037
			(0.336)
Two step-parents or other types			-0.097
			(0.281)
Number of siblings			-0.039
			(0.042)
Constant	15.870	14.683	14.826
	(0.813)**	(0.806)**	(0.848)**
R-squared	0.04	0.06	0.07
N	4101	4101	4101

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. * $p <= .05$; ** $p < = .01$

Table 5. Weighted binary logistic regression for generational differences in dinner with parents most of the days each week

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Age	-0.248 / .781 (0.038)**	-0.235 / .791 (0.038)**	-0.238 / .788 (0.038)**
Female	0.020 / 1.021 (0.102)	-0.017 / .983 (0.102)	0.004 / 1.004 (0.104)
Ethnicity (Europe/Canada)			
Mexico	-0.298 / .742 (0.172)	-0.363 / .696 (0.213)	-0.346 / .708 (0.221)
Cuba	-0.453 / .635 (0.201)*	-0.435 / .647 (0.212)*	-0.322 / .725 (0.206)
Central-South America	-0.443 / .642 (0.193)*	-0.507 / .602 (0.194)**	-0.447 / .639 (0.193)*
Puerto Rico	-0.788 / .455 (0.211)**	-0.845 / .430 (0.206)**	-0.670 / .512 (0.213)**
Chinese	-0.296 / .744 (0.310)	-0.195 / .823 (0.330)	-0.263 / .769 (0.323)
Philippines	-0.979 / .376 (0.180)**	-1.127 / .324 (0.176)**	-1.174 / .309 (0.179)**
Other Asia	-0.553 / .575 (0.215)*	-0.598 / .550 (0.221)**	-0.632 / .531 (0.218)**
Africa/Afro-Caribbean	-0.760 / .468 (0.295)*	-0.795 / .452 (0.311)*	-0.660 / .517 (0.310)*
Second generation	-0.331 / .718 (0.130)*	-0.314 / .730 (0.136)*	-0.366 /.693 (0.142)*
Language spoken at home (English)			
Spanish		-0.026 / .975 (0.164)	-0.047 / .954 (0.160)
Other language		0.025 / .1.026 (0.202)	-0.058 / .944 (0.205)
Religiosity		0.100 / 1.105 (0.022)**	0.089 / 1.093 (0.023)**
Parents' education (less than high school)			
High school graduate			0.027 / 1.027 (0.167)
Some college			0.196 / 1.216 (0.157)
College graduate			0.069 / 1.072 (0.173)
Missing			0.166 / 1.180 (0.241)
Family structure (two biological or two adopted parents)			
One step-parent + one biological parent			-0.478 / .620 (0.160)**
Single mom			-0.668 / .513 (0.138)**
Single dad			-0.637 / .529 (0.303)*
Two step-parents or other types			-0.397 / .672 (0.260)
Number of siblings			0.020 / 1.020 (0.045)
Constant	5.222 (0.725)**	4.508 (0.719)**	4.810 (0.759)**
N	4101	4101	4101

Note: coefficients and odds ratios with standard errors in parentheses. * $p <= .05$; ** $p < = .01$

Table 6. Weighted poisson regression for generational differences in parental control

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Age	-0.124 / .883 (0.016)**	-0.122 / .885 (0.015)**	-0.125 / .882 (0.015)**
Female	0.050 / 1.051 (0.033)	0.041 / 1.042 (0.034)	0.040 / 1.040 (0.033)
Ethnicity (Europe/Canada)			
Mexico	0.325 / 1.384 (0.066)**	0.269 / 1.308 (0.082)**	0.210 / 1.233 (0.084)*
Cuba	0.096 / 1.101 (0.056)	0.056 / 1.057 (0.063)	0.070 / 1.072 (0.066)
Central-South America	0.243 / 1.275 (0.086)**	0.195 / 1.215 (0.082)*	0.196 / 1.217 (0.082)*
Puerto Rico	0.176 / 1.192 (0.073)*	0.147 / 1.159 (0.072)*	0.158 / 1.216 (0.074)*
Chinese	-0.005 / .995 (0.112)	-0.019 / .981 (0.109)	-0.020 / 1.171 (0.106)
Philippines	0.099 / 1.104 (0.067)	0.069 / 1.072 (0.068)	0.072 / .980 (0.068)
Other Asia	0.096 / 1.101 (0.089)	0.066 / 1.069 (0.089)	0.060 / 1.075 (0.088)
Africa/Afro-Caribbean	0.257 / 1.293 (0.139)	0.258 / 1.295 (0.141)	0.268 / 1.061 (0.134)*
Second generation	-0.091 / .913 (0.041)*	-0.064 / .938 (0.043)	-0.065 / 1.307 (0.043)
Language spoken at home(English)			
Spanish		0.081 / 1.084 (0.049)	0.041 / .937 (0.047)
Other language		0.087 / 1.091 (0.070)	0.047 / 1.042 (0.068)
Religiosity		0.018 / 1.018 (0.010)	0.017 / 1.048 (0.010)
Parents' education (less than high school)			
High school graduate			-0.072 / 1.017 (0.046)
Some college			-0.118 / .931 (0.067)
College graduate			-0.112 / .889 (0.053)*
Missing			0.039 / .894 (0.089)
Family structure (two biological or two adopted parents)			
One step-parent + one biological parent			-0.088 / 1.040 (0.054)
Single mom			-0.090 / .916 (0.053)
Single dad			-0.289 / .914 (0.126)*
Two step-parents or other types			0.038 / .749 (0.127)
Number of siblings			0.024 / 1.038 (0.014)
Constant	2.603 (0.271)**	2.417 (0.256)**	2.557 / 1.023 (0.257)**
N	4101	4101	4101

Note: coefficients and odds ratios with standard errors in parentheses. * $p <= .05$; ** $p < = .01$

Table 7. Weighted poisson regression for length of stay difference in parental control

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Age	-0.124 / .883	-0.122 / .885	-0.125 / .883
	(0.016)**	(0.015)**	(0.014)**
Female	0.054 / 1.055	0.045 / 1.047	0.045 / 1.046
	(0.033)	(0.034)	(0.033)
Ethnicity (Europe/Canada)			
Mexico	0.324 / 1.382	0.269 / 1.308	0.210 / 1.233
	(0.066)**	(0.080)**	(0.082)*
Cuba	0.095 / 1.100	0.055 / 1.056	0.068 / 1.071
	(0.055)	(0.062)	(0.066)
Central-South America	0.246 / 1.279	0.198 / 1.219	0.200 / 1.221
	(0.083)**	(0.079)*	(0.079)*
Puerto Rico	0.183 / 1.200	0.155 / 1.167	0.167 / 1.182
	(0.073)*	(0.073)*	(0.075)*
Chinese	-0.012 / .988	-0.017 / .983	-0.018 / .982
	(0.106)	(0.104)	(0.100)
Philippines	0.089 / 1.093	0.062 / 1.064	0.066 / 1.068
	(0.067)	(0.068)	(0.069)
Other Asia	0.102 / 1.108	0.079 / 1.082	0.073 / 1.076
	(0.088)	(0.089)	(0.089)
Africa/Afro-Caribbean	0.244 / 1.277	0.246 / 1.278	0.255 / 1.290
	(0.143)	(0.144)	(0.137)
Length of stay (< 6 years)			
6-10 years	-0.185 / .831	-0.185 / .831	-0.196 / .822
	(0.080)*	(0.079)*	(0.081)*
11-14 years	-0.217 / .805	-0.200 / .819	-0.213 / .808
	(0.072)**	(0.072)**	(0.079)**
15+ years	-0.212 / .809	-0.186 / .830	-0.196 / .822
	(0.044)**	(0.044)**	(0.048)**
Language spoken at home (English)			
Spanish		0.074 / 1.077	0.033 / 1.033
		(0.047)	(0.045)
Other language		0.062 / 1.064	0.018 / 1.019
		(0.068)	(0.066)
Religiosity		0.018 / 1.018	0.016 / 1.017
		(0.010)	(0.010)
Parents' education (less than high school)			
High school graduate			-0.069 / .933
			(0.045)
Some college			-0.113 / .893
			(0.065)
College graduate			-0.113 / .894
			(0.053)*
Missing			0.052 / 1.053
			(0.088)
Family structure (two biological or two adopted parents)			
One step-parent + one biological parent			-0.097 / .907
			(0.053)
Single mom			-0.090 / .914
			(0.054)
Single dad			-0.311 / .733
			(0.127)*
Two step-parents or other types			0.000 / 1.000
			(0.133)
Number of siblings			0.023 / 1.023
			(0.014)
Constant	2.622	2.469	2.614 /
	(0.241)**	(0.221)**	(0.222)**
N	4101	4101	4101

Note: coefficients and odds ratios with standard errors in parentheses. * $p <= .05$, ** $p < = .01$.

Table 8. Weighted OLS regression for generational differences in intergenerational conflict

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Age	0.003	0.004	0.006
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.005)
Female	0.048	0.047	0.039
	(0.020)*	(0.019)*	(0.019)*
Ethnicity (Europe/Canada)			
Mexico	0.029	0.053	0.069
	(0.028)	(0.036)	(0.039)
Cuba	-0.033	-0.004	-0.031
	(0.055)	(0.053)	(0.050)
Central-South America	0.021	0.041	0.025
	(0.029)	(0.036)	(0.039)
Puerto Rico	0.124	0.133	0.101
	(0.055)*	(0.054)*	(0.054)
Chinese	0.099	0.132	0.147
	(0.068)	(0.069)	(0.068)*
Philippines	0.057	0.052	0.057
	(0.037)	(0.038)	(0.038)
Other Asia	0.024	0.039	0.052
	(0.036)	(0.035)	(0.035)
Africa/Afro-Caribbean	-0.038	-0.044	-0.062
	(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.043)
Second generation	0.065	0.046	0.041
	(0.020)**	(0.021)*	(0.020)*
Language spoken at home(English)			
Spanish		-0.060	-0.058
		(0.029)*	(0.030)
Other language		-0.070	-0.058
		(0.031)*	(0.032)
Religiosity		0.006	0.008
		(0.003)	(0.003)*
Parents' education (less than high school)			
High school graduate			-0.010
			(0.031)
Some college			0.083
			(0.040)*
College graduate			-0.014
			(0.031)
Missing			-0.063
			(0.038)
Family structure (two biological or two adopted parents)			
One step-parent + one biological parent			0.068
			(0.034)*
Single mom			0.101
			(0.032)**
Single dad			-0.113
			(0.044)*
Two step-parents or other types			-0.059
			(0.041)
Number of siblings			-0.010
			(0.007)
Constant	0.083	0.074	0.036
	(0.101)	(0.103)	(0.104)
R-squared	0.02	0.02	0.04
N	4101	4101	4101

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. * $p <= .05$; ** $p < = .01$

Table 9. Weighted OLS regression for age at arrival differences in intergenerational conflict

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Age	0.006	0.007	0.009
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Female	0.047	0.046	0.038
	(0.020)*	(0.019)*	(0.019)
Ethnicity (Europe/Canada)			
Mexico	0.019	0.049	0.067
	(0.028)	(0.036)	(0.039)
Cuba	-0.040	-0.005	-0.032
	(0.053)	(0.052)	(0.049)
Central-south America	0.007	0.032	0.017
	(0.029)	(0.035)	(0.039)
Puerto Rico	0.121	0.132	0.101
	(0.056)*	(0.055)*	(0.055)
Chinese	0.087	0.121	0.136
	(0.068)	(0.070)	(0.068)*
Philippines	0.047	0.044	0.048
	(0.036)	(0.037)	(0.037)
Other Asia	0.009	0.027	0.040
	(0.036)	(0.035)	(0.035)
Africa/Afro-Caribbean	-0.038	-0.044	-0.063
	(0.047)	(0.047)	(0.044)
Age at arrival (15+ years old)			
< 6 years old	0.213	0.198	0.184
	(0.030)**	(0.031)**	(0.031)**
6-10 years old	0.197	0.195	0.181
	(0.051)**	(0.055)**	(0.054)**
11-14 years old	0.164	0.172	0.159
	(0.037)**	(0.039)**	(0.036)**
Language spoken at home(English)			
Spanish		-0.067	-0.062
		(0.030)*	(0.031)*
Other language		-0.069	-0.055
		(0.030)*	(0.031)
Religiosity		0.007	0.009
		(0.003)*	(0.003)*
Parents' education (less than high school)			
High school graduate			-0.009
			(0.030)
Some college			0.084
			(0.039)*
College graduate			-0.010
			(0.031)
Missing			-0.058
			(0.038)
Family structure (two biological or two adopted parents)			
One step-parent + one biological parent			0.070
			(0.033)*
Single mom			0.101
			(0.033)**
Single dad			-0.116
			(0.044)**
Two step-parents or other types			-0.034
			(0.041)
Number of siblings			-0.011
			(0.007)
Constant	-0.043	-0.080	-0.108
	(0.107)	(0.111)	(0.110)
R-squared	0.02	0.02	0.05
N	4101	4101	4101

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. * $p <= .05$; ** $p < = .01$