Latino Families in the United States

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Latino families are a large and rapidly growing segment of the U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). Latinos[1] currently comprise 15.1% of the U.S. population and are the fastest growing ethnic group in the U.S., increasing 3.3% from 2006 to 2007, compared to 2.9% for Asians, 1.6% for Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders, 1.3% for Blacks,[2] 1% for American Indians and Alaska Natives, and 0.3% for Whites (U.S. Census, 2008). In fact, U.S. Census projections indicate that, by the year 2050, Latinos will comprise 24.4% of the U.S. population, Blacks will comprise 14.6%, and Asians will represent 8% (Bergman, 2004). For the most part, the tremendous growth in the Latino population is the result of higher birth rates compared to other ethnic populations in the U.S. and immigration from Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America (Knight, Roosa, & Umaña-Taylor, 2009). The impact of the Latino population in the U.S. is evident in a number of ways beyond their large size and rapid growth. For instance, in the U.S. Census 2000, 18% of the nation's population reported that they spoke a language other than English at home and, in every region of the U.S., Spanish was the leading non-English language spoken at home (Shin & Bruno, 2003). In fact, approximately 78% of Latinos reported that they spoke Spanish at home (Ramirez, 2004). Thus, the presence of Latino families is now felt across all regions of the U.S. As the presence of Latinos in the U.S. has become more salient, the amount of scholarship devoted to Latino families also has increased.

[1]There is a great deal of confusion regarding the terms Latino and Hispanic, and whether one is more accurate (or politically correct) than the other for labeling individuals who belong to this tremendously heterogeneous population. The two terms refer to slightly different groups (see Hayes-Bautista & Chapa, 1987; Treviño, 1987, for historical accounts of the creation of these terms and their intended use), and there is a lack of agreement among scholars regarding which term is most appropriate; however, such a discussion is beyond the scope of this chapter. For the purpose of the current chapter, the term Latino is being used to refer to individuals with Spanish speaking ancestors whose origins are in South America, Central America, islands in the Caribbean with an extensive history of Spanish colonization (i.e., Cuba, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico), or Spain. This includes, for example, individuals whose ancestors are from Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela, to name a few.

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[2]For the purposes of presenting demographic trends in the U.S. in this introductory paragraph, we use Census categorization of ethnic-racial groups, which acknowledges that Latinos represent an ethnic group and can be of any race (e.g., White, Black).

G.W. Peterson and K.R. Bush (eds.), *Handbook of Marriage and the Family*,
DOI 10.1007/978-1-4614-3987-5_30,

We approach the review of scholarship on Latino families from an ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Crouter, 1983), emphasizing how individual characteristics, proximal processes in key settings such as family and work, and larger contextual conditions (e.g., culture, socioeconomic status) shape family dynamics. We draw on literature from several different disciplines including family studies, sociology, and developmental and clinical psychology. Our goals are to provide an overview of existing Latino family scholarship, identify individual and contextual factors that introduce variability into family dynamics, and provide directions for future research. Unless otherwise noted, all of the studies included in this review utilized samples living in the continental U.S.

Overview of Existing Latino Family Scholarship

An exhaustive review of existing scholarship for any ethnic group on a topic as broad as "family studies" is impossible. Thus, in the sections that follow we review three substantive areas that have generated the significant existing research on Latino families. We provide this review as a backdrop from which to understand the general trends in research on Latino families, but in no way suggest that this is an exhaustive review of existing work. In particular, we focus our review on (a) general parenting behaviors, (b) cultural-specific parenting processes, and (c) the role of gender in shaping family roles, activities, and relationships in Latino families.

General Parenting Behaviors

A majority of the existing work on Latino families has focused on parenting-related processes (e.g., parenting behaviors, parent–child relationship characteristics) and, more specifically, how these processes are linked to child development and adjustment. For instance, several research teams have examined parenting styles and strategies among Latino families (e.g., Buriel, 1993; Caldera, Fitzpatrick, & Wampler, 2002; Chavez & Buriel, 1986; Delgado-Gaitan, 1993; Domenech Rodríguez, Donovick, & Crowley, 2009), with some focusing specifically on how parenting is linked to child outcomes (e.g., Domenech Rodríguez, Davis, Rodríguez, & Bates, 2006; Farver, Eppe, & Ballon, 2006; Fracasso, Busch-Rossnagel, & Fisher, 1994). Harwood, Leyendecker, Carlson, Asencio, and Miller's (2002) review of parenting among Latino families in the U.S., for example, identified the construct of proper demeanor, or *respeto*, as a key parenting value among Latino families. They explained that Latino parents from diverse national origin and socioeconomic backgrounds generally endorsed this aspect of child socialization and emphasized this value in the socialization of their children more so than their European American counterparts (Harwood et al.). Similarly, in their extensive review of parenting behaviors among Latinos (e.g., Costa Rican, Central American, Puerto Rican, Mexican), they concluded that Latino families tended to encourage interdependence or sociocentrism, in which children are socialized to place a greater emphasis on their obligations to the family and the larger group, rather than on their individual needs or desires (Harwood et al.). Finally, in another review of parenting behaviors among Latino families, Grau, Azmitia, and Quattlebaum (2009) found that Latina mothers (i.e., Puerto Rican and Mexican-origin) tended to be more controlling with their children than European American mothers, and they also tended to use fewer verbal strategies in their parenting than European American mothers. They concluded that the use of more directive/controlling parenting behaviors, fewer verbal strategies, and more nonverbal strategies appeared to be common characteristics of Latino parenting behaviors (Grau et al.).

Findings from previous studies such as those described above have been pivotal in providing scholars with a conceptually and empirically grounded rationale for examining and/or expecting differences to emerge between Latino families and mainstream European American families with respect to family processes. For example, Domenech Rodríguez et al. (2009) argued that due to differing socialization goals and parenting strategies among Latino families, there was a need

to examine whether Baumrind's parenting styles (i.e., authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful) were consistent with the experiences of Latino families. Indeed, their findings indicated that the four traditional parenting styles did not adequately capture Latino families' experiences and, furthermore, that a previously undetected parenting style termed "protective parenting" was more consistent with the experiences of a majority of the Latino families studied (Domenech Rodríguez et al.). Together, these studies have advanced Latino family scholarship by providing conceptually grounded arguments (and subsequent findings) that offer a clearer picture of Latino family life and, importantly, the underlying causes of differences between Latino families and mainstream U.S. families.

Other research teams have focused their efforts on understanding how parenting behaviors are linked to child outcomes in Latino families, often times with the intent of testing whether the associations between parenting behaviors and outcomes are similar for Latino and mainstream U.S. families, on which most research has been based. In some studies, the associations between parenting behaviors and child outcomes have functioned similarly for Latino families as they have with ethnic majority populations. Consistent with a plethora of work on mainstream U.S. families, studies of Latino children and families have found that maternal sensitivity and responsivity to children's cues are associated with positive developmental outcomes (e.g., cognitive functioning, secure attachment classification) among infants and young children (see Grau et al., 2009, for a review). In addition, Dumka, Roosa, and Jackson (1997) found that higher levels of Mexican-origin mothers' supportive parenting were associated with lower levels of conduct disorder and depressive symptoms in their children; furthermore, mothers' inconsistent discipline was associated with increased conduct disorders and depressive symptoms. Thus, these general parenting behaviors are viewed as universal and as serving promotive functions across cultural groups (Grau et al., 2009).

Other studies reveal differences in the connections between parenting behaviors and child outcomes in Latino families. In a study of Latino (i.e., Dominican and Puerto Rican) mother–infant dyads, Fracasso et al. (1994) explored whether the types of maternal behaviors associated with infants' secure attachment differed for Latinos when compared to previous samples. Contrary to findings from studies that had included predominately non-Latino populations, Fracasso et al. (1994) found that maternal interventions were actually associated with *secure* attachments, rather than insecure attachments, in their sample of Latino families. The authors suggested that their findings underscored the need to consider that the cultural context may largely inform how maternal behaviors are interpreted and linked to child outcomes. In a study of Mexican American and European American mother–child dyads, maternal acceptance was significantly and positively associated with children's self-esteem among both ethnic groups; however, the association between acceptance and self-esteem was significantly stronger for European American families than for Mexican American families (Ruiz, Roosa, & Gonzales, 2002). Thus, although maternal acceptance is a significant predictor of child outcomes across groups, it appears to be more salient in predicting child outcomes in ethnic majority populations than in Latino populations. In a second study, researchers found that Mexican American and European American families who were characterized by high levels of warmth and acceptance, consistent use of discipline, and low levels of conflict and hostility tended to have children with fewer conduct problems (Hill, Bush, & Roosa, 2003); no ethnic group differences emerged in their work. Although the findings from these studies may appear to contradict one another—at times noting differences between groups and in other instances suggesting similar processes across groups, it may simply be a matter of important moderators being overlooked. For instance, national origin, generational status, and socioeconomic status are key demographics that can introduce significant variability into family processes and may be masking certain relations. A more nuanced discussion of these potential moderators is presented below.

Culture-Specific Parenting Processes

In addition to examining general parenting behaviors, studies of Latino families have focused on parenting behaviors that are culture-specific. In particular, researchers have examined parents' efforts to socialize their children about their ethnic group membership (e.g., Knight, Bernal, Garza, Cota, & Ocampo, 1993; Quintana, Castañeda-English, & Ybarra, 1999; Quintana & Vera, 1999; Umaña-Taylor, Alfaro, Bámaca, & Guimond, 2009; also see Hughes et al., 2006, for a review). A majority of this work has focused on parents' efforts to teach or expose their children to their ethnic background by doing things such as discussing ethnic group history or teaching them about the parents' or grandparents' country of origin, exposing them to traditional foods and celebrations, or attending festivals or activities that celebrate the heritage culture (e.g., Knight et al., 1993; Quintana et al., 1999; Supple, Ghazarian, Frabutt, Plunkett, & Sands, 2006; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2009; Umaña-Taylor & Fine, 2004). For the most part, these studies have consistently found that parents' efforts toward ethnic socialization are significantly associated with increased ethnic identity among Latino youth. Specifically, as parents socialize their children more about their ethnicity, children tend to report increased exploration of their ethnicity, as well as a stronger sense of commitment toward their ethnic group (e.g., Quintana et al., 1999; Supple et al., 2006; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2009). Because ethnic identity has been identified as a significant protective resource for ethnic minority youth (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999; Phinney, 2003), identifying parenting behaviors that can promote positive ethnic identity development among Latino youth has critical implications for youth's positive development.

Interestingly, research on Latino families' ethnic socialization strategies has not typically focused on parents' efforts to prepare their children for ethnic or racial bias such as discrimination or prejudice (for exceptions, see Hughes, 2003; Knight et al., 1993; Quintana & Vera, 1999), despite studies repeatedly noting that experiences with discrimination are a salient reality for Latino youth and families (Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000; Katz, 1999; Szalacha et al., 2003). In contrast, this has been a central focus in research with African American families (for a review see Hughes et al., 2006). In the few studies that have examined preparation for bias among Latinos, researchers have found that parents' socialization efforts were associated with greater ethnic knowledge among their children and, furthermore, children's ethnic knowledge was positively associated with their understanding of ethnic prejudice (Quintana & Vera, 1999). Thus, parents' efforts with respect to socializing their children about potential discrimination appear to increase children's ethnic knowledge and understanding of prejudice.

Existing research also has identified within group differences in the extent to which Latino parents from specific national origin groups report this type of ethnic socialization (i.e., preparation for bias). Specifically, Hughes (2003) found that Puerto Rican parents were less likely to report this type of socialization than Dominican parents. Interestingly, Dominican parents were less likely to report this type of socialization than African American parents. This variability within Latino groups and between Latinos and African Americans is an area ripe for future research. These differences may be the result of the historical context for the particular ethnic group, the degree to which the ethnic group, on average, is phenotypically distinct (or similar) when compared to the U.S. mainstream population, or likely a combination of these and other factors. As an example, the type of ethnic socialization approaches that parents employ may be closely linked to children's phenotypic characteristics, such that parents of Black Latino children may be more likely than parents of White Latino children to emphasize preparation for bias. Understanding the source of these differences could contribute to preventive intervention efforts aimed at increasing parents' awareness of the benefits of different types of ethnic socialization, and particularly, having a better idea of the ethnic socialization strategies with which parents may be most familiar and comfortable.

Gender Dynamics in Latino Families

A significant amount of scholarship on Latino families also has been devoted to understanding the role that gender plays in family processes. The role of gender in shaping family dynamics is a defining characteristic of research on Latino families (Cauce & Domenech Rodríguez, 2002; Marin & Marin, 1991). When compared to African Americans and European Americans, Latinos have been described as more traditional, on average, in their gender role attitudes and division of household responsibilities (Golding, 1990; John, Shelton, & Luschen, 1995; Kane, 2000; Pinto & Coltrane, 2009). Interest in gender dynamics in Latino families comes primarily from early writings emphasizing rigidly traditional gender roles and culturally prescribed norms for male dominance and female subservience, with the majority of this work focusing on Latino families of Mexican descent (e.g., Madsen, 1961, 1964; Mirandé, 1977; Padilla & Ruiz, 1973; Peñalosa, 1968). Despite widespread acceptance, these early depictions of the strong patriarchal structure of Mexican American families were not grounded in scientific evidence (Staples & Mirandé, 1980). This early emphasis on traditional gender dynamics in Mexican American culture set the stage, however, for scholarship on Latino families in the decades to follow (e.g., Baca Zinn, 1980, 1982; Coltrane & Valdez, 1993; Hawkes & Taylor, 1975; Ybarra, 1982).

To test unsubstantiated ideas about male dominance in Mexican American families, scholars conducted a series of investigations focused on power and decision-making dynamics in Mexican-origin marriage relationships (Cromwell & Cromwell, 1978; Cromwell & Ruiz, 1979; Hawkes & Taylor, 1975; Ybarra, 1982). A consistent pattern emerged revealing that Mexican-origin husbands and wives described decision-making as a shared or egalitarian process most often and male dominance of family decisions was relatively less common (Cromwell & Cromwell, 1978; Cromwell & Ruiz, 1979; Hawkes & Taylor, 1975; Ybarra, 1982). Thus, assumptions about the strong patriarchy in Mexican American families were called into question and scholars turned their attention to the possibility that there is substantial variability in gender role dynamics in marriage in Mexican culture (Coltrane & Valdez, 1993; Williams, 1990).

Gender and Latino Couple Relationships

Consistent with ecological models (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and cultural adaptations of these perspectives (Garcia Coll et al., 1996; McAdoo, 1993; Ogbu, 1981), recent theoretical and empirical work has suggested that Latino parents' gender roles (e.g., division of housework and paid employment) are tied *both* to socioeconomic conditions and to cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and values. Several studies have found, for example, that wives' paid employment, education level, and income were positively associated with patterns of shared decision-making among Mexican American couples (Baca Zinn, 1980; Coltrane & Valdez, 1993; Williams, 1990; Ybarra, 1982). These studies, which were based primarily on small samples and typically employed qualitative data collection strategies, provide evidence that gender dynamics in Latino families result, in part, from "the social location of families…where they are situated in relation to societal institutions allocating resources" (Baca Zinn, 1990, p. 74). Some evidence further suggests that *within-couple* differences in socioeconomic resources may play a particularly important role in shaping gendered family work in Latino families (e.g., Coltrane & Valdez, 1993; Pinto & Coltrane, 2009; Updegraff & Umaña-Taylor, 2010), similar to findings that have emerged in studies of European American families (e.g., McHale & Crouter, 1992; Updegraff, McHale, & Crouter, 1996). Through qualitative interviews with 20 Mexican American middle-class couples, Coltrane and Valdez (1993) found that, when wives' educational and economic contributions to the family (i.e., income, education, job prestige) were equal to or greater than husbands', co-provider arrangements (i.e., sharing relatively equally in the division of paid and unpaid work) were most common. In a larger study of Mexican immigrant, Mexican American, and Anglo families, Pinto and Coltrane (2009)

found that when mothers contributed a greater proportion of the family income, they spent less time doing housework. This effect was stronger for Mexican than for Anglo mothers.

The role of cultural beliefs and values in parents' gender role ideologies is evident from both ethnic-comparative and ethnic-homogeneous work. Data from ethnic-comparative designs provide evidence of more traditional gender role attitudes in Latino couples when compared to European American and/or African American couples (e.g., Golding, 1990; Kane, 2000; Pinto & Coltrane, 2009). Investigations that attend to *within-group variability* in gender dynamics in Latino families draw attention to the role of cultural backgrounds and experiences and socioeconomic factors in explaining within-group variability in gender dynamics among Latino/Mexican-origin couples (e.g., Coltrane & Valdez, 1993; Leaper & Valin, 1996; Pinto & Coltrane, 2009; Updegraff & Umaña-Taylor, 2010). Leaper and Valin (1996) found, for example, that less traditional gender role attitudes were predicted by higher education levels and more communal values (i.e., values that reflect an emphasis on others' needs over individual needs in the same way that familism values emphasize the needs of the family over the needs of the individual) for both mothers and fathers. In addition, U.S.-born mothers and those with lower scores on competitive values also reported less traditional gender role attitudes. Updegraff and Umaña-Taylor (2010) identified patterns across family members (i.e., mothers, fathers, and two adolescent offspring) in their Mexican and Anglo orientations and examined connections to family background characteristics and parents' gender role attitudes and behaviors. Families who were categorized as Anglo-oriented (i.e., strong ties to Anglo culture and relatively weaker ties to Mexican culture), as compared to families that included parents with strong Mexican ties, reported more socioeconomic resources, higher education levels, and less traditional gender role attitudes and behaviors (i.e., division of household tasks and paid work). In addition, mothers and fathers in Anglo-oriented families reported being more similar to one another in their socioeconomic contributions to the family (i.e., education levels, incomes, job prestige) than did parents in other families. Taken together, these findings highlight the substantial variability that exists *between* and *within* Latino families living in the U.S. in their gendered marital dynamics and roles and underscores the role of both socioeconomic factors and cultural processes in shaping marital dynamics and roles in this cultural context.

Additional insights about gender dynamics in Latino couple relationships come from research that draws on theories of international migration and focuses on the role of migration in shaping and reshaping gender role enactments and ideologies in Latino immigrant couples (Greenlees & Saenz, 1999; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2003; Menjívar, 2003; Parrado & Flippen, 2005; Parrado, Flippen, & McQuiston, 2005). Parrado and Flippen (2005) addressed the role of migration in shaping couple power dynamics in a comparative study of Mexican immigrant women in North Carolina as compared to non-migrant women from four sending communities in Mexico (Parrado & Flippen, 2005; Parrado et al., 2005). Drawing on resource and social exchange perspectives and incorporating ideas about the larger socio-cultural context, their findings highlighted similarities and differences in the correlates of relationship power for migrant vs. non-migrant Mexican women. Social support from friends, for example, was linked to greater relationship power, with stronger associations emerging for migrant than for non-migrant women. Instrumental and social support from women's friendship networks may be a key factor that empowers women to seek greater balance in gendered aspects of their relationships, particularly among women who have recently migrated and may have more limited opportunities for social support. Contact with extended family, in contrast, was less common among migrant than non-migrant women and was associated with less relational power among migrant women in the U.S., but more relational power among non-migrant women in Mexico. The authors propose that, among migrant women, contact with extended family may have resulted in more domestic work for women (e.g., household work, meal provision) and in a greater emphasis on a

traditional division of gendered roles and responsibilities (Parrado & Flippen, 2005). Together, these findings highlight important differences across socio-cultural contexts in the correlates of the division of paid and unpaid family work. More detailed information about the types of social support family members and friends provide (e.g., instrumental, financial, emotional support) will further enhance our understanding of the associations between support and gendered relationship processes in these different socio-cultural contexts.

Gender and Parent–Child Relationships

Turning to parent–child relationships in Latino families, the role of gender dynamics also has received some attention. Building on ideas about traditional gender role norms and socialization processes in Latino families, a number of scholars have compared the roles of mothers vs. fathers and the parenting of daughters vs. sons. At the most general level, traditional roles emphasizing mothers' greater involvement in caretaking of children as compared to fathers' have been noted (e.g., Bronstein, 1984, 1988; Crockett, Brown, Russell, & Shen, 2007; Gamble, Ramakumar, & Diaz, 2007; Taylor & Behnke, 2005). Furthermore, in a comparative study of Latino fathers' beliefs in Mexico vs. the U.S., Taylor and Behnke (2005) found that the emphasis on mothers' responsibilities for raising children was more pronounced in Mexico than in the U.S. More specific differences between mothers' and fathers' parenting are largely consistent with differences noted in European American families. For example, self-report and observational data revealed that Latino mothers provided more physical nurturance (Bronstein, 1984, 1988) and more support and responsiveness to their children (Gamble et al., 2007) than did fathers, and that fathers tended to spend more time in play and companionate activities than did mothers (Bronstein, 1984, 1988).

Gender differences in Latino families also are apparent in comparisons of the family roles and responsibilities of daughters vs. sons (Azmitia & Brown, 2002; Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999). In accordance with the premise that females assume primary responsibility for childrearing in Latino families, there is evidence that girls describe greater participation in housework than boys, and similarly, that parents report assigning more housework to girls than to boys (e.g., Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999). In addition, girls are more likely than boys to serve as translators for parents who have limited English proficiency (Buriel, Love, & DeMent, 2006; Chao, 2006).

In addition to girls' greater family responsibilities, there also is evidence that girls are granted less freedom to spend time away from home and more closely monitored and supervised than are boys (e.g., Azmitia & Brown, 2002; Bulcroft, Carmody, & Bulcroft, 1996; Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004). In qualitative studies by Brown et al. focused on parents' strategies for managing youth's involvement with peers (Brown, Alvarez, & Quijada, 1999; Brown, Hamm, & Meyerson, 1996), for example, Brown noted that Latino parents place greater restrictions on daughters' time outside of the household and involvement with peers as compared to sons', and that mothers describe proactive strategies to closely monitor daughters' peer relationships (e.g., volunteering in their daughters' schools to see with whom daughters were affiliating), but little direct involvement in sons' peer relationships. Similar results emerged in Raffaelli and Ontai's (2004) work with Latino youth. When asked to compare themselves to other-sex siblings or relatives, girls described greater restrictions outside the home (e.g., curfews, involvement in afterschool activities, driving, holding a job) than did boys.

Collectively, this body of work highlights average differences in the roles of mothers vs. fathers and in the parenting of girls vs. boys in Latino families. However, scholarship on Latino families also has highlighted significant variability with respect to the degree to which parents adopt traditional gender-typed attitudes and behaviors (Baca Zinn, 1990; Coltrane & Valdez, 1993; Updegraff & Umaña-Taylor, 2010). Drawing from ecological (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and cultural ecological models (Garcia Coll et al., 1996; McAdoo, 1993; Ogbu, 1981), an important next step is to identify the socio-cultural processes that explain variability among Latino families in the degree to

which parents display gender-differentiated parenting. Toward this end, a recent study by McHale, Updegraff, Shanahan, Crouter, and Killoren (2005) examined the associations between parents' differential treatment of sons vs. daughters and their cultural orientations. McHale et al. (2005) found that parents assigned more family responsibilities to their daughters than to their sons when they had strong Mexican cultural orientations (and weaker ties to U.S. culture). In contrast, among parents who had strong orientations to U.S. culture (and weaker ties to Mexican culture), no differences were found in the household responsibilities assigned to daughters vs. sons. Additional research is needed to gain a more in-depth understanding of the socio-cultural processes that are linked to gender-typed parenting in Latino families (e.g., traditionality of parents' attitudes, familism values).

Equally important are efforts to understand the processes through which gender-differentiated parenting has implications for children's and adolescents' gender development and well being. According to social learning (Mischel, 1966) and gender socialization perspectives (e.g., Maccoby, 1990, 1998), gender-differentiated family and parenting roles provide opportunities for girls and boys to learn about and model gender-typed behaviors. In European American families, there is evidence that youth whose fathers endorse more traditional gender role attitudes display more gender-typed behaviors (e.g., activities, interests) than youth whose parents hold less traditional gender role attitudes (e.g., McHale, Crouter, & Tucker, 1999). Parents' gender-typed attitudes and practices may be particularly salient in early adolescence, to the extent that pressures to behave in accordance with traditional gender roles increase during this developmental period (Hill & Lynch, 1983). Evidence of gender-intensified parenting processes (i.e., time spent with same-sex offspring, participation in household tasks) has been documented in European American families (e.g., Crouter, Manke, & McHale, 1995). Increases in the time mothers and fathers spent with their same-sex offspring, for example, were apparent in European American families with mixed-sex sibling pairs (Crouter et al.). In Latino families, Raffaelli and Ontai (2004) noted that girls and boys described their same-sex parents as most likely to encourage sex-typed behaviors. An important next step is to examine the connections between Latino parents' gendered parenting and youth's gender-typed development and to identify the mechanisms underlying potential associations (e.g., modeling, observational learning).

Key Variables that Introduce Variability in Family Experiences

Although existing research on Latino families has been informative, a majority of existing studies have not completely attended to the diversity that exists within the Latino population. The Latino population in the U.S. is considerably diverse with respect to national origin, with members of this panethnic group coming from various countries such as Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Uruguay, Peru, Guatemala, and El Salvador, to name a few. Latinos also include Puerto Ricans living in the continental U.S. and other Caribbean islanders (e.g., Cubans, Dominicans). Beyond national origin differences, variations in family histories such as the circumstances or reasons leading to immigration to the U.S. (e.g., political upheavals, lack of employment opportunities), length of time (i.e., years and generations) in the U.S., and the nature of the communities in which families reside (e.g., ethnic enclaves vs. more integrated communities) enhance the diversity of the U.S. Latino population (Knight et al., 2009). Thus, the Latino population is not comprised of a homogenous group and any analyses or findings based on the panethnic population should be generalized with caution. In the sections that follow, we discuss key constructs that introduce variability into family life and, thus, must be considered when conducting research with Latinos.

From a theoretical standpoint, ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1989) is particularly useful for understanding the importance of examining this variability when studying Latino families. According to ecological theory, individual and family development can best be understood and

interpreted when examined contextually. Because individuals' lives are embedded in broader social and cultural systems and these systems uniquely inform the experiences of children and their families (Parke & Kellam, 1994), it is not possible to fully understand development without a keen understanding of the contexts within which such development is taking place. As such, an ecological framework provides an important contextual backdrop from which to understand how individual characteristics interact with broader contexts and ideologies to inform family experiences (Umaña-Taylor & Bámaca, 2004). As outlined below, several characteristics of individuals and families inform the cultural ecological contexts that introduce significant variability into Latino family life. Because of the group's diverse nature, characteristics such as national origin, generational status, nativity, immigration history, cultural orientation, and socioeconomic status must be considered when attempting to understand Latino families in the U.S. Within the sections that follow, we present studies that have illuminated the diversity that exists within Latinos with respect to each of these characteristics and, within each section, discuss the implications of *not* acknowledging such diversity when studying Latino families.

National Origin

As introduced above, the term Latino refers to a group that includes individuals from numerous national origin backgrounds. In the United States, the largest Latino subgroup is of Mexican origin (59.3%), with Puerto Ricans (9.7%) and Cubans (3.5%) comprising the next largest national origin groups within this large panethnic population (Ramirez, 2004). The national origin of a large percentage of Latinos (15.7%) is unknown because these individuals choose to identify with a panethnic term such as Latino, Hispanic, or Spanish, rather than indicating a specific national origin (Ramirez). With respect to family demographic characteristics, for example, statistics for Latinos mirror those of the general population when the Latino population is examined as a monolithic group. For instance, examination of Census 2000 data (see Ramirez) indicates that 51.3% of Latinos over the age of 15 were married, which is comparable to the figure for the general population (i.e., 54.4%). However, when examined by specific Latino national origin, it is evident that there is significant variability within Latinos. Specifically, these figures are representative of the rates for Cuban (55.3%), Mexican (53.4%), South American (53.6%), and Spaniard Latinos (53.5%), but statistics indicate much lower percentages for Puerto Rican (42.3%), Dominican (44.6%), and Central American (49.3%) Latinos over the age of 15 who were married in 2000. Rates for those who are separated, widowed, or divorced show the same diversity across Latino groups, with Mexican (12.1%) and Central American (12.8%) Latinos demonstrating the lowest rates, and Latinos of Puerto Rican (19.8%), Dominican (21%), and Cuban (22.9%) descent demonstrating much higher rates. Similarly, although 59.9% of Mexican households are married couple households, only 41.7 and 42.4% of Puerto Rican and Dominican households, respectively, are married couple households. Somewhat related to these figures, 14.7% of Mexican households are female-headed, compared to 26.2 and 33.5% of Puerto Rican and Dominican households, respectively.

The statistics presented above demonstrate the vast diversity that exists within the Latino population with respect to general demographic characteristics that pertain to family life (e.g., marriage, divorce). In addition, existing empirical work has demonstrated considerable diversity among Latino national origin groups with respect to parenting behaviors. For example, Umaña-Taylor and Bámaca (2004) found that Mexican, Puerto Rican, Guatemalan, and Colombian mothers varied significantly with respect to their ethnic socialization efforts toward their adolescent children. Consistent with notions from ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1989), the sociohistorical context could explain some of the differences that emerged among the national origin groups due to the different histories that the groups had in the U.S. (e.g., Colombians and Guatemalans have a shorter history in the U.S. when compared

to Mexicans and Puerto Ricans) and other differences could be explained by the relatively larger representation of one ethnic group compared to another (e.g., Mexican-origin Latinos are more heavily represented in the media and other mediums due to their significantly larger population size than Guatemalan Latinos). Regardless of the reasons for the differences that emerge across national origin groups, the variability evidenced in demographic statistics and empirical studies underscores the need for researchers studying Latino families to (a) be aware of the variability in family demographics among Latino national origin groups, (b) acknowledge that national origin is a key descriptive variable that must be presented when describing the sample of an empirical study, and (c) consider that, just as demographics vary significantly based on national origin, family processes and outcomes also may vary and, thus, national origin must be examined as a potential moderator of the relations under study if a sample includes participants that represent multiple national origin groups.

An illustration of the importance of accounting for national origin differences is evident in findings of a study linking parenting behaviors to child outcomes among low-income Latino families from Salvadoran, Mexican, and Puerto Rican backgrounds (i.e., Figueroa-Moseley, Ramey, Keltner, & Lanzi, 2006). Figueroa-Moseley et al. (2006) found significant differences among national origin groups in parenting behaviors, with Puerto Rican parents reporting significantly more nurturance and consistency than Mexican American and Salvadoran parents. Beyond these mean level differences, they also found that although parental responsivity was positively associated with children's academic achievement for all three national origin groups, this association was only evident in concurrent assessments for Puerto Rican families; in contrast, parental responsivity predicted *future* levels of academic achievement for Mexican American and Salvadoran families. These findings suggest that the predictive power of parental responsivity on child academic achievement may be stronger for some national origin groups than for others. If the data had been analyzed by pooling all national origin groups, the findings may have been masked and the researchers could have erroneously concluded that responsivity predicted future academic achievement for Latinos, in general.

Generational Status and Nativity

It also is essential to acknowledge the tremendous variability that exists *within* specific national origin groups. Put differently, although Mexican-origin families share a common national origin (i.e., Mexican heritage), they do not comprise a homogenous group—there is much diversity within Mexican-origin families. One way in which Mexican-origin families are diverse is by their generational status in the U.S., which is determined by the country of birth for an individual, his or her parents, and grandparents. Those who have been in the U.S. for relatively greater number of generations may be further removed from the culture of origin and, thus, their values, beliefs, and experiences may more closely mirror those of ethnic majority individuals. Although generational status and nativity are sometimes used synonymously with the construct of acculturation, we distinguish these constructs in the current chapter by viewing acculturation as one of several indicators of Latinos' cultural orientation and considering generational status and nativity as *demographic* characteristics that, in part, inform individuals' acculturation. Thus, in the current section we focus on demographic correlates (i.e., generational status and nativity), and in the section that follows, we discuss variability as a function of cultural orientation (i.e., acculturation, enculturation, and biculturalism).

Maintenance of cultural norms and values with respect to parenting across generations of Latinos in the U.S. is an understudied phenomenon and, in fact, many studies mix generational status within the same sample (Harwood et al., 2002). Nevertheless, theoretical work by Knight et al. (1993) suggests that families' social ecologies, such as their generation of immigration in the U.S., inform the socialization practices that occur within the family context. In fact, existing findings have provided support for this notion

such that Latino adolescents from families who have been in the U.S. for more generations tend to report lower levels of familial ethnic socialization relative to their counterparts whose families have been in the U.S. for fewer generations (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2009). Mothers of Puerto Rican and Mexican origin also tend to report different socialization strategies based on their generational status (Umaña-Taylor & Yazedjian, 2006). Furthermore, scholars have found that adherence to cultural practices and values change such that those whose families have been in the U.S. for more generations exhibit more change in adherence to traditional practices and values than those whose families have been in the U.S. for fewer generations (Sabogal, Marín, Otero-Sabogal, Marín, & Perez-Stable, 1987). Because values inform individual behavior and, in turn, family experiences, it is not surprising that studies have documented significant variability in family experiences as a result of generational status.

In a study examining childrearing styles, Buriel (1993) found significant differences among parents of first, second, and third generation Mexican American adolescents. Specifically, in families that had been in the U.S. the longest (i.e., third generation adolescents), parents demonstrated a more concern-oriented childrearing style (i.e., high maternal support, high expectations for the child at home and school, and encouraging parent–child dialogue), whereas parents in the other two groups reported a more responsibility-oriented parenting style (i.e., socializing children to assume responsibility for their actions). Furthermore, mothers of first and second generation adolescents stressed earlier autonomy, more productive use of time, more strictness, and more permissiveness than mothers of third generation adolescents. The author concluded that parents of first and second generation adolescents were likely more similar to one another in their parenting styles than to parents of third generation adolescents because parents in the first two groups had both been born in Mexico and likely had similar parenting socialization experiences, whereas parents of third generation adolescents may have been less connected to Mexico because they were born and raised in the U.S. In addition, Buriel (1993) suggested that U.S. born parents may have a greater awareness of the disadvantageous nature of their ethnic minority status in the U.S. and, thus, this may motivate them to be more supportive of their children and encourage proper behavior as a means of overcoming their socially disadvantaged status. Regardless of the mechanism by which generational status may introduce variability into parenting experiences, these findings demonstrate the critical need for researchers to account for variability in family processes by generational status.

Also related to parenting behaviors, Planos, Zayas, and Busch-Rossnagel (1995) examined differences in teaching behaviors among Dominican and Puerto Rican mothers. A strength of this study was the attention to potential variability based on national origin; however, a significant confound was that 69% of Puerto Rican mothers were born on the mainland U.S., whereas only 4% of the Dominican sample of mothers were U.S. born. Thus, it was not possible to decipher whether differences that emerged between the two groups resulted from variability in national origin or nativity. For example, Planos et al. indicated that Puerto Rican mothers made significantly more use of teaching strategies of inquiry and praise, whereas Dominican mothers made more use of modeling behaviors. To partially account for differences in nativity between the two groups, the authors tested acculturation as a potential covariate. Introducing this covariate eliminated significant differences with respect to inquiry and praise; however, significant differences between the two groups in the use of modeling remained even after controlling for acculturation level (assessed with an acculturation measure tapping behavioral indices of acculturation such as language proficiency and media use), suggesting that Dominicans and Puerto Ricans differed significantly in their use of modeling behaviors and this difference was not a function of their degree of acculturation. It is important to note that although acculturation and nativity tend to be highly interrelated such that those born in the U.S. tend to be more acculturated than those born outside the U.S., the two

constructs (i.e., nativity and acculturation) are not synonymous. Thus, although it is useful to control for level of acculturation, it does not completely account for the variability that may have been introduced into these processes as a result of nativity. Because it is possible that significant variability in levels of acculturation may be found within nativity groups (e.g., variability in acculturation within the U.S. born group), an ideal study would include large numbers of both U.S. born and foreign born participants, which would allow for an examination of the impact of *both* nativity and acculturation level on the processes of interest. A more detailed discussion of variability as a result of acculturation is presented below.

Another aspect of family life in which generational status plays a defining role is in the process of child language brokering (CLB). CLB refers to children translating for their parents or other adult family members and can involve translation for simple transactions such as translating what a store clerk is saying, to more formal transactions such as translating during a visit to the doctor or translating legally binding documents (e.g., apartment rental contract). Findings from existing studies on CLB among Latino families imply that CLB is a salient issue for immigrant Latino youth and their families (e.g., Buriel et al., 2006; Martinez, McClure, & Eddy, 2009), which is not surprising given that many immigrant Latino adults have limited English language proficiency (Knight et al., 2009) and, thus, likely require the assistance of their more language-acculturated children to understand transactions that are conducted in English. In fact, in a study of Mexican, Korean, and Chinese adolescents and their families, a significant difference in the prevalence of language brokering emerged among the three ethnic groups, with Mexican-origin adolescents being the most likely to have provided translation for their parents (Chao, 2006).

Due to the strong link between generational status and language proficiency, it is not surprising that the amount of translation that children do for their parents varies greatly by generational status. For instance, in a study of language brokering among immigrant families, Chao (2006) found that first generation Mexican-origin youth reported translating for their parents significantly more than their second generation counterparts. Furthermore, generational status interacted significantly with adolescent gender in determining the amount of translation children did for their parents. Specifically, being a female was associated with more translation for both mothers and fathers, but this was particularly the case for first generation, compared to second generation, immigrant adolescents (Chao). This finding is consistent with notions from ecological theory, which suggest that individual characteristics (e.g., gender) interact with contextual factors (e.g., generational status) to inform individual and family experiences. Thus, generational status not only introduced important variability into the amount of translation in which children participated, but it also interacted with child characteristics (e.g., gender) in shaping family experiences.

Immigration History

There are a number of cross-cultural studies that point to the need to understand the impact of immigration on family processes. Using the literature on relationship dissolution as an example, findings from cross-cultural studies (i.e., study participants in the U.S. and their counterparts in the native country of origin) indicate that second and third generation immigrants are more similar to those living in the native country than are first generation immigrants, suggesting that the experiences of first generation immigrants may be largely the result of family adaptation strategies or survival mechanisms unique to immigration (e.g., economic and social circumstances) rather than any indication of a cultural difference (Umaña-Taylor & Alfaro, 2006). Put differently, comparative studies in which first generation Latinos are compared to European Americans should not conclude that any differences observed are the result of different cultural characteristics or patterns, as the results could be an artifact of immigration processes, rather than culture (Umaña-Taylor & Alfaro).

Thus, it is essential to consider the conditions of immigration and how this may inform the experiences that family members have upon entering and settling in the U.S. Those who enter the U.S. with more resources and those who have access to more resources after immigration naturally fare better than their counterparts with fewer advantages. As described by Baca Zinn and Wells (2000), the sociohistorical context and the structure of economic opportunity in the receiving country at the time of immigration are both critical in defining families' experiences upon immigration. Using Latinos from Cuba as an example, Cubans who immigrated to the U.S. as part of the exodus from Cuba in the late 1950s in an effort to flee a socialist regime received a relatively positive reception in the U.S. as evidenced by an abundance of social welfare programs designed to help Cuban immigrants succeed upon entry into the U.S. (Suro, 2002). The relocation assistance Cuban immigrants received included things such as formal education training, healthcare, housing, and educational scholarships. Because those who were highly educated and came from wealthy families had the most to lose from the implementation of a socialist government in Cuba, the Cuban immigrants who comprised this initial wave of immigration tended to be relatively wealthy, successful, and educated. These strengths were further enhanced by additional privileges afforded to Cuban immigrants in the form of generous relocation assistance. With respect to the sociohistorical context, because the U.S. was in opposition of the political decisions taking place in Cuba at the time, the U.S. government organized a relocation program that provided many Cuban immigrants with the tools necessary to make a successful transition into the U.S. In terms of the structure of economic opportunity in the U.S., the employment and educational opportunities available to Cuban immigrants at the time generally positioned them in professional or managerial jobs, which facilitated their entry into a solid middle-class socioeconomic status. Furthermore, the Cuban ethnic enclaves and communities that formed in the Miami Dade County area, where most Cubans settled, provided an immediate network that facilitated employment and educational opportunities (Suro). Thus, Cuban immigrants from this initial large wave of immigration received a relatively positive reception into the U.S. and the privileges afforded to individual members and their families provided resources that facilitated their adjustment and outcomes in the U.S.

In stark contrast, a second wave of Cuban migration to the U.S. took place in the early 1980s and this group of Cuban immigrants did not benefit from the same advantages as their counterparts who immigrated two decades prior. The latter group of immigrants was quite different demographically from those who migrated in the late 1950s in that they tended to be less educated, highly impoverished, and generally less advantaged. Their reception into the U.S. was relatively negative; there was limited relocation assistance provided and, furthermore, this was not a prosperous time for the U.S., as the U.S. was entering an economic recession. Thus, this group of Cuban immigrants tended to be viewed as a drain on the U.S. economy and, thus, was not welcomed as positively as the group that arrived in the late 1950s. These differences in the conditions of immigration illustrate how individuals who share a common national origin (i.e., Cuban) may have significantly different economic opportunities and, thus, divergent family experiences once they are settled in the U.S.

Importantly, the political climate of the U.S. at the time of immigration can largely impact immigrant families' experiences as they are transitioning into life in a new country. Ecological theory suggests that the political ideologies of a society, which would be considered part of the macrosystem, can greatly inform individuals' and families' experiences (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). This notion is well-illustrated in the case of Salvadorans and Guatemalans who fled to the U.S. in the late 1970s to escape civil war in their respective countries. Due to political alliances at the time, the U.S. refused to give immigrants from these countries refugee status or asylum, which would have granted them legal resident status in the U.S. As a result, many came to the U.S. as undocumented immigrants and, thus, had restricted access to the labor market, could not rely upon social services,

and lived in constant apprehension and fear of deportation to a country where their lives could be at risk (Dorrington, 1995). Families and children from these communities faced significant psychosocial problems such as depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress (Dorrington). Furthermore, there is evidence that family members have sometimes resorted to maladaptive coping strategies such as substance abuse or domestic violence to cope with their severe stress (Dorrington). Thus, national origin combined with the historical timing of immigration to the U.S. can work together to impact the type of immigration experience children and parents have and, in turn, their adjustment to life in the new country.

Cultural Orientation: Acculturation, Enculturation, and Biculturalism

Regardless of their generation of immigration to the U.S. or the history of a family's immigration, Latino families in the U.S. experience a process of dual cultural adaptation in which they balance and negotiate the processes of acculturation and enculturation (Knight et al., 2009). Acculturation refers to the degree to which individuals adhere to the values and behaviors of mainstream culture (Olmedo, 1979), whereas enculturation refers to adherence to values and behaviors of the native culture (Gonzales, Fabrett, & Knight, 2009; Matsumoto, 1996). Finally, biculturalism refers to individuals' dual involvement in *both* the mainstream and native cultures (Gonzales et al., 2009; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1980). As evidenced below, existing research has documented that these indices of cultural orientation introduce significant variability into family experiences and, in particular, function as significant moderators for many relations. From an ecological perspective, individuals' cultural orientation and, importantly, the constellation of cultural orientations within the family unit, provide an important backdrop for understanding individuals' experiences within families.

Acculturation

A large number of studies have examined how family processes or outcomes vary as a function of individual members' *acculturation* (e.g., Hill et al., 2003; Ispa et al., 2004). In some studies, researchers assess acculturation with established measures, and in other studies, researchers utilize proxies for acculturation such as language preference, nativity, or length of time in the U.S. The expectation in the latter studies is that individuals who (a) prefer and/or feel more comfortable speaking in English (than in Spanish), (b) were born in the U.S., and (c) have been in the U.S. for a longer period of time, are relatively more acculturated than their respective counterparts. Within this body of work, researchers have found evidence suggesting that although processes may be similar, the strength of the association between variables is sometimes stronger or weaker for families based on level of acculturation. For instance, in a study of Mexican American mothers and children, Hill et al. (2003) used language preference as a proxy for acculturation and found that the relation between maternal acceptance and child conduct behaviors was significantly stronger for Spanish speaking (i.e., less acculturated) mothers than for English speaking mothers. Upon further exploration of parenting behaviors, they found that for Spanish speaking mothers, maternal acceptance and hostile control were positively and significantly associated, whereas these parenting behaviors were not significantly related among English speaking mothers. Hill et al. (2003) concluded that the use of hostile control seemed to co-occur with maternal acceptance for Spanish speaking Mexican American mothers; thus, maternal acceptance may play a greater role in reducing conduct problems in the context of hostile control for less acculturated Mexican American mothers than their more acculturated counterparts.

As another example, in a sample of low-income Mexican American mothers, Ispa et al. (2004) found that the longitudinal association between maternal intrusiveness and child outcomes was more similar among more acculturated Mexican American mothers and European American mothers, than among less acculturated Mexican American mothers and European American mothers. Specifically, among European American mothers, intrusiveness was significantly associated with all three child outcomes examined, and

among more acculturated Mexican American mothers intrusiveness was significantly associated with two of the three outcomes examined; however, intrusiveness was significantly associated with only one of the three outcomes among the *least* acculturated Mexican American mothers. These findings suggest that there is significant variability in how parenting behaviors such as maternal intrusiveness are linked to child outcomes based on families' level of acculturation; furthermore, parenting variables that have consistently been associated with child maladjustment in largely European American middle-class samples may not be linked to negative outcomes among children from families that display low levels of acculturation. In line with this notion, Gonzales, Pitts, Hill, and Roosa (2000) suggested that their inability to find a significant association between parents' hostile control and child depression or conduct problems in a sample of Mexican American families was likely due to the relatively low levels of acculturation for the families in their sample.

Individuals' behaviors and the meanings that they make of their day-to-day experiences are largely informed by their values and beliefs, which are culturally rooted (Umaña-Taylor & Yazedjian, 2006). Put differently, individuals' adherence and/or attachment to mainstream culture likely dictates their parenting behaviors and, importantly, the degree to which these behaviors are linked to outcomes. Thus, it is not surprising that researchers have repeatedly found family processes and outcomes to vary as a function of individuals' level of acculturation (e.g., see Grau et al., 2009, for a review of variability in parenting behaviors as a function of acculturation). As demonstrated by findings from Ispa and colleagues' (2004) work, those who are more connected to mainstream culture are likely going to evidence similar patterns to European Americans because their beliefs and experiences are more in line with those of European Americans'. On the other hand, for families who are not as acculturated, behaviors and experiences that have been commonly linked to negative outcomes (e.g., intrusiveness) may not have the same negative effect on children because the interpretation of these behaviors may be different in these families. Interestingly, with respect to parenting behaviors, there appears to be a progression toward mainstream values, beliefs, and experiences and, furthermore, the relations between variables appear to function more similarly to how they function among individuals from the ethnic majority culture as individuals acculturate.

Enculturation

A smaller number of studies have examined how family members' enculturation, or degree of engagement in the native culture, may impact individual and/or family processes. It has been suggested that maintaining a strong attachment to the culture of origin can be beneficial for individuals, as it can provide them with a source of strength and can minimize the negative effects of risk factors (Organista, Organista, & Kurasaki, 2003; Umaña-Taylor & Updegraff, 2007); however, few studies have examined the potentially protective role that cultural orientation toward the native culture may have on *family* processes and outcomes and most of this work has focused on individual development and outcomes. The few existing studies that have examined characteristics of families have focused primarily on one index of enculturation: the cultural value of familism.

Latinos have been characterized as espousing *familism values* that emphasize support, interdependence, and obligations (Garcia-Preto, 1996; Sabogal et al., 1987). Using familism as an indicator of enculturation, McHale et al. examined the degree to which adherence to familism values moderated the link between parenting behaviors and youth adjustment. In their study of Mexican American parents and adolescents, they found that the negative effects of parents' differential treatment on youth adjustment were mitigated by strong familism values for youth in middle/late adolescence (McHale et al., 2005). Similarly, with a sample comprised of Mexican American parents and adolescents, German, Gonzales, and Dumka (2009) found that adolescents', mothers', and fathers' reports of familism values each served a protective function by minimizing the risk of deviant peer affiliations on adolescents' externalizing behaviors. As adolescents reported more deviant peer affiliations, they also tended to

report higher levels of externalizing behaviors; however, this association was significantly stronger among those with low levels of familism than for those with relatively higher levels of familism. Finally, familism also has been linked to Mexican American adolescents' sibling relationship qualities (e.g., sisters' emotional closeness and dyadic involvement) such that those reporting higher levels of familism tended to report closer and more involved sibling relationships (Updegraff, McHale, Whiteman, Thayer, & Delgado, 2005).

Because existing studies that have examined enculturation as a moderator have focused primarily on one index of enculturation (i.e., familism values), it will be important to examine other Latino cultural values that serve as indices of enculturation. Furthermore, it will be useful for future studies to examine adherence to native cultural values in combination with behavioral indices of enculturation such as Spanish language use, given scholars' recommendations that both behavioral and attitudinal indices of enculturation should be assessed to represent the multidimensional nature of cultural processes (Cabassa, 2003; Cuéllar, Arnold, & González, 1995). Despite these limitations, the existing work provides initial evidence supporting the recommendation to consider enculturation as a key variable, in addition to acculturation, that may introduce variability into families' experiences and, specifically, may modify the links between family processes and outcomes.

Biculturalism

Finally, scholars have recommended that researchers examine acculturation and enculturation in combination with one another (see Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1980) and, importantly, existing findings suggest that a bicultural orientation, in which individuals are comfortable in both cultures, appears to be most adaptable for Latino children, adults, and families (see Gonzales et al., 2009, for a review). For example, Gutierrez and Sameroff (1990) examined Mexican American mothers' biculturalism and the degree to which it interacted with mothers' acculturation levels to predict parenting concepts. Biculturalism was assessed with a measure designed to capture the degree to which individuals feel comfortable and involved in Hispanic and Anglo American cultures, independently; the measure is then scored in a manner that produces a continuous scale ranging from monoculturalism to biculturalism. Acculturation was assessed with a measure tapping behavioral indices of acculturation such as English language preference. Findings indicated that bicultural mothers who were highly acculturated scored higher on adaptive parenting concepts of development than bicultural mothers who were moderately acculturated. However, highly acculturated and moderately acculturated *bicultural* mothers both scored higher than highly or moderately acculturated *monocultural* mothers, which underscores the value of biculturalism, at least with respect to adaptive parenting beliefs. In fact, almost 50% of the unique variance in mothers' parental concepts of development was explained by mothers' levels of biculturalism. Thus, Gutierrez and Sameroff (1990) argue that although acculturation facilitates individuals' abilities to function in the host culture, their ability to function in *both* the host and native culture (i.e., biculturalism) makes them more flexible in their interpretation of and reaction to variations in their children's behavior, and this cognitive flexibility is ideal for parenting.

Biculturalism also has been linked to positive child outcomes such that children from homes in which mothers had an integrated style of acculturation (i.e., bicultural—American cultural orientation and Latino cultural orientation both high) demonstrated the best literacy outcomes (Farver et al., 2006). In addition, biculturalism was linked to better family functioning in a study of Latinos from Mexican, Central American, and South American backgrounds (i.e., Miranda, Estrada, & Firpo-Jimenez, 2000). Specifically, Miranda et al. found that families in their study who were classified as bicultural scored significantly lower on family conflict than families characterized at either extreme of acculturation (i.e., high or low). Interestingly, existing research also suggests that the family environments of bicultural adolescents tend to be characterized by increased parental monitoring, family support, parental involvement, and positive

parenting practices (Gonzales et al., 2009). Given that biculturalism in youth is associated with positive psychosocial functioning (e.g., higher academic achievement, better psychological adjustment, and lower externalizing behaviors; see Gonzales et al., for a review), it is not surprising that adaptive parenting behaviors, which also have been linked to positive youth outcomes, have been linked with biculturalism. Thus, whether assessed at the individual or family level, biculturalism is consistently associated with more positive adaptation and adjustment among individuals and families.

An important gap in this research is that the constellation of biculturalism within the family unit has not been examined. Put differently, we have limited knowledge regarding how individual family members' cultural orientations work together to inform the family-level cultural orientation. Updegraff and Umaña-Taylor (2010) provided one of the first examinations of within-family patterns of acculturation, enculturation, and biculturalism with a sample of Mexican American families (i.e., mother, father, and two children in each family). They assessed involvement in both the host and ethnic culture (e.g., language use, affiliations, ethnic label identification, food preferences) and created profiles that represented the four family members' acculturation and enculturation experiences, recognizing that each family member's cultural involvement must be understood within the broader context of other family members' cultural involvement. In their study, three family types emerged: Anglo-oriented (all four family members reported strong ties to Anglo culture and relatively weaker ties to Mexican culture), Mexican-oriented (all four family members reported strong ties to Mexican culture and relatively weaker ties to Anglo culture), and Mexican/dual-involvement (parents had relatively stronger ties to Mexican culture and youth reported strong ties to *both* Mexican and Anglo culture) families. Their findings highlighted the intersection of unique family members' experiences and the cultural context of the family. For instance, they found that older sisters in Mexican-oriented families not only reported the highest levels of expected educational attainment, but also the highest levels of depressive symptoms. Updegraff and Umaña-Taylor (2010) suggest that perhaps the combination of holding high expectations for their future education and being in a family context characterized by traditional gender roles, increased family responsibilities for older sisters, and limited economic and neighborhood resources that can potentially restrict future educational opportunities (all characteristics of Mexican-oriented families in their study) may, in part, explain the higher levels of depressive symptoms found among older sisters in Mexican-oriented families. Importantly, findings from this work highlight the value in examining multiple family members' experiences and how the *constellation* of acculturation and enculturation profiles *within* the family may help to inform individuals' outcomes and adjustment.

Examining patterns of cultural orientation within the family is an important area for future research, as it will help to answer an important question—Is the family in which individuals are all bicultural the most well adjusted? Or is it the degree of similarity in cultural orientations across family members what will determine more positive adjustment? Yet another possibility is that it may depend on both the constellation of family members' cultural orientation and the specific outcome of interest, as suggested by the findings of Updegraff and Umaña-Taylor (2010). Overall, findings from studies that have examined acculturation, enculturation, and/or biculturalism suggest that these are important indicators of individuals' cultural orientations and are necessary to examine in combination, given that biculturalism (i.e., high levels of both acculturation and enculturation) appears to be uniquely linked with positive family functioning and adaptation, as well as positive outcomes among individual family members.

Socioeconomic Status

A final demographic characteristic that has significant implications for families and children is socioeconomic status. In existing work with ethnic minority populations, of which Latinos

make up a significant group, most studies confound socioeconomic status and ethnicity/race (McLoyd, 1998). Often times conclusions are drawn and attributed to ethnic differences between groups when, in fact, the underlying cause of differences may be socioeconomic status. Studies that confound socioeconomic status and ethnicity make it extremely difficult to have confidence in any conclusions drawn. For example, Chavez and Buriel (1986) compared European American mothers recruited from a college day care center in southern California to Mexican American (immigrant and U.S.-born) mothers recruited from a neighborhood community center in East Los Angeles, where all mothers had to be at or below the poverty level to qualify for services. According to the authors, the European American mothers' income reflected a middle-class standard, and the Mexican American mothers' income reflected that of an unskilled or semiskilled laborer. Similarly, in a study by Delgado-Gaitan (1993), immigrant Mexican mothers were compared with first generation Mexican American mothers. Those in the immigrant cohort spoke only Spanish and had attended school in Mexico; all but one had stopped their schooling after elementary school. In the first generation cohort, occupations ranged from clerical jobs to professional positions and all mothers had attended school in the U.S. Delgado-Gaitan explained that there was very little overlap between the educational attainment of the two groups. Although SES disparities were noted in the description of each of these samples, what conclusions can be drawn from this research? How can we conclude that any differences observed were the result of cultural orientation or generational status and not the result of a socioeconomic difference between the groups?

A few existing studies, however, have sampled and recruited participants in a manner that has introduced variability in socioeconomic status into their ethnic homogenous samples and has allowed them to examine the potential role of socioeconomic status on family processes. Findings from these studies have supported the notion that family experiences vary considerably by socioeconomic status and, thus, it is imperative to take this variable into consideration when studying Latino families. For instance, in a study of Mexican American families, Updegraff, Killoren, and Thayer's (2007) findings provided evidence suggesting that parents' involvement in their adolescents' peer relationships varied significantly as a function of the family's socioeconomic status. Specifically, using cluster analysis, three groups of families were identified based on mothers' and fathers' education levels and their Mexican and Anglo cultural orientations: (1) Anglo-oriented, more educated parents; (2) Mexican-oriented, more educated parents; and (3) Mexican-oriented, less educated parents. The latter group had the most limited economic resources and lived in neighborhoods that included higher percentages of families in poverty as compared to the other two groups and also described the most restrictions on their adolescents' peer relationships (Updegraff et al.). Consistent with an ecological perspective, Updegraff et al. (2007) suggest that the broader context must be considered in understanding the role of socioeconomic status on family processes, given that the families in their study with the most limited economic resources also tended to live in neighborhoods characterized by higher levels of poverty and lower perceived safety; thus, it seems consistent that these parents may be most restrictive with respect to their children's peer relationships in an effort to keep their children safe.

In another study that examined variability by socioeconomic status, Harwood, Scholmerich, Ventura-Cook, Schulze, and Wilson (1996) examined the long-term socialization goals that Puerto Rican and Anglo mothers from diverse social class groups had for their children. Among the Puerto Rican mothers in their sample, they found that socialization goals varied significantly based on socioeconomic status. Specifically, middle-class Puerto Rican mothers referenced socialization goals focused on self-maximization more frequently than their lower-class counterparts. Self-maximization involves children being self-confident, independent, and developing their talents and abilities as an individual (Harwood et al.). Although Harwood et al. found significant within group differences based on socioeconomic

status, they also noted that the socioeconomic differences found within Puerto Rican mothers were less pronounced than the differences that emerged when Puerto Rican mothers of varied socioeconomic statuses were compared to their European American counterparts. Put differently, although significant socioeconomic differences emerged, ethnic group differences were even stronger. Thus, their findings emphasize the importance of examining variability by both socioeconomic status and ethnic group membership.

Because Latinos are disproportionately represented among families living in poverty, it is critical that researchers take into account socioeconomic status when studying Latino families and consider the unique implications of limited economic resources for Latino families who are suffering extreme deprivation. Again, there is considerable diversity within the Latino population, with only 14.6 and 15% of Cubans and South Americans, respectively, living in poverty, compared to 23.5%, 25.8%, and 27.5% of Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Dominican Latinos, respectively (Ramirez, 2004). Overall, 22.6% of Latinos in the U.S. are living in poverty, which compares unfavorably to the 12.4% of the general population that lives in poverty (Ramirez). When statistics for children under the age of 18 living in poverty are examined, conclusions are even bleaker with 28.4%, 32.9%, and 35.2% of Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Dominican children, respectively, living in poverty, compared to 16.6% of children in the general population who live in poverty. Poverty has significant consequences for children and families. The extreme lack of resources that accompanies poverty status can lead to risk factors, such as chronic stress, that place families and their members at risk for negative outcomes (García Coll, 1990). In fact, the family process model of economic hardship (Conger et al., 1992) suggests that adverse financial circumstances lead to higher levels of stress resulting from perceived economic hardship, and in turn, to poorer parent psychological functioning, which can impact parenting, family relationships, and child outcomes. A study of Mexican American families has provided empirical support for this model such that economic hardship was significantly associated with both parents' reports of economic pressure, which in turn was significantly associated with paternal and maternal depression; importantly, paternal depression significantly predicted marital problems, which in turn predicted child adjustment problems (Parke et al., 2004). From an ecological perspective, socioeconomic status provides an additional contextual factor to consider when attempting to understand Latino families' experiences and the potential variability that exists within this considerably heterogeneous group.

A final consideration with respect to socioeconomic status among Latinos is that it is important to consider the potential interaction between socioeconomic status and cultural processes (e.g., acculturation, enculturation, biculturalism) and how these variables may work together to inform family experiences. More highly acculturated families tend to have a higher socioeconomic status and also are more likely to have been educated in U.S. schools, both of which could partially explain their similarities in terms of parenting behaviors and experiences to middle-class European American parents (Grau et al., 2009). Thus, studies should consider both cultural orientation and socioeconomic status when studying family processes and, importantly, prior to concluding that differences between groups are the result of socioeconomic status or cultural orientation, it will be important to disentangle the potential variability explained by each of these characteristics in the processes being examined.

Conclusion and Suggestions for Future Research

Our review of Latino family scholarship revealed that the research areas with the most concentrated efforts appeared to focus on parenting behaviors (general and culture-specific) and gender dynamics in Latino families. Although these areas appear to have generated the most research, given the diversity of the Latino population, it is not yet possible to draw generalizable conclusions from this work. For example, the conclusions

that can be drawn regarding general parenting behaviors must be made specific to certain national origin groups (e.g., most research on parenting behaviors has focused on families of Mexican or Puerto Rican descent, and we know little about the family experiences of Central and South American families). Further, attention to gender dynamics in Latino families has been limited primarily to qualitative data from relatively small samples and a particular focus on gender dynamics in marriage. Thus, our concluding comments are focused more on suggestions for future research, as we believe there are many ways in which the scholarship on Latino families can move forward.

The significant diversity that exists within the Latino population with respect to national origin, generational status, nativity, immigration history, cultural orientation, and socioeconomic status, as described above, must be taken into account in research focused on Latino families. Harwood et al. (2002) made a number of recommendations with respect to future research on Latino parenting: be specific with regard to the country of origin, control for the effects of socioeconomic status, control for generational status, and consider the effects of acculturation on parents' beliefs and practices. We take their recommendations one step further by suggesting that researchers not only acknowledge the country of origin of the Latino population they are studying, but, rather, that they make considerable efforts to include multiple national origin groups in their studies. There is a significant need to increase the field's understanding of family experiences of Latinos from Central and South American backgrounds, given the rapid growth of these populations in the U.S. (Guzmán, 2001). Thus, a concerted effort is needed to recruit Latinos from these underrepresented groups into research studies.

In addition, we recommend that future researchers recruit and stratify their samples in a manner that provides sufficient variability with respect to national origin, generational status, nativity, cultural orientation, and socioeconomic status to enable researchers to examine these variables as moderators, rather than simply controlling for their effects. To move the field forward, it will be necessary to understand how these variables modify family processes and outcomes among Latino families, especially given the vast diversity that exists among these families. As noted in several studies described in our review, the associations between family processes and child adjustment sometimes varied significantly by demographics such as national origin (e.g., Figueroa-Moseley et al., 2006) and acculturation level (e.g., Hill et al., 2003). To better understand the processes for different groups based on these demographic characteristics, we must move beyond controlling for the impact of such demographics and toward an understanding of how processes differ for these different subgroups of families.

Beyond the need to examine key demographic characteristics as moderators, we also noted several methodological issues that should be considered in designing future studies on Latino families. First, among the most significant gaps that we observed in the literature was the limited number of studies that used a multiple informant design. Most studies relied on data gathered from a single informant (e.g., parent reports or child reports); furthermore, studies that did include multiple informants typically included one parent/caregiver and a target child, but it was rare to find a study that included multiple caregivers. Underscoring the value and need to conduct research with multiple caregivers in order to more completely understand the association between parenting and child outcomes, Domenech Rodríguez et al. (2006) found that it was the interaction of both parents' parenting practices that significantly predicted child outcomes, rather than a single parent's parenting behaviors. Although time consuming and expensive, there is a significant need for studies that gather data from multiple family members, and particularly those that account for the perspectives of multiple caregivers, rather than just the primary caregiver. Importantly, we are not suggesting that researchers only study two-parent families, as that would limit the broader generalizability of findings from this work. Rather, we suggest that multiple *caregivers* be included in studies; in some cases this would involve gathering data from a parent

and a grandparent, in other cases it may involve gathering data from a parent and an older sibling. Latino families are diverse in family constellation and it will be important for future studies to capture this diversity by expanding the definition of caregiver to include someone other than a biological mother or father, and moreover, capturing the multiple perspectives of caregivers within families. This recommendation is consistent with notions from ecological theory, which suggest that considering the impact of multiple systems and how they interact with one another is necessary to more completely understand the processes of human and family development.

Somewhat related, we also noted that no studies, to our knowledge, have examined how differing generational statuses or differing levels of acculturation/enculturation within the marital dyad impact family functioning. Put differently, it is unclear how family dynamics play out in families in which one partner is a recent immigrant to the U.S. and the second partner has been in the U.S. for many generations. How do differing levels of acculturation/enculturation impact spousal relationships and, in turn, parenting experiences? Are there similarities in the family processes of these families as compared to the processes of biethnic families in which a Latino marries a European American? What role do social networks play in these relationships? Does family have the same meaning? There has been some theoretical work that discusses the potential impact of differing levels of acculturation/enculturation between parents and children (Birman, 2006); however, few studies have examined this parent–child discrepancy in acculturation among Latino families (Gonzales, Knight, Morgan-Lopez, Saenz, & Sirolli, 2002; Updegraff & Umaña-Taylor, 2010), and we know even *less* about whether differing levels of acculturation impact the couple relationship.

Finally, we would like to close by noting that, although we present many limitations in our review of the existing work and make several recommendations for how this research can be improved, we believe that the efforts of previous researchers are laudable, particularly given that much of this work has been conducted with limited research funds, staff, and additional challenges that are unique to the study of Latino families (e.g., language barriers, translation issues; Knight et al., 2009). To overcome some of these constraints, researchers should consider increasing collaborative efforts and, particularly, increasing collaborations across disciplines. Scholars from diverse disciplines (e.g., Family Studies, Psychology, Sociology, Women's Studies) are increasingly interested in studying the family experiences of Latinos. Future researchers should attempt to make interdisciplinary connections that will help ease some of the cost and time burdens of this work. Such interdisciplinary collaborations will help to ensure that the multiple meanings and experiences of family life are captured across this rapidly growing and diverse population.

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